

Amidst its differences, humanity very often finds itself working as one. Examples of cooperation, generosity and selflessness touch the heart, and the differences fade. In its pages One World One Humanity brings highlights of the association between Shri Ram Chandra Mission and UN Department of Public Information in communicating that ideal of oneness.

One World One Humanity



KOLKATA CENTRE YOUTH CELEBRATING HUMAN RIGHTS DAY, 10 DECEMBER 2006. More than 7,500 people responded to the Mission's invitation to commemorate the Day in its meditation centres and ashrams in 25 countries in South America, Oceania, India, South Africa and S.E. Asia. They prayed for all and reflected on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Turn to pg. 4, 5, 6, 7 for highlights on commemorations worldwide. Photo: Kolkata centre

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Human Behaviour and Climate Change

Three members of Shri Ram Chandra Mission joined 1,749 individuals representing 491 nongovernmental organizations from 66 countries early September at the United Nations in New York. They all gathered in the wake of indisputable scientific evidence that the Earth was warming.

BACKGROUND: Every year, the UN Department of Public Information (DPI), with whom the Mission works on matters of social and spiritual significance, hosts a meeting of citizen groups—also called

nongovernmental organizations—with a view to raise awareness of global challenges. It was in this context that the 2007 conference titled, “Climate Change: How It Impacts Us All”, challenged all to assume collective and individual responsibility and help reverse, where possible, the impact of climate change.

WHAT'S CAUSING IT:

Humans are burning coal, oil, and natural gas much faster than the rate that the fuels are created. This releases carbon-dioxide gas into the atmosphere, which forms a thick blanket around the Earth, traps its natural heat from escaping into space, and heats up the Earth's surface. This temperature increase is

resulting in sea level rise, shifting seasons, advancing deserts and out-of-season floods. People have been displaced from their traditional lands, animal breeding and migration patterns have been disrupted and some plant and animal species are already extinct. And since the impact is harsher on some countries, climate change is whipsawing humanity into the have mores, the haves and the have nots.

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(More on pg. 7)

Since December 2005, Shri Ram Chandra Mission has been associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI). As an international non-governmental organization that works in support of the public good and fulfills the principles outlined in the United Nations Charter, Shri Ram Chandra Mission is one among some 1,550 non-governmental organizations worldwide that are currently associated with DPI.

This association constitutes a commitment on the part of the Mission to disseminate information and raise public awareness about the purposes and activities of the United Nations and issues of global concern.

There is the need for cooperation and goodwill amongst the world's nations and peoples in order to establish peace. To this end, the UN has been establishing partnerships with local, national and international, non-profit, service-oriented voluntary groups.

Since 1945, Shri Ram Chandra Mission has been providing a spiritual and worldly platform for people in now more than ninety nations. Every day, in its



**Revered Master, Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari
President and Spiritual Head, Shri Ram Chandra Mission**

Shri Ram Chandra Mission and the United Nations

ashrams and hundreds of centres, people come together in oneness transcending the boundaries of race, religion, nationality, language, caste, age and social standing.

The Mission achieves this unity in purpose by offering, for free, a simple and practical method of spiritual practice that unfolds the full potential within an individual who then assumes responsibility for personal growth and social change. Over the decades, guided by Revered Master, Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari, the Mission has actively promoted

human integration and invoked within the hearts of its practitioners the belief that all life is sacred.

Our involvement with the United Nations comes at a time when more individuals around the world are benefiting from the Mission's services, and when the emblematic purpose of the UN to become a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations is ever more in need of support.

Recognizing the urgency for people with similar values to convene on a shared platform, Shri Ram

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Chandra Mission embraces this association in the faith that, ultimately, selfless actions will govern the destiny of human beings. ‡

WHY DOES THE U.N. WORK WITH NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS?

THROUGH NGOS, THE U.N. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION (DPI) AMPLIFIES UN THEMES, REACHES OUT TO PEOPLE FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND HELPS THEM UNDERSTAND THE UN'S WORK. WHILE OFFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS STARTED ONLY IN 1968, NGOS HAVE BEEN PARTNERS OF DPI SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN 1947. THE SHRI RAM CHANDRA MISSION GOT ASSOCIATED ON 12 DECEMBER 2005.

Dag Hammarskjöld of Sweden, the second secretary-general of the United Nations, personally planned and supervised in every detail the re-creation of the “Meditation Room” in 1957 from a tiny room originally planned. Hammarskjöld wrote the following text to be distributed to visitors of the room:

“We all have within us a centre of stillness surrounded by silence. This house, dedicated to work and debate in the service of peace, should have one room dedicated to silence in the outward sense and stillness in the inner sense. It has been the aim to create in this small room a place where the doors may be open to the infinite lands of thought and prayer.

“People of many faiths will meet here, and for that reason none of the symbols to which we are accustomed in our meditation could be used.

“However, there are simple things which speak to us all with the same language. We have sought for such things and we believe that we have found them in the shaft of light striking the shimmering surface of solid rock.

“A Room of Quiet” Meditation at the UN

“So, in the middle of the room we see a symbol of how, daily, the light of the skies gives life to the earth on which we stand, a symbol to many of us of how the light of the spirit gives life to matter.

“But the stone in the middle of the room has more to tell us. We may see it as an altar, empty not because there is no God, not because it is an altar to an unknown god, but because it is dedicated to the God whom man worships under many names and in many forms.

“The stone in the middle of the room reminds us also of the firm and permanent in a world of movement and change. The block of iron ore has the weight and solidity of the everlasting. It is a reminder of that cornerstone of endurance and faith on which all human endeavour must be based.

“The material of the stone leads our thoughts to the necessity for choice between destruction and construction, between war and peace. Of iron man has forged his swords, of iron he has

also made his ploughshares. Of iron he has

constructed tanks, but of iron he has likewise built homes for man. The block of iron ore is part of the wealth we have inherited on this earth of ours. How are we to use it?

“The shaft of light strikes the stone in a room of utter simplicity. There are no other symbols, there is nothing to distract our attention or to break in on the stillness within ourselves. When our eyes travel from these symbols to the front wall, they meet a simple pattern opening up the room to the harmony, freedom and balance of space.

“There is an ancient saying that the sense of a vessel is not in its shell but in the void. So it is with this room. It is for those who come here to fill the void with what they find in their centre of stillness.” ‡



Photo: www.un.org

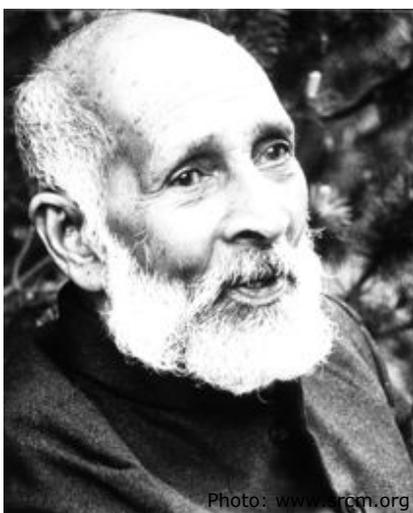


Photo: www.srcm.org

“It is only the spiritual force that can remove the causes of war from the minds of people...If my opinion were to be invited, I would lay down simplest possible method: Let all brothers and sisters sit daily at a fixed hour individually at our respective places and meditate for about an hour thinking that all people of the World are growing peace loving and pious.”

These words from Babuji Maharaj's letter to the UN in 1957 are a source of great inspiration to us in guiding our evolving relationship with the UN. With this guidance, our Mission has been welcoming all interested people into our centres to pray and meditate for human integration in mutual love and universal brotherhood. We also have the opportunity to pray for all through our daily 9 pm Universal prayer.

Text of the letter: http://srcm.org/members/ssandesh/2006/2006_65.jsp

Around the World

Uniting for Peace: In Thought and Action

The name Bega may not ring a loud bell. It's a river that flows by the lyrical sounding city of Timisoara, which along with Hunedoara and Arad in Romania is a Shri Ram Chandra Mission centre. On Peace Day, 21 September, abhyasis in Romania, and 32 centres across Europe, Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Canada held on to one thought, that "all human beings are growing peace loving and pious". It was Revered Babuji Maharaj who suggested so, further saying, "It is only the spiritual force that can remove the causes of war among the minds of people." This insight into the human condition found a parallel in UNESCO's preamble: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."

Shri Ram Chandra Mission commemorated International Day of Peace inviting general public, friends and neighbours to participate in a prayer/meditation for peace and discussions on themes selected by its abhyasis. For instance, Culture of peace and non-violence (Paris); World peace: What can I do? (Monchengladbach); Building a culture of peace (Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane); Prayer for peace and the power of the mind (Milano, Aosta, Padova, Pordenone, Trento and Trieste); Let us dare to have a vision of a world without conflict and violence (Munich). Quite many other centres choose the theme of prayer and did what they always do—deepened their spiritual practice.

Abhyasi and invited speakers gave thoughtful presentations on the transformative practice of meditation in establishing peace and non-violence in today's world. The programmes worldwide subscribed to the proverbial wisdom that one must first be the change that one wants to see in the world. ‡

Peace Day, Australia, Fiji, New Zealand



"EVERYONE'S A BROTHER OR A SISTER THAT YOU MEET, WE ARE ALL ONE FAMILY, LIVING ON THE SAME STREET". Children and youth of Perth centre (top) and Melbourne (bottom) on Peace Day, 21 September 2007. People came together to pray/meditate in Sydney and Brisbane as well. Youth participated with videos, songs and poems from UN Cyberschoolbus and quotes from UNESCO's Culture of Peace initiative. Guest and Mission speakers spoke on the need to develop inner peace and the necessity to cultivate transformation within the heart. Excerpts from Constant Remembrance and texts from various cultures on the theme of brotherhood were also read. Photos: Oceania centre (Top image has been retouched for clarity.)



ON PEACE DAY, IN THE MISSION'S CENTRES WORLDWIDE, THE READING OF BABUJI MAHARAJ'S LETTER WRITTEN TO THE UN IN 1957 WAS FOLLOWED BY MASTER'S VIDEOS, THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S MESSAGE AND PRAYER MEDITATION. YOUTH LED THE PROGRAMME WITH ENTHUSIASM. CHILDREN SKETCHED DRAWINGS, COMPOSED AND SANG SONGS AND, IN A RARE INSTANCE, ITALY CENTRE REPORTED, THEY EVEN SAT IN SILENCE!

Peace Day, Europe

Around the World



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE AT PARIS (LEFT)
AND MONTPELLIER ASHRAM (BELOW)
21 SEPTEMBER 2007

The Mission in Europe commemorated the Day in 34 cities in Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, United Kingdom, Spain and Switzerland. The UN considers Peace Day "a unique opportunity" for its "related importance of achieving the broadest possible awareness and observance...among the global community". Photos: France centre

UN commemoration days are for all people. The Mission's intention in hosting them is to raise public awareness of spiritual ideals of universal love, tolerance and compassion as the foundation for a peaceful, balanced human existence; and create open forums for assemblies, independent of affiliation or background, with the common good as the purpose.



JAIPUR, 10 DECEMBER 2006

Human Rights Day, India

"All human beings are...endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood" (Art. 1 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights). People from 15 centres across India joined their brothers and sisters in 22 countries in commemorating the Day with cultural events, discussion and prayer/ meditation. The programme was intended to raise awareness of the Declaration, which was distributed in handouts. Various centres in Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Japan, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Brazil and South Africa participated. Photo: Jaipur centre

Youth Day, India



Photo: Delhi centre

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY, NEW DELHI (TOP), KANPUR (BOTTOM) 12 AUGUST 2007

Be Seen, Be Heard! Youth Participation For Development: Living Purposefully, Developing Internal & External Leadership Qualities

Approximately 4,000 youth aged 15-24 from various schools, colleges as well as abhyasis' children participated at leadership workshops held in 23 cities in India. The workshops were designed to invoke original ideas within participants and steer away from a prescriptive exercise. Youth reflected on the qualities necessary for effective leadership and how an inclusive worldview is a reflection of beliefs, value systems and attitudes. A power point presentation set the tone for group discussions. Public figures, teachers and parents participated as observers as group representatives presented to the audience the group's findings on what constitutes lead-

ership. Workshops were held at New Delhi, Kanpur, Hyderabad, Tirupati, Guwahati, Raipur, Ahmedabad, Ranchi, Bengaluru, Indore, Mumbai, Pune, Raipur, Bhubaneswar, Jaipur, Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai, Allahabad, Lucknow, Dehradun, Roorkee and Kolkata. ‡



Photo: Kanpur centre

Around the World

“Looking at it with a spiritual vision, it is time for the younger people to take the reins of, not only their own life, but of societal change, societal transformation, and so forth. So this is what Sahaj Marg expects from its youth. In the process, of course, Sahaj Marg will give you all the help that you need, that is a promise.”

— Revered Master,
Shri Parthasarathi
Rajagopalachari

“Make out of your grihastha (family) life, a temple of love.”

– Revered Master, Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari



Around the World

Celebrating Families, Canada

SHERBROOKE, INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES, 20 MAY 2007: A lot of happy children and their families celebrated the Day which coincided with a regional gathering. The programme consisted of a presentation about the association between the Mission and the UN, a reading of Babuji Maharaj's July 1957 letter to the UN, discussion, question and answers, concluding with a silent prayer/meditation. Nine centres across Canada also observed Peace Day 2007 and Human Rights Day 2006 with a variety of events. Photo: Canada centre

Climate Change

www.un.org/climatechange

A BROAD SCALE RESPONSE NEEDED:

The necessity for a wide range of responses was discussed at the conference. The need to take responsibility—at an individual, political, economic and social level as well as the need for research into renewable energies was also discussed. Indeed, participants were invited to observe their behaviour towards Earth, remember their connectedness with nature and develop an attitude of gratitude and moderation. The need to reduce current use of resources in order that future generations may be sustained was a strong flavour for action throughout the three days. ‡

Small Steps

BELOW ARE SOME STEPS MENTIONED THAT INDIVIDUALS CAN IMPLEMENT IN THEIR DAILY LIVES:

Plant a tree, protect it

Drive less each week (Walk, bicycle, share a ride, use public transport)

Conserve paper (It takes 10 litres of water to produce one

8 1/2" x 11" sheet)

In winter (wear a sweater, turn down the heating)

In summer

(limit air-conditioning use)

Recycle aluminum, plastic, cardboard, newspapers and glass

(Recycling saves energy to make new products.)

Re-use, reduce

Conserve water

Wash clothes in cold or warm water, dry them on clothes line (Skip the hot water)

Change light bulbs (Use compact fluorescent lamps)

Switch off appliances in sleep mode

Service your car and motorcycle regularly

(To check emissions)

Share information, communicate

Where possible, pay bills online

Favour renewable energy such as wind, solar

Avoid unsolicited mail

Eat vegetarian

Buy local produce ‡



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