



## WHISPERS OF SOUL AND ECHOES OF NATURE

***“Jithé paani vándde, uthey dharm vi vándde nahīn.”***  
*(Where water is shared, faiths are never divided.)*

A Pahari proverb highlighting unity through shared natural and spiritual resources. For the ancient Pahari tribes of Jammu and Kashmir, nature was not merely a resource, it was the very foundation of life and spirituality. Mountains, rivers, forests and animals were **living sacred beings**, honoured through rituals, festivals and oral traditions that connected communities to the cosmic order. High in the Himalayan folds, the Pahari tribes of Jammu and Kashmir have lived for centuries as **custodians of a deep ecological wisdom**, one that sees no boundary between the human, the animal and the divine. One clear example of nature worship among the Pahari tribe is their veneration of the **Kishan Ganga River**, which flows through **Gurez, Keran, Machil and Karnah** region. The river is considered sacred local myths recount how the rivers water is blessed by mountain spirits and during festivals, the paharis used to perform rituals on the banks of Kishanganga river, offering food and prayers to ensure its continued flow and health. This respect for the river illustrates the tribe's understanding of nature's vital role in their survival and spirituality. **“Parbat sab da hai, sirf mandir ya masjid da nahīn.”** *The mountain belongs to all - it is not just the temples or the mosques.* This Pahari proverb emphasizing sacred geography as common ground.

This reflects how ancient Pahari world was shaped by **forests, rivers and mountains**. Every element of the natural world was imbued with spirit, **trees were elders, animals were kin, and mountains were living deities**. **“Jithey van, nadi te insaan ik ho jaande ne, othe rab vi vasda hai.”** *Where forest, river and people unite, there too resides the divine.* A sacred ecological view tied to interfaith respect. For the ancient Pahari tribes of the pir panjal, nature was not a backdrop, it was a living entity. The **earth was revered as Matrikas (divine mother), rivers cherished as bodes of local deities or ancestral spirits and animals regarded as fellow kin's.**