

9th
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON PEACE AND NONVIOLENT ACTION
(9th ICPNA)

Theme
Science, Spirituality and Universal Peace

17 Dec to 20 Dec, 2017

A Brief Report



ANUVRAT GLOBAL ORGANIZATION (ANUVIBHA)
ANUVRAT VISHVA BHARATI (ANUVIBHA)

a transnational centre for peace and nonviolent action associated with UN-DPI

ANUVIBHA JAIPUR KENDRA
B01-B02, Opp. Gaurav Tower, JLN Marg, JAIPUR - 302 017 (Raj.) INDIA

9th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PEACE AND NONVIOLENT ACTION (9th ICPNA)

(A Brief Report)

ANUVIBHA has been striving for the last 35 years to promote peace, nonviolence, friendship, reconciliation and human solidarity in the world. The organization of the 9th International Conference on Peace and Nonviolent Action at Jaipur was a continuation of its endeavour to create a world without weapons and violence. Earlier it had organized eight such conferences in various cities and towns in which thousands of enlightened scholars, peace activists and nonviolence lovers had joined hands with it to create a culture of ahimsa on this planet. That is why the Jaipur conference too attracted one hundred and fifty participants from 21 countries including India at such short notice. Since the number was small this international dialogue on science and spirituality turned out to be a forum for sharing each other's visions and perceptions. In consonance with the spirit of the theme of the 9th ICPNA though most delegates were used to living a life of comforts in their countries they never demanded special treatment or facilities. Their pure and dedicated feelings for peace through science, spirituality and nonviolence were really commendable.

Nonviolence is neither a passive acceptance of oppression nor a violent opposition to it. Instead, it is an active action. Nonviolent action implies a commitment to utilizing nonviolent and creative means to resist violent forces in order to influence and encourage social change and establishment of peace. The 9th ICPNA on Science, Spirituality and Universal Peace (December, 17-20,2017) organized by Anuvrat Global Organization (ANUVIBHA) in academic collaboration with the Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR) and the International Institute of Peace Studies and Global Philosophy (IIPSGP), based in France and the UK, was focused on the establishment of a culture of peace and nonviolence as part of its commitment to peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution, peace education, education dedicated to achieving a culture of nonviolence, tolerance, mutual respect, intercultural and interfaith dialogue and reconciliation.

INAUGURAL SESSION

The Inaugural Session of the Conference was held on 17th December 2017 at 10:30 AM. The session was graced by the auspicious presence of the most revered Mantrimuni Sumermal Ji Swami, the representative of the current Anuvrat Anushashta (spiritual head of Anuvrat Movement) HH Acharya Shri Mahashraman. It was chaired by Dr. Gulab Kothari, Chair, 9th ICPNA, the Editor-in-Chief of Rajasthan Patrika and President of Pt. Madhusudan Ojha Institute of Vedic Studies and Research.



First of all Mr. T.K. Jain, Chairman, Organizing Committee, delivered his welcome speech, in which he emphasized the need to preserve Indian culture, to protect, maintain and strengthen it at all costs. He suggested that Anuvrat could be one of the central instruments of attaining this objective if India wished to secure the position of Vishwa Guru. Shri Naresh Mehta, Chairman, Reception Committee also extended a warm welcome to the delegates and ensured them of a comfortable stay during the conference in Jaipur.

Dr. S.L. Gandhi, the man who marshalled all resources to undertake the herculean task of bringing the academics and practitioners together, viewed Anuvrat as a means of conflict resolution and ecological preservation which should be adopted by all. Reiterating the themes adopted by past conferences Dr. Gandhi said that the role of the conference was to create an awareness among people regarding peace building through nonviolence and its implementation in later stages. He expressed a sense of exhilaration that the journey of ICPNA has reached six continents. He also discussed how science and spirituality are inextricably beholden to one another, which was the focal point of the conference.

Prof. Anoop Swarup, Chairman, Centre for Global Non-killing, Honolulu (USA) was the keynote speaker of this session. He addressed the gathering by congratulating Dr. S.L. Gandhi for his untiring efforts in calling together and marshalling the forces of peace. In his presentation on 'Give non-killing a Chance: Integrating Science and Spirituality for Human Revolution' he pointed out that spiritualism is essential to ensuring the continued survival of humanity on this earth. He very clearly stated that innovations and discoveries in science alone cannot save humanity, but it is spirituality that can remove the darkness from the lives of one and all. Prof. Swarup stressed that the future revolutions would be about empowering people and it would happen only with the aid of spirituality.

Prof. S.R. Bhatt - Chairman, Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi who was the chief guest at the inaugural function of the 9th ICPNA shared his views on the central theme of the realization of peace through the synergy of science and spirituality. He stated that each human being has evolved uniquely and therefore we all have a dual responsibility. According to him, one responsibility of man is the realization of peace and perfection and the other is to seek the preservation of peace for the sake of all, and to protect the identity of every existent living being on earth. He also came forward with the idea that spirituality is holistic whereas science is specialized. He opined that science is a means and peace is an end, so that the earth might be made a better place to live in through the synergy of science and peacemaking.

Dr. Thomas Clough Daffern, Rector – Global Green University and Director, International Institute of Peace Studies and Global Philosophy, (France and UK) said that the world would, one day, turn into a place of justice and truth instead of fear and violence, if we adopt spirituality as our way of life. He held the view that eco-philosophy and planetary healing could take us in the direction of peace. He hoped that more research would be done on the power of prayer so that it could be scientifically established that prayer is an essential component in fostering peace. Dr. Daffern introduced the Interfaith Peace Treaty which is open for all to sign, and should be agreed upon by all.



Sister B.K. Rama – a representative of Brahma Kumaris, Mount Abu, addressed the august gathering explaining that emotional, mental, physical and spiritual wellness is necessary for overall development. Synchronizing between nature and peace, she opined that the more we deviate from nature, the more inclined we are towards violence. Sister Rama urged us to promote a culture of soul consciousness. She said that once we are guided by consciousness, we will be able to establish peace, compassion, trust, and faith. Sister Rama concluded her deliberation by saying that once a person internalizes peace, he can preach the same to others.

Dr. Gulab Kothari, the chairperson of the 9th ICPNA, said in his speech that peace is the common denominator that allows for the mingling of science and spirituality. The fruits of science are insufficient sustenance for mankind without the support of spirituality. Remarking on the nature of science, he maintained that the unequivocal neutrality of science made it incumbent upon the wisdom of spirituality to channelize it in the direction of peace. Dr. Kothari further opined that making spirituality a part of education is the need of the hour so that, along with the development of IQ, the mind, soul and emotions are not ignored. Education should provide instruction and guidance for the creation of the whole child and person so that they may embody a balanced state of harmony, which is peace. Ven Lama Doboomb Tulku, Founder and Managing Trustee of the World Buddhist Culture Trust said that spirituality alone could lead to universal peace. Though Science has brought prosperity to humanity it has also become an instrument for mass destruction. Spirituality has the power to discipline it. Thus if science and spirituality join hands together heaven can descend on the earth itself.

At the end of the inaugural session, the most revered Mantrimuni Sumermal Ji Swami blessed the gathering with his words of wisdom. He explained the importance of Anuvrat in establishing brotherhood for humanity. Since Anuvrat follows the principles of nonviolence, it brings us closer to humanity and thus closer to spirituality and morality. Commenting upon the present education system, he argued that we could ensure peace only if we were able to achieve coordination between education and civilization.

The inaugural session crystallized the different perspectives before the commencement of this important conference, with outstanding discourses and information shared by distinguished representatives. It provided a wealth of knowledge and a better understanding of the importance of the reconciliation between science and spirituality. The session ended with generous words of gratitude and appreciation that manifested in the 'thank you' speech by Prof. Vidya Jain. Now the time has come when more expertise is required in the examination of more specialized issues.



FIRST PLENARY SESSION

Ecological Science and Eco-friendly Spirituality

The First Plenary Session of the conference was devoted to Ecological Science and Eco-friendly Spirituality. It was chaired by Prof. Christopher Chapple, Doshi Professor of India and Comparative Theology at Loyola Marymount University Los Angeles, USA.

The keynote speaker of the session, Dr. Narayan Hegde, an agricultural scientist from Pune, said that there exists an eternal bond between spirituality and ecology. He pointed out that a food chain of producers and consumers exists in the ecosystem and the adverse effect on one element of the food chain has a bearing on the entire ecosystem. Prof. Chapple, who made preliminary observations as the moderator of the session, explained that energy patterns could be observed by studying organisms and the way they interact with their ecosystems. The new dimension for ecology to explore would be the study of energy flows. It is a nexus between the three – producers, consumers and the ecosystem – that sustains life on earth and it is the primary duty of man to maintain the balance between the three. Quoting from the Bhagavad Gita, Prof. Chapple explained that human needs could be restricted and confined if man dismissed all his cravings and stayed free from likes and dislikes, through which he would attain ultimate peace.

The second speaker of the session, Rabbi Ezekiel Isaac Malekar, Honorary Secretary of the Judah Hyan Synagogn, New Delhi, elucidated the Jewish traditions that reinforce ecological sentiments. In his highly illuminating speech, he advised all to be like a tree – reserved, quiet, tolerant and benevolent – dispensing shade to all alike.

Dr. Shugan Chand Jain, Chairperson, International School for Jain Studies, Delhi, talked about the unity of LOKA and the cosmos and how these two elements are so connected with each other that the act of one affects the other. Therefore, our acts should

be such as did not negatively affect the cosmos so that eco-balance could be restored. Dr. Jain resplendently explained the cosmic matrix and place of a human being in it. He opined that equilibrium and a harmonious relationship between the two could convert us into ultimate ecological balance. A man can attain peace if he dismisses all the negative tendencies of the mind, and stays free from passions.

Father M.D. Thomas, Former National Director of the Commission for Religious Harmony, CBCI New Delhi, held a strong view that the current century requires a harmonization between spirituality and science. He concluded by saying that spirituality needed to have a scientific orientation in order to achieve a more integral balance in terms of democracy, equality, and fairness. The last speaker of this session was Samani Dr. Pratibha Pragya, a Post-doctoral Researcher at SOAS, University of London. She said that unrestrained human behaviour and wantonness were responsible for the environmental and ecological degradation at global level that we see today. Eco-spirituality alone could be an antidote to this process of gradual destruction closing in on humankind.

SECOND PLENARY SESSION

Medical Science and Spiritual Healing

The theme of the Second Plenary Session was Medical Science and Spiritual Healing. It was chaired by Dr. Rahul Agarwal, Jaipur – a senior Yoga Pranic Healer and Medical Doctor. At the very outset, he outlined the importance of spiritual healing – transforming suffering into soul consciousness. Narrating his real life experiences, as to how he challenged various diseases through spiritual healing, he urged everyone present to turn their sufferings and sorrows into opportunities to strengthen their



spiritual muscles. He said that these sufferings come to teach us certain special lessons for enduring our life journey in a fruitful manner, and each one of us needs to learn that that message can heal us by learning yoga vidya pranic healing.

The keynote speaker of the session was most Revered Dr J Ravi Kumar Stephen G Archbishop and Moderating Head of Episcopal Churches of India, Chennai. He said that controlling our fears could have a placebo effect on our health and thus one should avoid the negativity that could damage our health. Thus, Jesus Christ's injunction to love was seen as an actual living force behind healing ourselves and others. Illness resulting from medical treatment is the third leading cause of death in the USA. He stated that the number of deaths per year had reached 7,000, due to errors resulting from the wrongful allocation of medication in hospitals; 12,000 due to unnecessary surgeries, 45,000 due to other forms of malpractice in hospitals; 80,000 resulting from infections in the hospitals; 106,000 due to the adverse effects of drugs. But, on average, the lifespan also substantially increased and drugs like heparin saved many people's lives. Both are the realities of the modern-day allopathic treatment. If one had to sell the body parts as components, a human body could be worth \$45 million. He further focused on "Who we are" and exhorted the audience to find answers to this fundamental question, as we need to know the dynamics that prompted the evolution of the species, without relying too much on the theory known as "Survival of the Fittest." Competition with others has become the base for all the negative emotions, which are responsible for ill-health. One should expect to lead a healthy life and this expectation is the essence of a healthy life. Fears stunt our growth. If we can control our fears, we can regain control over our lives. Letting go of our fears is the first step towards creating a fuller, more satisfying life. When the mind through positive suggestions improves health, it is referred to as a placebo effect. Conversely, when the same mind is engaged in a negative suggestion, it can damage health; such negative effects are referred to as the nocebo effect. Thoughts, the mind's energy, directly influence how the physical brain controls the body's physiology. Religions have emerged with the intention of bettering human life, but history teaches us that religion itself has become one of the main purveyors of violence and war. The best way to stop it is to realize God that resides in all of us. He called this phenomenon 'Immanuel-Consciousness' (God with us) and this is possible only if we become aware of our Immanuel-ness. God is love, and therefore Swadharma (original nature of creation) of humans is love. We need love as much as we need food. Love can better be realized in giving rather than in receiving. Love is an emotion. Love facilitates the retention of Swadharma and helps us to achieve robust health, and thus, the emotion of love heals us whenever we fall spiritually, emotionally, or physically sick.

Prof. Fred Jeremy Seligson from South Korea was of the opinion that healing through sound sends vibrations to various parts of the body like the liver, kidneys stomach and heart and helps in alleviating negative emotions like anger, hatred, too much thinking and other toxic emotions. He advised practicing each sound for at least five minutes to have a healing impact on the mind and body. Ms. Bharti Jain – the Founder of Udaan Bharti Sky Foundation – reflected on the thought that the seeds of

diseases are psychosomatic, and result from non-spiritualism, unexpressed emotions, low physical activity, other factors like ego, fear, etc. She talked about the five layers of the body-physical, etheric (Physical trauma Imprints), astral body (Emotional Imprints), mental body (Soul Imprints), causal body (Spiritual Imprints), and physical body. Unexpressed emotions leading to mental disorders are responsible for fifteen percent of the world's illnesses, while more than half of the world's mentally ill never receive the proper treatment merely due to the stigma attached their illness. Any individual needs to take care of the five aspects of their personality. Physical – assuming responsibility over such things as physical activity, diet, sleep, nutrition, mental health - free from fear, stress and worries, emotional disturbances - coping effectively with life and creating satisfying relationships; spirituality – expanding our sense of purpose and meaning in life; and intellectual - recognizing creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and skills. She further illustrated the various therapeutic traditions involving the recitation of mantras, which help to heal the mind, body and soul. She said that namokar mantra increases awareness, emotional health, enhances spiritual power, and creates a positive and protective aura around us, and that controlled breathing helps in alleviating anxiety and stress.

The Namokar Gym is furthered to enhance one's quality of life through Asanas and Mudras, Mantras, breathing techniques, meditation, relaxation, affirmation, mind-power games and fun through fitness activities. By practicing the activities of Namokar gym regularly and chanting the Mahamantra, the brain becomes calm and you can get rid of stress, anxiety, depression, high BP and so many daily ailments, even chronic diseases. She concluded that the world is currently in a state of turmoil. Many saints have predicted the possibility of a Third World War and unprecedented natural disasters in the next few years. As a result of this war, there will be a scarcity of many basic commodities. Factories will close down and medicines developed through medical science will become unavailable and the time will come when one will have to rely on spiritual healing measures and available alternative therapies to cure diseases. Hence, learning and adopting spiritual healing measures from now on is of vital importance. Namokar Mantra is a Jain mantra which enjoins an individual to pay obeisance to five types of pure souls i.e. the arhats (who have destroyed all eight karmas and conquered the self), the siddhas (liberated souls), the acharyas (spiritual preceptors), the upadhyayas (exponents of agamas or spiritual teachers) and the ascetics (who have renounced the worldly life). It is non-sectarian sacred text which does not mention Jainism or the name of any Tirthankara.

Dr. S.G. Kabra from Jaipur requested that everyone present should read three books. The Idiot by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Lying Awake by Mark Salzman, and The Two Saints by Arun Shourie. He narrated the story of lying awake to emphasize the importance of healing. Sister John of the Cross is a Carmelite nun who has lived in a California monastery for 28 years. She writes poetry and essays. In some ways, writing is like prayer for her. Sister John is revered for her spirituality and visions.

What she has long assumed to be the special blessings from God turn out to be the manifestations of temporal lobe epilepsy due to a small meningioma. The nun is forced to confront the scientific explanation that her headaches, altered perception, and hypergraphia are secondary to a seizure disorder and not a gift of divine favour and spiritual ecstasy. Sister John agrees to undergo surgery to remove the tumour, aware of the likelihood that a surgical cure will also eliminate her unique vision and insight. Postoperatively, she admits that life without epilepsy seems dull but realizes that “only in complete darkness do we learn that faith gives off light.” Dr. Kabra remarked that we need to reconcile our experiences with our faith. It was a highlight of the day that as the last speaker, he stressed the importance of faith and spirituality. He also highlighted the uneasy balance between reality and illusion, spiritual and material, and faith and self-interest.

Finally, the session culminated with a vote of thanks by Dr. Prerna Jain.

INTERFAITH PRAYERS FOR UNIVERSAL PEACE

Led by Dr. S.N. Subba Rao

Now was the time of interfaith prayers for universal peace that started at 6:30 PM on 17th December 2017. The session was led by Dr. S.N. Subba Rao – a well known Gandhian and founder of the National Youth Projects of India. This was a lively session with some brilliant dancing and music from the youths of India representing the different communities of India in their resplendent multicultural diversity and beauty.



On 18th Dec, the delegates woke up in time to participate in the invigorating yoga exercises and relaxing Preksha Meditation led by Dr. Pradeep Bhati. The yogic postures and meditational strategies went a long way in generating the requisite energy and enthusiasm among the delegates.

THIRD PLENARY SESSION

Peace, Conflict Research and Ancient Solution

The Third Plenary Session started exactly at 9.30 am. The theme for deliberation was Peace, Conflict Research and Ancient Solution. The session was chaired by Prof. Katsuya Kodama, former Vice-President Mie University and Co-secretary General IPRA. He initiated the discussion with a brief preliminary remark. He said we have to identify the problems and plan a course of action. We also have to do something to stop the nuclear explosions, and he also explained how he was involved in an exciting project utilising new science to help clean up rivers and dirty water worldwide.

Mr. Frank Kauffmann, Editor-in-Chief of New World Encyclopaedia and Director of Interreligious Federation for World Peace, USA was the keynote speaker. He made his presentation via Skype and talked about ancient spiritual solutions and religious traditions that offer vision, faith and desire. They express a oneness of divine intention, rules for charity and manifestation. We have to rule out all that causes of conflict, evil and disorder to prevent them from arising. He quoted examples of Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Jainism, where originally,



there were no differences. Conflicts arise because of differences and clash of identities. He looked at the analogy of a garden, where a plethora of diversities and identities were an unavoidable fact. This is the reality which is unavoidable. How do we resolve conflicts? He emphasized that leaders play a very important role in educating the masses. Advocating universal ethics, he said that leaders come from an educational system where universal ethics is taught. How do we fix problems? Religion and spirituality provide insights into solutions for world peace. Divine Intention – love provides an ancient solution for conflict resolution. Let us ponder on what is conflict and how it arises. There are two points which clash with each other on certain issues. How to resolve these conflicts? The world keeps on disintegrating but new identities come into being in the process. Perhaps conflict can be creative and the secret to resolving conflict is to find creativity that is trying to be born.

Another speaker Mr. Gevork Manankin, a law and human rights education expert from Armenia, emphasized love as a mortar of global justice and from this realization universal peace can arise. A spiritual Christian view emphasizes the Kingdom of God in reality. It wants first of all, the authorities in power as well as scientists to realize the truth. It calls upon all the scientists of the world to refrain from inventing super-weapons and misusing the internet. Instead, we should create love and affection among neighbors and nations, using the internet to foster peace instead of creating hate amongst them. The Indian education system has been influenced by the British and America concept of education, which stresses developing the brain but not the heart.

The next speaker of the session was Mr. Christopher Miller from USA. He is a Ph.D. candidate in the Study of Religion Graduate Programme at UC Davis and the Past Recipient of the Mellon Research Initiative in Reimagining Indian Ocean USA. He expressed his views on Anekantavada and Ahimsa. These values can be helpful in causing tolerance and creating harmony at a global level. He emphasized that overconsumption can't feed our unstable desires. The doctrine of Anekantavada reveals that all views are equally valid and no view is absolutely true. The doctrine of living beings enjoins us not to hurt anyone and entreats us to enjoin all things with ourselves and treat our neighbors as we wish ourselves to be treated. From religiosity, you can move to spirituality.

Another important speaker of this session was Rev. Geshe Dorji Damdul, Director of Tibet House, Cultural Centre of HH The Dalai Lama, New Delhi. He traced the cause of conflict to the disintegration of the harmonious units in society and establishment of new identities in the process. Citing examples from Buddhism and other religions he said that in their original forms they need not be divisive. The leaders and educators who plead for a global ethic could play a vital role in bringing about peace. Dr. Ranju Mehta, Vice-Principal, Kanoria Girls College, Jaipur and Mr. Sandeep Meel coordinated the session.

A SPECIAL LECTURE

The Universe : Macro-Micro : A Vedic Perspective

The Third Plenary Session was followed by a special lecture by Dr. Gulab Kothari on The Form of the Universe from a Vedic Perspective. It was chaired by **11** of. Dayanand Bhargava, an internationally acclaimed scholar, Former head Depa **11** nt

of Sanskrit, Jai Narayan Vyas University, Jodhpur. Making his introductory remark, he said that the universe is infinitely infinite. The modern scientists have been trying to unravel the mystery to some extent but they explained what is visible. The invisible world is still a riddle.



Dr. Kothari is trying to decode the ancient wisdom enshrined in Ved Vigyana. Dr. Kothari referred to the Ancient Indian Philosophy of Action (Karma Yoga) and its results and reviewed the ancient Indian teachings that would help us to attain liberation. Dr. Kothari in his captivating flow of ideas, explained the process of evolution on both macro and micro levels. He elaborated on the concepts of Yoga, the divine Trinity, the methodology of Vedic science, five vital breaths, mortality and immortality, season as native, power and theory of complementarity. He was of the view that if science relates to our micro-realities as well as to the larger cosmic and supernatural universe together, physically as well as the spiritually, the world would be a healthy and peaceful place to live in.

The session ended with various observations and comments from the audience.

FOURTH PLENARY SESSION

Scientific and Spiritual Approaches to Evolution

The Fourth Plenary Session was devoted to Scientific and Spiritual Approaches to Evolution. It was chaired by Dr. Homi D. Gandhi, President of the Federation of Zoroastrian Association of North America and Dr. K.P. Mishra, Founder President, Society of Radiation Research, India, and an eminent scientist was the co-chair of this session. As the keynote speaker of the session, Samani Dr. Chaitanya Pragya, Professor and Head - Department of Jainology, Comparative Religions and Philosophy, Jain Vishva Bharati Institute Ladnun (Raj.) highlighted an important message regarding internal peace that human beings have a great moral responsibility in their mutual dealings and their relationships with the rest of the universe. The next important speaker was Dr. K.P. Mishra, an eminent scientist. He explained how science was important for



society and individuals in their lives. He opined that it would be better if we combined science and spirituality to make this earth a better place in which to live. He made it clear in his illuminating advocacy for the reconciliation between the two that both science and spirituality were needed for the good of humanity. Science has already unravelled the mysteries of the visible world but the world within each of us needs to be fathomed.

The third presenter was Mr. Marko Hren from Croatia. He currently serves as a member of a small team in Slovenian Govt. He leads the group entrusted with the responsibility of implementing Slovenian Smart Specialization Strategy. His presentation was dedicated to sustainable development, ethical trade, and value-based society. He emphasized the need for cross-cultural cooperation for the promotion of the primary natural beliefs of all religions. Prof. Christopher Chapple, another enlightened speaker, highlighted the vital role of the Jain philosophy in the evolution of spirituality. He held the strong view that each faith has its uniqueness, but despite this, we can work together for the establishment of peace. He also elucidated the contribution of Mahrishi Aurobindo towards the evolution of spirituality.

Dr. James Edward Myres who did his Ph.D. in English Literature from Arizona State University USA and is now serving underprivileged animal world in Udaipur (Raj.) focused on the reality of the animal world. He concluded by saying that animals were also a wonderful part of our lives and together we could make a difference in the lives of animals as well as human beings. Ms. Kuniko Fukuse, a spiritual peacebuilder and an instructor of Byakko Shinko Kai, Japan strongly supported reconciliation between science and spirituality. She also threw light on the activities of her organization Byakko Shinko Kai which has been tirelessly working for universal peace.

The session ended with a vote of thanks from the coordinator Dr. Shaffali Jain.

FIFTH PLENARY SESSION

Interfaith and Inter-Philosophical Peace or Endless Religious Wars

The Fifth Plenary Session of the conference addressed the question of Interfaith and Inter-Philosophical Peace or Endless Religious Wars. It was chaired by Sardar Jasbir Singh, Chairperson, Minority Commission, Govt. Of Rajasthan and a revered Sikh Leader. In his preliminary remark, Mr. Singh said that all religions emphasize altruism, righteousness and love. They may have different forms of worship but all believe in an all-pervading force or God but it is an irony that religion is gradually degenerating into an instrument for hatred. In order to avoid endless religious wars it is imperative that we have interfaith dialogues for interreligious understanding and cooperation.

Ven. Doboomb Tulku, an eminent Buddhist monk and the former Director of Tibet House was the keynote speaker. He said that ahimsa (nonviolence) was the basis of the co-existence of all faiths. Compassion is the highest virtue and a jewel of spiritual life. Interfaith harmony and inter-philosophical peace alone could



ensure universal peace. Ms. Susan Seats, a teacher, social worker, peace activist and public speaker from USA pleaded for the unity of all religions and the basis of this unity could a global ethic. All religions believe in moral and spiritual values and religious wars are promoted only by irreligious and immoral persons in the garb of religion.

Mr. Arvind Vora, the Main Representative of ANUVIBHA at the UN and the Past Secretary JAINA, USA strongly supported the worldwide campaign aimed at promoting interfaith harmony. Religious hatred is a by-product of our ignorance about the principles of other religions. He described his own experience of organizing multi-faith dialogues in Long Island and asserted that peace would prevail if the leaders of different faiths sat together and shared their visions and viewpoints.

Another important speaker at this session was Dr. Anil Dutt Mishra, an eminent Gandhian scholar and former Deputy Director of National Gandhi Museum. He was of the view that Gandhi was the best model of interreligious understanding and cooperation. He practised what he preached. His message of Satya and Ahimsa (truth and nonviolence) has in a potential to extricate the world from violence and endless conflicts. The last speaker of this vitally significant session was Samani Dr. Arhat Pragya of the Jain Vishva Bharati Institute,

Ladnun. She said that the Jain principle of Anekant could become a strong foundation of interfaith harmony. Lord Mahavira said, 'All religions are based on some or other element of truth so no religion should be criticized or disparaged. It is a sin to say that only our religion is the best and all others are false. This absolutist attitude gives rise to conflict. In such situation Anekant is a beacon of hope for universal peace.

PANEL : War, Science and Spirituality

The second-day evening panel was a nod to women's empowerment, with all three panelists being women excelling in their respective fields. The session was chaired by Prof. Ved Prakash who highlighted the fact as to how even after 72 years since the establishment of the United Nations Organization, we as a society are far away from the goals of preventing war. He recalled the poignant memories of the partitioning of India, when he was still a young boy. It affected his psyche deeply. He said, "The violence seen during the partition is still imprinted in my mind."

We moved from war and peace to science and spirituality. The first speaker on the panel was Ms. Shivalika Goyal, a researcher studying the impact of meditation on the brain. In her talk, she explained how the brain and the mind are not the same, as the brain is the box you contain and the mind is the storehouse of knowledge, and spirituality is the divine connection. She conducted an experiment with the audience, asking them to touch their cheek while she touched her chin, most of the audience imitated her. She said that this is how the brain plays with us during attentiveness. She went ahead with her research on how meditation can help alter the initial functioning of the brain and how the neurons are connected together in many of the regions of the brain. She concluded that through meditation the thickness of the cerebral cortex layer does not decrease, which helps boost memory skills, increasing the brain volume in the hippocampus region and diminishing that of the amygdale. We then had Dr. Eszter Lukacs, the Vice-



Chancellor of Szechenyi Istvan University, Hungary, presenting a paper on Sri Swami Madhavananda World Peace Council in the UN System. The council is committed to fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals. It supports the UN's post-2015 development agenda. The World Peace Council carries out many philanthropic activities such as creating sustainable jobs, enabling sustainable tourism and managing environmental sustainability. Dr. Lukacs also believes that yoga is a way to achieve nonviolence and peace. She concluded with the motto “One in All and All in One (the whole world is a family)” of Hindu Dharmasamrat Paramhans Sri Swami Madhavananda Puriji – it is simply vasudaiva kutumbkam.

In the end, we had Ms. Bharti Jain, the founder of Udaan Bharti Sky Foundation and Namokaar Gym, who talked about helping the troubled sections of Indian society and enhancing their personal as well professional competence. Namokaar Gym (Atmshakti ki Nayi Lehar) is her spectacular creation, a holistic health approach to life through which she intends to spread the Namokaar Mantra worldwide as a drugless therapy. She engaged the audience by getting everyone to participate in the five mudras of the Namokaar Gym, which aims to shed ego, fear, anger and find peace within.

SIXTH PLENARY SESSION

Terrorism, Digital Warfare and Ahimsa (Nonviolence)

On the third day of this International Conference on Peace and Nonviolent Action (9th ICPNA), we had the Sixth Plenary Session on Terrorism, Digital Warfare and Ahimsa (Nonviolence). Dr. Bindu Jain, Coordinator of the session, welcomed everyone present to the sixth plenary session. Shri Mahendra Jain presented mementos to all the esteemed guests.



Dr. Thomas Daffern chaired the session and Swami Hari Prasad, Managing Trustee Sri Vishnu Mohan Foundation, Chennai was the co-chair. In his address, Dr. Daffern summarised a detailed scientific paper he had prepared, explaining that war and violence cost us huge material cost while peace is the attitude embedded in values and it costs nothing. Terrorism and digital warfare cause the destruction of time, money and intellect. If the same is used in ensuring harmony, the world will be a beautiful place to live in. We were told how 1,000 people were involved and a 66-million-dollar budget was allocated for the first nuclear bomb. While there are factories to produce and destroy humanity with the help of bombs why can't we have factories of culture producing human beliefs in peaceful co-existence and harmony? He underlined the fact that challenges to the nonviolent moment had been posed by developments in modern warfare such as cyber warfare, drones and new weapons of mass destruction being invented all the time, etc. He explained that the world's economy is currently unbalanced against peace because billions of pounds and the thoughts of the brightest minds are going into weapons development. Dr. Daffern called for the marshalling of our collective intelligence to develop a world free of terrorism, fear and violence. Instead of terrorism, we should create a world of joy based on love, truth, and wisdom.

Prof. B.M. Jain, Former Professor of Political Science, Rajasthan University, Jaipur was the the keynote speaker of the session. He said terrorism is a global concern. Today the potential threat is from nuclear terrorism. We need to understand the genesis of terrorism. The first cause of terrorism is geo-politics, so due to the cold war, South Asia and Afghanistan have become the epicentre of terrorism due to this geo-strategic power struggle between superpowers. The second source of terrorism was 9/11. He explained how geo-psychology was the main reason behind this attack, even if many things remain unexplained. What followed was the war in 2001, in which the U.S. invaded Afghanistan, which hurt the feelings and the pride of the people of Afghanistan, leaving a serious impact on their psyche. The third source of conflict is the state discrimination as in Sri Lanka, which led to the establishment of the LTTE there. A strictly nonviolent strategy is required to counter all these forms of violence and promote peace. Mr. Wachner Trent R, Associate Professor, Heider College of Business at Creighton University, USA emphasized that peace is the prime requirement for anything, even business. He gave the example of Warren Buffet, a simple man despite being the third richest man in the world, who nurtured a passion to bring happiness to others. He has donated his entire fortune to children. Because he is peaceful in his business, behaviour and ethics, he promotes only peace. Mr. Trent stressed nonviolent communication as the key solution to peace. We must understand the differences between judgment and observation. If we use nonviolent communication, peace is always secured.

Dr. George Anca, an eminent writer from Romania who taught Romanian language at Delhi University for seven years talked about the preachings of Mahavira, how love, faith, and trust can lead to peace and a blissful world. He presented a poem on Jainism and opined that its teaching could lead to a peaceful world. Ms. Mayumi Mezaki of

Japan, a representative of Ikebana Ikenobo Study Group, Italy presented a paper on "The origin of Religion is the Same" and explained that peace means everyone can eat food impartially according to the Chinese writing system for helping. But against our hope, there are a large number of hungry people. She talked of two monsters – one is the army monster and the other is the economic monster, both of which pose great threats to people. She also talked about the weapons business, nuclear issues and inappropriate globalization. She said that we must understand the teachings of spirituality, of brotherhood, to ensure peace. She also talked about how Jainism and Buddhism were born at a time when the philosophies of 96 factions were fighting with one another, due to divisions within Upanishadic philosophical schools.

Swami Hari Prasad Ji concluded the entire discussion. He said that, unless we internalize peace and understand that we all are drops of the same ocean, peace can't be attained. We can tackle the problems of terrorism and warfare only with the understanding of humanity, unity, and brotherhood. He said that only Ahimsa can be the answer for all the problems the world is facing these days. In the end, Dr. Bindu Jain thanked everyone with a quotation on "There is no path to peace. Peace is the only path."

SEVENTH PLENARY SESSION

Is a Nonviolent Socio-Political World Order Possible ?

The theme of the Seventh Plenary Session was Is a Nonviolent Socio-Political World Order Possible. It was coordinated by Dr. Reetesh Jain. This session was chaired by Dr. A.K. Merchant, the National Trustee and Ex-Secretary Lotus Temple Baha'i Community of India, Delhi. The keynote speaker, Prof. Vidya Jain, Former Principal Maharani College, Jaipur emphasized ecological and sustainable development. In her view, ecological and sustainable development were possible only through nonviolence.



Gandhi's Satyagraha, inspired by Buddhism, Jainism and theosophy, remains the best option for establishing a new peaceful world order.

Prof. Jiang Maorong, Founding Director of the Asian World Centre, Creighton University, USA emphasized the creation of a non-governmental international organization to establish world peace. The next speaker, Mohammed Muzzamil Cader, from Sri Lanka, emphasized that spirituality plays an important role in the establishment of nonviolent social and political systems. Dr. Narendra Sharma Kusum, Former Principal LBS College Jaipur said that in today's world of guided missiles the unguided man is a big threat to our survival, so spirituality can guide humanity to strengthen our nonviolent socio-political world order. Jagdish C. Batra from New Delhi said that his ideas were based on Gandhian thought and for the establishment of a nonviolent society. We have to follow the idea of Gandhi and Mahavira. Chairperson Dr. A.K. Merchant, Delhi explained the principles of the Bahai religion in the establishment of human values and world peace.

SPECIAL PLENARY SESSION

Free and Frank Deliberation on the Theme of the 9th ICPNA

A Special Plenary Session for free discussion on the theme of the 9th ICPNA was chaired by Prof. Vidya Jain. The first speaker, Dr. Ashwani Kumar, a social worker from Chandigarh explained the need of Dhyaan to activate all the senses in the human body. Mr. Ignatius Xavier, an Ahimsa Artist and inventor of a New Art Style from Hyderabad narrated a story based on judgment day. He said that the spirit lives in man as long as it wishes and makes him happy.



Muni Pulkit Kumar from the Jain Terapanth expressed his views on Aparigrah (Non-possession). Samani Him Pragya from Jain Vishva Bharati Institute, Ladnun spoke about the importance of Ahimsa in day-to-day life for the establishment of peace. Samani Manjul Pragya also from Jain Vishva Bharati Institute, Ladnun expressed her views on health and metaphysical healings. Samani Punya Pragya from JVB Institute Ladnun talked about spirituality and peace and the importance of morals in life. Smt. Neha Nagori, Secretary - Anuvrat Samiti, Jaipur emphasized Meditation and Personality Development.

EIGHTH PLENARY SESSION

Spirituality, Global Issues, and Sustainable Development Goals

A Eighth Plenary Session was held on Spirituality, Global Issues, and Sustainable Development Goals. The moderator of this session was Prof. Ashok Bapna, Hon. Professor MNIT Jaipur and Prof. Emeritus JVB Institute Ladnun. Making preliminary observations at the outset, he said how any discussion on spirituality was incomplete without reference to sustainability and development goals. The keynote speaker of this session was Dr. Michael Ben-Eli. He made his presentation through Skype. He emphasized sustainability, linking it to the concepts of order and entropy. Sustainability is related to enabling the population to reach its full potential without compromising the environment, he pointed out. Dr. Narayan Hegde said that a number of programmes could be initiated to help achieve the UNDP's sustainable development goals. However, these programs don't produce results. Spirituality can really help us with honesty and concern for others in attaining them, he pointed out. Development without spirituality is not attainable.



Prof. Sandeep Sancheti, Vice-Chancellor of Manipal University, Jaipur said that the challenges that were facing development models could not be combated unless they first took on board the whole challenge of environmental sustainability. He pointed out that the inability to understand the model and predict the environment is the biggest challenge faced by those addressing the problem of sustainability. The next challenge, he stated, was on account of not following APARIGRAHA (non-possessiveness). As a result, the poor become poorer and the rich richer. The third challenge was the inverted system of Indian education in which primary education is very expensive. It simply perpetuates the inbuilt system of inequality and injustice.

Dr. S.L. Gandhi, the International Coordinator of the 9th ICPNA, narrated his experiences of being associated with organising this and previous conferences and commented on the UNDP's sustainability goals. He felt that strategies to preserve the earth would prove futile unless man changed his lifestyle. The UN cannot achieve its goals, unless there was a change in the individual outlook. He hoped the Anuvrat movement would provide the blueprint for eco-sustainability in the future. Prof. Dayanand Bhargava, Former Dean, Professor and Head Sanskrit Department of Jodhpur related the SDG's to spirituality and opined that the root of all problems is ignorance. Merely suggesting solutions is only an intellectual exercise, whereas what is important is putting what we say into practice. It is possible only when our efforts are grounded in spirituality, ethics and values,

In the end, Dr. D.R. Mehta, Founder of Prakrit Bharati Academy, referred to the precarious situation that humanity is in. He explained how the discriminative system of the economic model was being followed, in which profit is put before people, bringing about all kinds of problems. It can only be solved by generating a new form of holistic awareness, especially in the younger generation, in which thinkers can realize that science and spirituality need each other to collaboratively solve the current global issues we are facing together, not in the least that of climate change. He gave examples of how building metaphorical bridges between these domains in a positive manner could reduce differences and create peace among communities. The way we are following the destructive system of modern “economics for profit” is unsustainable; only by adopting an eco-model with spirituality and ethics built into it can we find the solution to shift consumption patterns into sustainable modes. In the end Prof. Ashok Bapna who moderated the session said that non-sustainability was posing a great threat to human survival. We can create a sustainable world only by exercising restraint on our activities including eating, travelling etc. Spirituality alone can protect ecological and environmental system on this earth.

The session was very well received. It was suggested by one listener, and appreciated by the panel, that each speaker could highlight the connection of each development goal with spirituality: the UNDP must look into incorporating the importance of spirituality in its goals.



VALEDICTORY SESSION

The 9th ICPNA was an unforgettable experience for all those who attended it. In consonance with the spirit of the theme the ambience in Mahapragya Hall during the conference proceedings remained permeated with powerful spiritual vibrations and scientific outlook. It was marked by solemnity and tranquillity. The discourses were focussed on exploring the inner world which is said to be infinitely infinite. It is the domain of spirituality. Science has in it an enormous potential to unravel the mysteries hidden in the physical world which is visible to our eyes. If the scientists and spiritual leaders can join hands together our survival into the third millennium can be ensured.

The culmination of the three-day deliberation was the Valedictory Session which was held in the morning of 20 December, 2017. It was coordinated by Ms. Tanushree Datta and chaired by Vishva Guru HH Mahamandleshwar Swami Maheshwaranand Ji, an internationally acclaimed spiritual leader. The session began with the screening of a short film on Teaching Peace by Ms. Susan Seats, a dedicated peace activist from USA. Ms. Chhavishree, a student from Bangalore, recited a highly inspiring spiritual song. Dr. S.L. Gandhi, the International Coordinator of the 9th IPCNA described the journey of the International Conference on Peace and Nonviolent Action which began in Dec 1988 at Ladnun, the birth place of late Anuvrat Anushashta Acharya Tulsi who launched Anuvrat Movement to rid the world of moral filth and violence. What heartened Dr. Gandhi and others was that notwithstanding hardship and other constraints the ICPNA's journey to universal peace continued without a break. It became an international forum for peace which attracted not only peace and nonviolence academics, thinkers, spiritual leaders but also the grassroots workers who were spreading the light of peace in conflict ridden regions of the world. He gave an overview of the ICPNAs held so far. Dr. Deeptima Shukla, the rapporteur of the 9th ICPNA read a brief report of the three-day discussions on the possibility of reconciling science and spirituality for the good of humanity.

Dr. Thomas Daffern, Chair, International Academic Advisory Board, presented the 2017 Jaipur Declaration on Science and Spirituality. Mr. Naresh Kumar Mehta, Chair - Reception Committee expressed joy at the successful conclusion of the vitally important event. Prof. Vidya Jain, Programme Director - 9th ICPNA described her impressions of the shared visions. Mr. Marko Hren of Slovenia thanked the organizers on behalf of the delegates for the excellent way the 9th ICPNA was organized. He recalled his participation in Second ICPNA held at the Children's Peace Palace Rajsamand in 1991. Dr. K.P. Mishra, a renowned scientist of India, observed that science and spirituality were not opposed to each other but were complementary and if the two worked together, universal peace was possible. Swami Hari Prasad spoke about a Hindu spiritual perspective and praised the conference for its important work. Swami Parmeshananad joined us via Skype and explained his work as the president of the Committee of Religious NGO's associated with the UN, and its Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns. Prof. Samani Chaitanya Prajna of the Jain Vishva Bharati University of Ladnun, threw light on the Jain perspective and opined that nonviolence could still solve our many complex problems, and both science and spirituality were required to walk together on this road. Just as the Jain monks and nuns walk barefoot to touch the earth, we need scientists and spiritual thinkers to work together and walk barefoot on the earth towards the common goal of co-building and co-envisioning a world of nonviolence. His Holiness Vishva Guru Swami Maheshwaranand, Chair of the Valedictory Session, blessed the delegates and admired the Anuvrat Movement which aims at rejuvenating moral and spiritual values and preserving environment and ecology. He was of the view that spirituality alone had the power to extricate the world from the turmoil it was mired in. Mr. Nirmal Baradia, President of ANUVIBHA Jaipur Kendra, which co-hosted the 9th ICPNA, thanked all



for sparing their valuable time to come here in quest of peace. Dr. S.L. Gandhi read out an important message from the Chairman of Byakko Shinko Kai, a grassroots organization based in Japan dedicated to promoting a culture of peace through interfaith harmony. Ms. Kuniko Fukuse, a representative of this organization was invited to address the gathering and apprise them of the symphony of peace prayers, an important activity of the organization. She expressed her sense of exhilaration at being able to participate in the 9th ICPNA. She also threw light on her mission to promote world peace and the slogan is "May Peace Prevail on Earth". Mr. T.K. Jain, Chair - Organizing Committee, presented mementoes to volunteer workers and thanked all for cooperation and hard work to make the conference a grand success. The 9th ICPNA ended with a vote of thanks by Mr. Mahendra Jain, the then Vice-President of Anuvrat Vishva Bharati and Vice-Chair- Organizing Committee.