

AUM

THE TRIUMPH AT TANKARA

By Brigadier Chitranjan Sawant, VSM

The Vedic Trinity was indeed in full play when a new soul entered a body at Tankara in 1824. The Jeev Atma drew full inspiration from Parmatma and learnt the inspired divine knowledge that had been revealed at the beginning of the human creation, the Vedas, and grew up physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The Prakriti or the matter, as the third component of the Vedic Trinity had indeed its role to play on the soil of Tankara. The Jeev Atma that I am talking about was named Moolshankar and Tankara was then a small village in the native state of Morvi in Saurashtra, the present day Gujarat. What better example of the Vedic Trinity could there be than this one. Of course, Tankara triumphed and more than 12,000 people – men, women and children – assembled in that small place from 15th to 17th February 2007 to celebrate the Bodh Divas. The great day or to be more precise the great night was when the young Moolshankar, not yet a teenager, came out of darkness and attained spiritual enlightenment about the Almighty Himself.

Looking at the vast multitude of young and old at Tankara I wondered what the motivating factor was that brought them there from all over the world. Their gleaming eyes, radiant faces and cheerful disposition spelt that they had achieved what they wanted. They had all come to the birthplace of Young Moolshankar who was later transformed into the great religious and social reformer, Swami Dayanand Saraswati. They had come to Tankara to assess their own spiritual advancement, to assess the failings and to find ways and means to achieve happiness and eventually, the ultimate goal, the Moksha. To help them achieve their aim of spiritual advancement the schedule of the three-day event was very well organised by the Shri Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati Smarak Trust and its able trustees led by Shri Brij Mohan Munjal and Shri Ramnath Sehgal. The latter, as secretary was the driving force behind the mammoth celebrations and the logistics. Indeed, it was not an easy task to house, feed and to minister to the spiritual needs of over twelve thousand people for more than three days.

THE SPIRITUAL SCHEDULE

The day began rather early in the Brahm muhurth with the long ringing of the big brass gong and that signaled it was time to leave the bed. To encourage the reluctant ones a couple of volunteers went around with honking horns and singing a song Uth Jaag Musafir bhor bhaye, ab raen kahan jo sovat hai. They also announced that it was time to assemble at the central point of the campus – the Mahalaya to proceed on Prabhat Pheri. Low and behold, a big crowd had assembled with big saffron flags on which AUM in Devnagri was inscribed in bold relief. They sang Bhajans and also songs paying tributes to the great Rishi, Dayanand Saraswati, who unfolded the Vedas and brought them to the reach of the common man, irrespective of caste, creed and faith. ``

*Dhanya hai tujhko aai rishi, Tune hamen jaaga diya
So so ke lut rahe thae hum, tune hamen bacha liya*

The Prabhat Pheri went through the lanes and by-lanes of sleepy little Tankara inhabited by about 15,000 people. The bleary eyed local residents were impressed with the marching men and women who had come from all parts of Bharat and even from lands across the seven seas like The United Kingdom, United States of America, Kenya and other parts of the world.

After a quick breakfast of healthy cow's milk and cereals we all assembled in the impressive and imposing Yajnashala. After the devastating earth quake when the previous Yajnashala was completely razed to the ground, the new one came up as a magnificent structure, thanks to large donations by faithful Aryas, the engineering skill and perseverance of stalwarts like Guru

Dutt Tiwari and Ramnath Sehgal, the present Yajnasala was constructed. It is a dream come true. Sandhya, followed by Havan and Pravachan was presided over by Acharya Ramdev. Bhajans were sung by a celebrity Bhajnik Satpal Pathik and a budding talent Narendra Vashishth. The Bhajans literally lifted the spirits many notches. Sermons followed. Of course, they were not heavy, therefore, the audience did not doze off. The role of Master of Ceremonies was very ably performed by Ajay, the Editor of Tankara Samachar and a young trustee of the organisation. He did so on all occasions, big or small, without fear or favour.

THE SERMONS

The Brahmacharis of the Updeshak Mahavidyalaya, Tankara were the first among equals to go on stage and give a commendable performance. They were equally good at Sanskrit and Hindi in giving the message of the Vedas to the eager audience. Staging a playlet on Pandit Ramprasad Bismil, the renowned freedom fighter and poet who received his initiation into patriotism at the Arya Samaj in Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh, the young performers stole the show. Appreciation was indeed universal. To begin with the evening show did not attract a large audience, but the number swelled as the evening wore on and the compere exhorted the Arya guests who had come from far and wide to come and applaud the hard work done by the Brahmacharis. The response was encouraging.

Sermons from the pulpit were delivered in the post- havan session, the afternoon session and, of course, the evening session. The speakers of all shades and hues poured their hearts out in explaining the impact of Maharishi Dayanand on contemporary India and thereafter till today. At times narrations of the Rishi's life and times were rather repetitive but I must hasten to add that at times they were just brilliant. I shall not venture to write who fell in what category but the writing was on the wall for everyone to read. I shall not be off the mark if I say that self study and depth of thought are lacking amongst the budding preachers. It would be in order to hold a training camp for the new generation preachers so that the world today gets effective stage speakers as the world of yester- years got in the person of Prakash Vir Shastri. Out of turn praise bordering on flattery of the organisers should be given a cold shoulder by the men and women who wield authority. It will indeed be a great service to the Vedic cause.

Satya Pal Pathik and Narendra Arya kept the audience spellbound with their renderings of bhajans and mantras to the accompaniment of musical instruments. On an occasion or two the musical evening went well beyond the appointed hour but the audience did not grow restive. In fact there was a clamour for more and more music that touched the soul. The Vedic Thought and the teachings of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati were brought home in an effective manner through the medium of music. Where spoken words failed to communicate the Vedic philosophy to the common man, music stepped in and achieved the aim.

THE BODH DIVAS

The Bodh Divas began with a Prabhat pheri through the lanes and streets of Tankara. The number of men ,women and children singing songs in praise of God and the Rishi had swelled beyond expectation. Of course, some devotees had stayed back as there was a Shobha Yatra planned later in the day after the hoisting of the OM DHWAJ by Dr Uttama Yati of Ajmer. It may be recalled that she was the only female Arya to have been initiated into Sanyas on the occasion of the International Vedic Conference in Rohini, Delhi in October 2006. She is a devoted and dedicated preacher of the Vedic Dharm and is an asset to our outfit. Mahashay Ram Nath Sehgal did well in rising to a higher level and selecting a Sanyasini for the hoisting of the AUM Dhvaj. The innovation was appreciated by one and all. I am deliberately not mentioning the pre-sanyas name of Uttama Yeti ji because the very logic of changing the old name signifies a break with the past life and relationship.

His Excellency Shri Nawal Kishore Sharma, Rajyapal of Gujarat was the Mukhya Yajnik at the Bodh Divas Havan. He was keen on offering the Aahuti to the Agni and succeeded in doing so

before the poorna aahuti. Ajay, the compere, informed the audience in the large and impressive yajnasal that the Rajyapal Mahodaya was from an Arya parivar and so he was there at the invitation of the trust. As per his original plan he was to preside over the post-lunch session but that was not to be owing to a mix up of schedules. He came by a chopper and soon after left the same way. Of course, the lensemen of the media and the scribes had news to report and the Bodh Divas, I am told, appeared in print and on the screen. I wish you and I had our own channel to carry the good word around. The 64 dollar question is: who will foot the bill.

The afternoon and evening sessions were well attended. Among the notable invitees were Swami Pranavanand and Babu Mithayee Lal Singh, great educationists in their respective fields. Some friends had surmised that at Tankara there may be heart-to-heart talks among the various splinter groups of Aryas so that we devote our time and energy to prachar and not in mutual bickerings. A ray of light was seen at the end of the tunnel but more sincerity is required to sort out the mess and clean the Aegean stables. Let us wait and watch and hope for the best.

The finale was taken in the normal stride of life. Some Arya devotees were already in a mood to leave and some had left for the home destination in the morning. One and all had a good word to say for the devoted band of trustees and organisers led by the Octogenarian Sehgal, the grand old man of the great show at Tankara. The devotion of the entire family, three generations present at Tankara, is to be seen to be believed. May the fourth generation too inherit the Vedic Heritage and carry on the good work of Ved prachar and association with the Tankara of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati.

AUM SHANTIH SHANTIH SHANTIH.