

AUM

VEDIC CONFLUENCE ENTHRALLED ALL

An Eyewitness Account: By Brigadier Chitranjan Sawant, VSM

Aryas came, Aryas saw and Aryas conquered. They came from all over the world, both old and new. Over 40,000 men, women and children from as many as 21 countries assembled in the Arya Nagar, Rohini, Delhi from 26 to 29 October 2006 for the International Arya Confluence. The aim was: Introspection, Interaction, Spiritual Resuscitation and Rededication to carry the mission of Maharishi Dayanand forward to eradicate Avidya and inculcate Vidya. It was resolved to spread the message of the VEDAS to every nook and corner of the world to enlighten all human beings.

The international meet began with a bang. Swami Ramdev Ji, an Arya sanyasi of world fame, who is known as the yoga guru, came to inaugurate the deliberations on the first day in the first session. He stayed on till the afternoon to preside over and deliver the keynote address at the Ved sammelan. He remained in focus of the media, both print and electronic, all along. The eyes of common man remained glued to him for the entire duration. As per estimate of the sponsors the crowd swelled as the Swami spoke and paid tribute to Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati. The yoga guru said that but for the Maharishi he would have still been harvesting bajra (a coarse grain eaten by the rural poor) It was the enlightenment and unfolding of the Vedic knowledge that men and women from the so called backward areas risen high. Everyone wanted to hear him and when he spoke in glowing terms about the Vedic knowledge made available to all and sundry, exhilaration was experienced by one and all. No one was disappointed. The Vedic thought was discernible all along. He reiterated the sixth principle of the Arya Samaj in his simple but forceful message. The physical, the spiritual and the social wellbeing of the entire Mankind is the main mission of us all, Swami Ramdev said. His session came to a close with a bang, not a whimper, when he took leave of the congregation to carry on the mission elsewhere.

Dr Naveen Ramgoolam, Hon'ble Prime Minister of Mauritius had very kindly consented to preside over the opening session. However, pressing matters of state did not let him leave the island state for the land of his ancestors. He made it a point to send a special message befitting the occasion. His Excellency Mr Mookhesswur Choonee, the High Commissioner of Mauritius in India, accompanied by his lady wife, was gracious enough to come to the Sammelan and deliver the message of the Prime Minister in person. He spoke in Hindi about his own views on the Vedic Dharm which was applauded by the large audience. Likewise Smt Sheela Dikshit, Chief Minister of Delhi, who could not make it in person, was represented by Dr Yoganand Shastri, Minister of Health in the Delhi government. Of course, as a product of the Arya Samaj, he came to speak in his own right. It was all about the Arya Samaj without the slightest reference to the political scene here there or anywhere.

With a view to putting the record straight, allow me to mention that some spectators of the dissident camp who took the trouble of counting chairs placed in the pandal estimate that not more than 15,000 men and women were present for the address of the yoga guru. Many of them melted away thereafter. Vrindavan and Agra attracted them more. As an eyewitness I am in no position to confirm or deny this assertion. Indeed many stalwarts of the Arya world were conspicuous by their absence from the international conclave for reasons best known to them and the office bearers of the many-fangled Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabhas. The common man wished that the hydra-headed monster of factionalism was put on the pyre. However, if wishes were horses beggars would ride them. Period.

Let us go back to the first morning and participate in the Congregational Havan in a specially

built Yajna shala. It was so ethnic in design and construction that the faithfuls wanted it to be retained there for ever. Of course, that was not to be. A temporary but pretty structure wont be able to withstand the fury of Nature for long in an open area of the Swarna Jayanti Park and had to be shifted elsewhere on conclusion of the international meet. Its cost of two and a half lakh rupees came in donation after a persuasive appeal made by Brahmchari Raj Singh, pradhan of the Delhi Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. The donor was none else but his own brother. Charity begins at home in a philanthropic way. Commendable indeed. All the Yajmans contributed generously to meet the ever growing budget that may exceed a crore and a half rupees as per a conservative estimate.. Among the celebrity yajmans and liberal donors was Shri Sahib Singh Verma, former Chief Minister of Delhi and a prominent BJP leader. This healthy trend of announcing handsome donations continued till the end.

AUM DHWAJ, the flag of Param Pita Parmatma was hoisted at 10 AM just outside the main venue of the Maha Sammelen by Acharya Baldev Ji, a guru of Swami Ramdev Ji. I was called upon to deliver a short discourse on the importance of a flag in a revolution or a battle and how it is a rallying point in adverse circumstances. The honour was given to me because of my military background.

A large number of people from foreign countries were present at the inaugural session. Most of them stayed on for the four-day conclave. Perhaps sightseeing was the lesser attraction for them. Mauritius and Nepal fielded the largest contingents, 350 and 250 persons respectively. Shri Uday Narain Gangu, leader of the Mauritius delegation, was always in the limelight. He presided over the convention of the foreign delegates too. The delegation of Aryas from Pakistan was in focus most of the time as we all wanted to know the problems that they faced in practising the faith of their forefathers. They were rather reticent on this issue and kept a smiling face all along. The Armenians and the white European from the Czech Republic vowed to establish Arya Samaj in their countries. Time alone will tell of their success or failure. Of course, the Czech gentleman has changed his name from Karen Astrigen to Kamlanand and is making rounds of the Vedic scholars to learn all about the sixteen Sanskaras. Let us wish him the best of luck in his mission. A black delegate from Kenya was in prominence too but I could not meet him to know of his plans of joining the Vedic dharm.

While dwelling on our foreign Arya friends I shall mention of the lone delegate from the UK – Shri Gopal Chandra, our bhrata ji. The octogenarian veteran Arya Samajist from Birmingham is a pillar of strength to the Vedic missionaries who need succor in the UK. His residence is an open house for Aryas visiting England to preach the Vedic dharm. A question arises : when and where will the next Arya Vishwa Sammelen be held? Pundit Ram Lall Ji of the United States of America has volunteered to host it in New York next year. A septuagenarian affable and smiling person that he is, he is bound to succeed in his sankalp. Ram Lall Ji is an outward-bound person and is the first one to extend his hand of friendship for a good shake. That is how he and I met while shopping for Vedic literature and he unfolded his plans warning us to be aware of those shady fellows who sell the name of Dayanand for personal petty gains in foreign lands. After America, the world Aryas are scheduled to meet in Mauritius in 2008 to carry forward the mission of Swami Dayanand Saraswati. We wish Gangu Ji and his team of devoted Aryas Godspeed and a roaring success.

The Arya Shiksha Sammelen was the finale of the first day. After the Havan and Sandhya in the twilight period, we all assembled in the main pandal to hear a galaxy of educationists headed by Dr Ashok Chauhan Ji, an Arya Samajist to the core. Of course, Smt Meera Kumar Ji, slated for this session, had made a debut in the afternoon and made an open breast of her thought process. Coming of a dalit family, she acknowledged that it was the Arya Samaj that taught her grand parents and parents to recite the Ved mantras and live with dignity. The torch of Vedic knowledge must be passed on, she said.

Dr Ashok Chauhan is an eminent educationist in his own right. He has not only started the Amity group of secondary schools but also has the proud privilege of founding an Amity University. The Amity University is gradually gaining eminence as an institution that nurtures talent. What is of great relevance to us in the present context is that he was accompanied by many generations of his family who pledged to work for the Arya samaj relentlessly and spread the good word of the Vedas. He went round the Arya Nagar shivir and was impressed with the arrangements. Indeed it was a morale booster for Brhamachari Raj Singh and his devoted team of Aryas who had worked for months to make the Maha Sammelan a grand success.

Allow me to bow out for now. I promise to return soon with the rest of the story.

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