

BRAHMO CONFERENCE NEWS LETTER

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Editor : Saurav De

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LATEST NEWS

The 127th sessions of Brahma Conference are scheduled to be held from 2nd October (Monday) 2017 to 5th October (Thursday) 2017 at Balasore

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THE WONDERFUL CONFERENCE AT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

The 126th Session of the All India Brahma Conference at New Delhi was such a wonderful event that it will always remain fresh in our memory. Nearly 100 delegates came from various parts of India, the number being not so large considering the usual attendance in previous conferences except a few. I am sorry to say that there was only one delegate from AP, the ever youthful Mr Himakar Tata, and none from Assam, and the number of delegates from W. Bengal and Orissa was much lower than usual. But we all were happy that after a gap of few years Karnataka was represented and their delegation included devoted Brahmans like Mr W. P. Krishna, Mr C.N. Raju, Mr and Mrs Jeevan Kumar. It was pleasant to see a good number of delegates from Maharashtra which included devoted Brahmans like Prof Dilip Joag and Dr Sushma Joag. Ms Malavika Nagarkar, who was the President of this session of the Conference. Mr Milind Nagarkar and Mr Ashis Basu. It is also heartening to note that a good number of delegates came from the Himalayan Brahma Samaj, Shimla, while, as usual, M.B.B. Samaj, Indore, was well represented.

The most remarkable point is that we all met at Rammohun Roy Memorial Hall, which had been solemnised as a venerable seat of the Brahma Movement by revered personalities like Bhai Sitaram, P.C. Lal and S.K. Das. We very much missed Mr Subas De, the former Secretary of the Brahma Conference who could not attend due to illness. May God bless him with good health so that we can feel the pleasure of his company at the next conference at Balasore, Orissa. We also very much missed Dr Rajyaiakshmi of Kakinada, who had been our guiding spirit and inspiring force for so many decades. She was seriously ill. and during the Conference itself we were deeply sad to hear that her condition was very serious. Eventually on 24th November, to our utmost shock, she left us for her heavenly abode. May her soul rest in eternal peace. Her contribution to the Brahma Samaj is immeasurable. She served as the President of the Brahma Conference for many years and efficiently organised two sessions of the Conference at Kakinada.

The conference was successful thanks to the hard work done by a sincere and active group of workers

led by Mr Sanjoy Chanda and Mr Arup Kumar Das, the President and Secretary respectively of the Brahma Samaj, Delhi, and included Mr Ranabir Mitra. Mr Debasish Guha Niyogi, Mrs. Gopa Chanda, Mr Amab Das, Ms Priyanjali Mitra, Ms Rimi Das and others. Mr Saurav De, the Secretary of the Brahma Conference, provided necessary guidance in the smooth proceeding of the Conference. It was a wonderful feeling to meet Ms Ranjana Ray, the great Brahma lady of Delhi, who worked hard to spread education to children of poor and downtrodden families. She was very active when the Conference was last held at New Delhi way back in 1990. This time too in spite of having physical difficulties, she was present at the Conference. We were proud to meet such a venerable person.

All functions, divine services, lectures, debates, discussions and cultural shows took place at the Rammohun Memorial Hall. It is a fascinating hall with a sprawling and attractive compound around it. As Brahmans, we felt immensely proud that such a well-organised Samaj with well-constituted executive committee and board of trustees exists in the national capital. The hall, the front-yard and backyard were beautifully and artistically decorated, thanks to the tireless involvement of Mr Debasish Guha Niyogi. The dining zone was made in the back-yard with excellent arrangements.

DAY ONE - 12. 11. 2016. The day began with Flag Hoisting by the Conf. President Ms Malavika Nagarkar. Mr Ashis Basu did a short prayer and Ms Amrita Mitra and group presented devotional songs. It was a nice opening of the Conference. It was followed by tea, breakfast and registration. This was indeed a wonderful experience, because we met and renewed our ties with known friends and, more happily, many new first timers came with whom we could build up ties of friendship. Everyone was in a joyous mood that is what we gather for. Then all delegates and invited guests gathered at the Hall, which was nicely decorated and was possessed of most modern stage craft and light arrangement. The first Brahmopasana was done by Mr Mahendra Tayade of Indore and devotional songs were presented by the Indore group. It created a good impact on the household of audience. Then came the Inaugural Function. Mr Sanjoy Chanda welcomed the guests and delegates. Ms

Malavika Nagarkar delivered the President's Address. It was a highly scholarly speech and the audience listened to her with rapt attention. She highlighted the achievements of the Samaj and also regretted its declining role and dwindling popularity. Then Mr Saurav De presented the Secretary's report. After this the Chief Guest, Dr Uma Tuli, who has earned a country-wide reputation as the founder and managing secretary of the Amar Jyoti Memorial Trust. Her speech was heart-touching and inspiring. She elaborately narrated the great work done by the Trust in providing shelter and education to thousands of deprived and physically challenged children. Many of the children who began as hopeless later became established in life, thanks to the efforts of the dedicated teachers of the schools run by the Trust. The Brahmo Samaj, Delhi, and Mrs. Gopa Chanda was also involved with her work. Dr Tulc also released the Conference Souvenir. It is a nicely edited and attractively printed Souvenir with scholarly articles and valuable photos, thanks to Mr Arnab Das, Ms Koninika Roy and Ms Amrita Das. The function was enlivened by the cultural programme of songs and dances presented by the school students of the Trust. The audience encouraged them with thunderous cheers and clappings.

After a delicious and sumptuous lunch, the delegates gathered in the Hall for the three meetings — the Brahmo Conference Executive Committee meeting, the CCBS meeting and the Annual General Body meeting. The BCEC meeting was presided over by Prof Dr Dilip Joag, the CCBS meeting by Mr W.P. Krishna, and the AGM meeting by Prof Dr Sumanta Niyogi. The heartening feature of all the meeting was that all were well-attended and members took keen interest in the problems and future role of the Brahmo Samajes and the Brahmo Conference. Everyone was happy at the revival of the CCBS. thanks to the efforts of Mr W.P. Krishna and Mr C.N. Raju. The general consensus was that the CCBS must work to bring closer the Brahmo Samajes of India and help the cash-starved Samajes to rebuild themselves. Mr Raju presented the accounts of the CCBS. In the liC meeting Mr Saurav De presented the BC report and accounts. The AGM meeting unanimously decided that the next venue of the Conference in 2017 will be Balcshwar. Orissa. The FIBS, Shimla too was an applicant, but it was tentatively decided that Shimla may be the venue in 2018.

It was followed by a very lively and thought-provoking debate on "Being ritualistic goes against the essence of spiritualism", in which about nine persons participated. Ms Priyanjali Mitra moderated the debate. Ms Gargi Chakraborty, Mr Asish Basu and some youths gave impressive account of themselves through arguments and counter-arguments. After this

Prof SumanUi Niyogi in a speech paid homage to the solemn memory of Bhai Prakash Dev, a highly revered B rah mo leader of Punjab, and the Guru of Bhai Sitaram, the founder of the Brahmo Samaj of Delhi. Prof Niyogi elaborated on how the saga of Prakash Devji's struggle, sacrifice and service for the cause of the Brahmo Movement is exemplary and inspirational. The cultural programme in the evening was amazing. The "Nriyopasana" in Bharat Natyam dance form performed by the talented and gifted girls from Pune with colourful gorgeous costumes, amazing grace and movement, thanks to the effort of Ms Anuradha Shinde of Pune Prarthana Samaj, kept the audience spellbound. Then came the fantastic drama, 'Court Martial', directed by Mr Arvind Gaur, with brilliant performances by the young boys and girls, and it kept the audience glued to their seats.

DAY TWO:- 13.11.2016 :- The day began with heart-touching Baitalik by Ms Amrita Mitra and Ms Mahua Prarnanik and group. It was followed by Brahmopasona by Mr Sanjoy Chanda, and the devotional songs rendered by Mr Sanjoy Sarkar and group. The Upasana was so profoundly thoughtful but delivered in such a simple that the packed hall listened to it with rapt attention. The devotional songs by Mr Sarkar and local artists was also an unforgettable experience.

This was followed by the prestigious item of the Conference. — a symposium on 'Confluence of Religion : Towards Spirituality' in which the eminent scholar and educationist Dr Sayeeda Hamid spoke on Islam, the learned Bishop of Delhi's St Colomba's Catholic Church spoke Christianity, the learned Swaini Shastragyananada of the Ramakrishna Vidya Mandir, Kolkata, spoke on Hinduism and Prof Sumanta Niyogi spoke on Brahmoism. Dr Sumitra Mohanty of Delhi University presided. All speakers conveyed the message that all religions attain the eternal spiritual confluence, spoken of by Rammohun that "the service of man is the service of God". So the Religion of Man should be based on human love, care for the poor, deprived and suffering ones and avoidance of conflict, hatred and violence. It was a wonderful session and each speaker was heard with rapt attention and tremendous curiosity by the large audience. Mr Milind Nagarkar distributed momentoes to the speakers.

This was followed by a seminar on 'Universalism and Social Equality : Relevance of the Brahmo Samaj Today' in which papers were presented by Dr Ketaki Goswami (nicely done with PPP). Ms Kalyanmoyee Chattopadhyay, Mr Asish Basu and Ms Gargi Chakraborty. All speakers put emphasis on the point that the Brahmo Samaj is as relevant today as its immortal founder Rammohun Roy. It was followed by Sangeetopasana presented by Mr Supratim

Chakraborty and group from Kolkata. Prof Dr Sucheta Dutta very well conducted the divine service, and Mr Supratim Chakraborty, Mr Manojit DC, Ms Ellora Chakraborty and others presented devotional songs. A pleasant surprise of the session was the appearance of Mr Babul Supriyo. a Union Minister and Bollywood celebrity, with his family and his mesmerising rendering of "Dhyay jeno mor sakal bhalobasa, probhu tomar pane, tomar pane, tomar pane' drew repeated cheers.

Then took place a panel discussion on Jawaharlal Nehru's significant observation, 'Though a microscopic minority, Brahmo Samaj has had a big impact on Indian Society". Ms Gargi Chakraborty was the moderator. Mr Milind Nagarkar, Prof Dilip Joag, Mr Asish Basu, Mr Ilimakar Tata, Ms Sneha Itihasa, Ms Kalyanmoyee Chattopadhyay, Mrs S. Chattcrji and Prof Sumanta Niyogi participated. The presentations were lively and all agreed on the point that though the Brahmo Samaj bequeathed precious legacy to the posterity in India in every field, its present-day activities show lack of dedication and commitment towards reformist and developmental activities, which regrettably puts its survival in doubt.

There was a formal closing ceremony, where several delegates thanked the organisers for the excellent arrangements and delicious food. Then Mr Saurav De took the Conference Flag from Mr Arup K. Das and handed it to the delegate from Balasore. Mr Arup K. Das moved the vote of thanks. It was followed by a cultural function in the evening. The ghazals presented by Ms Agarwal impacted the audience. A highly artistic and sophisticated dance drama was presented by the local artists which will be remembered by the audience for a long time. It was directed by Ms Anusree Bonnerji. Thus ended the Conference. Delegates came with smile and they returned with smile and worth cherishing memories. Hats off to the organisers. .

Dr (Mrs) Sandhya Niyogi,
Vice-President,
Brahmo Samaj, Patna

QUOTATION

The Secret of health
both mind and body is
not to mourn for the
past, not to wairy about
the future, or not to
anticipate troubles
but to live in the
present moment wisely
and earnestly.

Gautam Buddha

A VERY SAD NEWS

We regret very much to inform all Brahmos about the sad demise of Dr. Rajyalakshmi Telikacherla (86) at 4.00 AM on 24 Nov 2016, in Kakinada, she was in hospital for about 2 weeks due to breathlessness and underwent treatment. She is a Doctorate in Fisheries Technology. A devoted Brahmo of highest order, she is the 2nd daughter of great Brahmo Acharya Late Sri Tarakam and the 2nd grand daughter of the Doyen Brahmarshi Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu. She was the president of Kakinada Brahmo Samaj for many years and along with her late husband Dr. Sasibhushan contributed a lot for its development. She was also the president of "Brahmo Conference" for many years. She has successfully conducted two All India Brahmo conferences in 2005 and 2010 in Kakinada. She is the Editor and Publisher of a Bi-monthly Magazine "Dharma Jyoti" in two languages for many years. Her contribution to the development of Brahmo Samaj will be remembered for ever. It is most unfortunate that she passed away within 1 Month of her sister's death (Smt. Sesharatnam passed away on 31st Oct). May the Almighty grant eternal Bliss to the departed soul Mruthyorman Amruthangamaya Death is not the end; we do not die when the body dies. "When all the knots that strangle the heart are loosened, the mortal becomes immortal." (Katha 11.3.14-15)

Yours faithfully
V Kesava Chand Challa

It is with a very heavy heart and a great personal loss that I wish to inform all my friends and relatives on FB, members of Samaj, particularly those who knows her, that my third Sister-in-Law Dr. T. Rajyalakshmi, passed away on Nov 24th in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh. She had a very distinguished life at personal, social and professional levels. She was born to Late Tarakam, a brahmin (Kambhampati Rama Sastry) and Late Suguna Mahalakshmi, adopted by the well-known Andhra Social Reformer, Scholar and educationist (First elected India Vice Chancellor of Madras University) Raghupathi Venkata Ratnam Naidu. Dr. Rajyalakshmi is the Grand Daughter of Sir Raghupathi Venkataratnam Naidu, She was married to my third brother Dr. T. Sasibhushan, a cytogeneticist with postgraduate and doctoral degrees from Calcutta University and University of Rostock in East Germany. He was also a Brahmo leader in Kakinada and was the editor of Dharma Jyothi until his death in 2009.