

# HOPE 'n HELP POST EARTHQUAKE

By Brigadier Chitranjan Sawant, VSM

Lovely complex indeed. There is joy and cheer all over sans depression and hopelessness. Boys and girls, toddlers to teenagers, all are there on the campus. Jeevan Prabhat is the name of the place. True to its name it brings the morning freshness in their lives day after day. Orphans, once upon a time, they are orphans no more. Arya Samaj Gandhidham is a father and a mother, as well as a Guru to them.

They had lost their parents and other loved ones in the devastating earthquake of 2001 that had razed to ground almost every building in the Anjar town and neighboring areas in Kutch, Arya Samaj Gandhidham runs the project of progress for the 182 children collected from the scene of death and destruction and sheltered in Jeevan Prabhat from day one. Jeevan Prabhat has been their home and hearth and they were orphans no more when they crossed the threshold of Jeevan Prabhat to be sheltered from the harsh realities of the wild-wicked world.

## **THEY HAVE A DREAM**

The boys and girls are housed in separate dormitories on the campus. The supervisors, a male for boys and a female for girls, ensure that the personal hygiene is good and the environmental

cleanliness is not neglected either. The dust bins placed at vantage points are made use of. Names of residents of a room or a hall are written on the entrance door to facilitate a head count when required. The personal clothing, the bed linen, the floors and ceilings, the toilets and bathrooms are spotlessly clean. The health and hygiene of boys and girls of Jeevan Prabhat compares favorably with that of a reputed public school where parents pay for their upkeep through their nose. Here the time table for a day's activity is drawn and observed. With the result the education of the children is paid adequate attention and they fare well in the terminal and final examinations.

The inmates are encouraged by the selfless team of management to think of charting their own future career. Encouragement by the Arya guardians given lovingly helps the children realize their dreams.

Jigna Arya, a bright girl is now heading for an engineering college to become a civil engineer. Rajesh Arya is now a B.Com student and nurtures the dream of becoming a chartered accountant. Surabhi is preparing for the tenth class board examination and also looks after three junior girls who look up to her for

guidance when in doubt. It is time some retired armed forces personnel volunteered to motivate these students to think of becoming soldiers or officers to defend the nation. Manju, the present Pracharya or Principal is the role model of quite a few girls. She never tires in doing more work for Jeevan Prabhat than she is scheduled for. Likewise the boys look forward to receiving guidance from Vachonidhi Arya in planning and executing their dream projects.

Jeevan Prabhat has taken a step forward and is going to have a Vocational College. Land has already been acquired and Havan was performed in our presence during the inauguration ceremony of the campus of Jeevan Prabhat. Thus progress is writ large all over and both the staff and students are on guard against regression making inroads into the lives of young boys and girls.

The Kul Pita, Girish Khosla is in the Vaanprasth Ashram and handles the children lovingly by taking them out for sight- seeing or bringing ice crème in bulk for a change of taste. Both he and Vachonidhi may find it difficult not to cry when the girls reach nubile age and are married off. Such is the bond of love between the Kul Pita, the Kul Sachiv and the students of the Kul that they cannot but cry on parting permanently.

## **INAUGURATION OF JEEVAN PRABHAT**

The grand inauguration of Jeevan Prabhat was performed with a Havan on three mornings from 18 December to 20 December 09. The day commenced with a Samveds Parayan Yajna where the mantras were recited ably by the brahmacharinis of Panini Kanya Gurukul, Varanasi while their Acharya, Nandita Shastri Ji was the guiding hand for the ceremony. After the Havan, many men of letters who had come on invitation from many places addressed the audience with their pravachans which were appreciated by listeners.

One evening right on the first day, there was a shobha yatra or a grand procession under the able Leadership of Pandit Ram Lal Ji Patron Arya Pratinidhi Sabha America that went round all important places in the town. The precisionists covered a few kilometers on foot. The children and the senior citizens were permitted to ride a horse or a camel or a cart as the case may be.

Water was served enroute by well intentioned citizens of Gandhidham, both Hindus and Muslims. After all Jeevan Prabhat provided shelter and succor to the destitute children without any discrimination based on caste, creed, faith or fraternity. The children recite Ved mantras and perform Havan as laid down by Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati and no one is discriminated against because of his or her faith. Thus they are

shaping into good citizens who perform Sandhya and Havan for self and society.

So far so good. The question arises who foots the bill for the activities of Jeevan Prabhat? Well, donations in cash or kind come from citizens of the State and other parts of the country as well as from the United States of America. If you are in a mood to go round the campus, you will find evidence of donations pouring into the coffers of Jeevan Prabhat.

A residential building of students was constructed with the help of money received from the Aryas of the Arya Samaj, Houston, Texas. Dev Mahajan, a major donor to Jeevan Prabhat, and his wife, Sushma Mahajan flew in for the inauguration ceremony and saw for them how their money was utilized. Joginder Kundra came from New Jersey to find out if he should contribute more than 70,000 US dollars already donated for Pondicherry. Dharmacharya Pandit Ram Lall Ji flew from New York to bless Jeevan Prabhat and lead the SamVed Parayan Yajna. Mr. & Mrs. Gyanendra Narayan (President Arya Samaj Vancouver) & Mrs. Uma Kant Singh flew from Vancouver Canada. The big Dhyan Kaksha or the Meditation Hall was built with the donation given on a large scale by Seth Kanak Ji from Muscat (Oman).

Dr Vinod Prakash, a former Economist of the World Bank and presently the

founder-Director of the IDRF, Washington DC. The India Development and Relief Fund is the biggest donor having contributed Rs One Crore and eighty lacs for the Jeevan Prabhat. Sarla Prakash, his wife and a committed Arya Samajist accompanied her husband. She is a graduate of the Arya Kanya Gurukul, Dehra Dun that was started by Acharya Ram Dev Ji (Grand Father of Girish Ji).

It was done at the entrance of the main administrative block constructed with the help of Radio XL of Birmingham, UK. There were many minor donors from within Bharat and we cannot rate their donations as low. There were some silent donors who did not wish to be listed or talked about. The third and final day of the inauguration ceremony ambled along and the sermons delivered were of interest. These sermons left a lasting and deep impression on listeners' minds. The guests came and returned to their places of residence. But the boys and girls of Jeevan Prabhat continued to be where they belonged to.

Most of them heard sermons and were impressed. They know that there is hope for them in future and help will continue to be given to them so that they proceed forward on the path of progress. Let us pray to Param Pita Parmatma that the path of progress of students of Jeevan Prabhat remains free from road blocks and the path is widened day by day.

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