

**Interfaith Seminar Report:**

**Sajda**

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**“A Soulful, Spiritual, Sufi, Interfaith Musical Program”**

**60 Cronomer Heights Drive**

**Newburg, New York**

**On Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019**

**Mission statement:**

Interfaith dialogue to foster interfaith harmony, understanding, and acceptance to break the walls of hate, violence, war, injustice and selfishness and to promote a just, sustainable and peaceful world.

We were also celebrating the 150th Birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and his message of nonviolence, interfaith harmony and peace.

**Background :**

I had the good fortune of attending and witnessing a wonderful interfaith convention, “2018 Parliament of the World ’s Religions” in Toronto Canada in November 2018.

I was also an invited speaker in two seminars.

After listening the message of interfaith harmony by distinguished international spiritual speakers, I was deeply motivated to take the message home and spread it to the best of my abilities.

After attending a webinar hosted by **Aftab Ahmed, the manager of the King Abdullah II World Interfaith Harmony Week Prize**, about a special in-depth look at the history of World Interfaith Harmony Week, how it came about and the prize selection criteria for WIHW events, it was unequivocally decided to host an interfaith seminar.

**Organizer, Speaker and Moderator:**

Narendra C. Bhalodkar MD, FACC

**Host and Venue:**

Gulzar and Dr. Munir Shikari

60 Cronomer Heights Drive, Newburg, NY

**Concept of the Seminar:**

Since early childhood, I was impressed by Sufi philosophy, poetry and music. The path of devotion, sacrifice and unconditional surrender to Allah, God, Murshid (Guru) fascinated my young mind and spirit.

**I also felt that Hindu scriptures were similar in their principles of total surrender (Ananya Sharanagati) and selfless love and devotion (Nishkam Bhakti)**

Hence, I was inspired to plan this interfaith dialogue with spiritual scholars of Hindu and Islam faiths to enlighten us how the scriptures and teachings of their faiths relate to each other.

This dialogue clearly highlighted that there are more commonalities between all religions and faiths than differences and emphasizing on harmony of religions and unity of existence is the only way to make our world just, sustainable and peaceful for all.

#### **Advertisement and Attendance:**

It was attended by 40+ people from various faiths and religions. (see attached pictures) They were from different professions i.e. doctors, pharmacists, attorneys, engineers, accountants and financial planners etc. However, all of them came to promote Interfaith Harmony and Peace.

They firmly believed the mission and purpose of the seminar which was to spread the message of interfaith understanding, harmony and peace based on the **principles advocated by the Parliament of the World's Religions and World Harmony Interfaith initiative of the United Nations.**

**Below is the “ FLYER” sent via email to all invitees.**



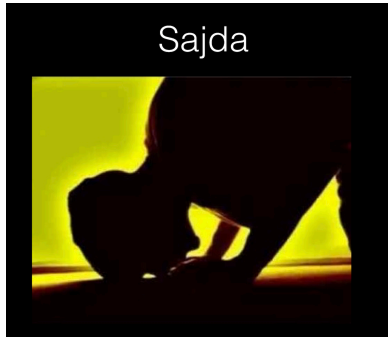
***Sajda – A Soulful, Spiritual, and Blissful Interfaith Presentation***  
***Presented By Narendra C. Bhalodkar MD FACC***

“Sajda” program will feature some of the finer nuances of Sufi Bollywood and non-Bollywood music. The event highlights the beauty of Indian music and promotes the rich Indian culture/heritage and Harmony.

**Sajda meaning:** The Urdu word Sajda or Sajdah that keeps on appearing in Hindi songs forever is an Arabic word meaning prostration to God in the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca. Sajda is usually done during the daily prayers.

In simpler terms, Sajda is a posture in prayer where one bends one's head in submission to God. Sajda is considered the utmost stage of submission, hence, when someone says s/he performed a Sajda, it means s/he devoted himself / herself completely to someone else.

During our program, we will attempt to use its meaning on a broader sense, i.e. not only prostration to God but also to the beloved, be it a Guru, Friend, Nature, lover, Spouse etc.



The program will consist of video and audio presentations of Sufi songs. Poems by Amir Khusrow, Rumi, Bulleh Shah, Kabir and others will also be presented. Dr. Bhalodkar will introduce and speak briefly about each of the musical selections. In an attempt to make the program more enjoyable, translations of difficult and somewhat unfamiliar “Urdu” words will be provided.

The program promises to be a soulful one and we hope it will transcend you to a place of Joy, Tranquility and Anand.

Don't miss this opportunity to hear multitalented artists performing through video and audio presentations on a single platform.

**On Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 at Dr. Munir Shikari and Gulzar's residence.**

WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK



The Official UN Observance in the 1<sup>st</sup> Week of February

### **Seminar proceedings:**

After welcoming guests, the seminar started with interfaith prayers.

It was followed by a video screening of the Audio/video of the Bhajans, Sufi songs and poetry.

**Subsequently, a scholarly discussion by speaker and attendees ensued.**

**Throughout entire seminar during Power Point Presentation this master slide was projected.**



During 2 hours of presentation and interactive discussion we understood deeper and spiritual meaning of “ Sajda.”

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In simpler terms, Sajda is a posture in prayer where one bends one's head in submission to God. Sajda is considered the utmost stage of submission, hence, when someone says s/he performed a Sajda, it means s/he devoted himself / herself completely to someone else.

We explored “Sajda” to use its meaning on a broader sense, i.e. not only prostration to Allah, God but also to the beloved, be it a Guru, Friend, Nature, lover, Spouse etc.

Spiritual poems by Amir Khusrow, Rumi, Bulleh Shah, Kabir, Meera and others were also be presented.

We discussed at length, similarity in the lyrics of ‘ Allahu” and “Chatushloki Bhagwat” written by Sage Ved Vyasji.

# Allah Hoo

## Urdu

- Her Aik Ke Lab Per Hai  
Teri **Hamd-O-Sana**. Her  
Sooz Mein Her Saaz Mein  
Moujood Hai Tu.
- Tere He Naam Say Her  
**Ibtida** Hai  
Tere He Naam Per Tak  
**Intiha** Hai  
Teri Hamd-O-Sana  
**Alhamdulillah** Ka, Tu Mere  
Mohammad Ka Khuda Hai

## English

- On everyone's lips is your  
**prayer**  
In every chord, every song  
is your presence
- Every **beginning** is with  
your name.  
With your name **ends**  
everything.  
Your praise is '**praise be to  
Allah**'. That you are the  
God of my Mohammad.

# Allah Hoo

## Urdu

- Yeh Zameen Jab Na Thi Yeh Jahaan Jab Na Thaa.
- Chaand Suraj Na Thay Aasman Jab Na Tha.
- Raaz-E-Haq Bhi Kisi Per Ayaan Jab Na Tha.
- Tab Na Tha Kuch Yahaan, Tha Magar Tu Hee Tu
- Har Shay Tere Jamaal Ki Aainaa Daar Hai.
- Har Shay Pukaarti Hai Tu Parvardigaar Hai.
- Teri ruboobiyat ki Ada ka kamaal hai.
- Tu Rab-e- Qayaanat Hai, tu lajwal hai.

## English

- When this earth and world did not exist.
- When there was no moon, sun or sky.
- When the secret of the truth was still not known.
- When there was nothing, there was you.
- Everything is a reflection of your glory.
- Every thing cries out that you are the Lord.
- It is the distinction of your enthralling visage.
- You are the unrivalled Lord of the Universe.

## || Chatuhshlokee Bhaagavatam ||

### Sanskrit

- ahamevaasmevagre  
naanydhyatsadsamparam  
| pashchadaham  
yadetchch yoavishishyet  
soasmyaham
- || अहमेवासमेवाग्रे  
नांयद्यत्सड्सम्पराम | पश्चादहम  
यदेतच्च योअविशिष्येत  
सोअस्म्यहम् || १ ||

### English

- Before the creation of anything, it was only I who existed.
- Sat, Asat, and beyond that there was nothing that was different from me.
- The world which is seen as the universe is also just me.
- Whatever remains after the annihilation or total destruction (Pralay) is also me. || 1 ||

Similarly, comparison and similarity were highlighted between “Al-Asma-ul-Husna”, 99 names of Allah the Almighty and “Vishnusahasranam-Stotram”, 1000 names of Lord Vishnu.

## Vishnu Sahasranam Stotra (Hymn) 1000 Names of Lord Vishnu







# “Vaishnav Jan To Tene Kahiye” An Interfaith Bhajan

## Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti

*Rig Veda*

Truth is one; Sages call it by Various Names



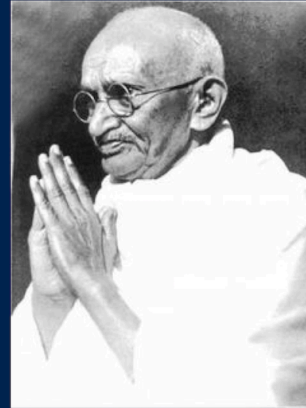




## Mahatma Gandhiji, a Seeker of God and Truth

“The Allah of Islam is same  
as the God of Christians  
and Ishwara of Hindus.

We all worship the same  
sprit.”



Similar to Sajda, Hindu's do “Vandana”.

# Vandana



We also did prostration to “Guru” or “Mushid”

- *Brahmanandam parama sukhadam kevalam  
jnanamurtim, dvandvaateetam gagana sadrusam  
tatvamasyadi lakshyam, ekam nityam vimala  
machalam sarvadheesaakshibuutam bhaavaateetam  
triguna rahitam sadgurum tam namaami .*
- "I salute to that Sadguru
  - who is the source of eternal bliss, supreme happiness,
  - who has true wisdom, who is beyond the dualities, who is infinite,
  - whose attention is always on the divine,
  - who is unique, eternal, pure, steady, and who sees with the eyes of wisdom,
  - who is beyond thoughts and beyond three gunas ".

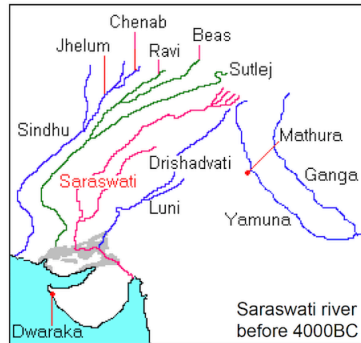
Guru Gita

Attendees were enlightened to see similarity in the spiritual fundamental principles.

Basic Principles of ‘ Sanatan Dharm’’ (AKA Hindu) were discussed.



## Hinduism = ?



Persians: 'Hindu' for River Sindhu

Muslims: 'Hindus' and 'Hindustan'

Greek: 'Indus' for 'Hindu'

British: 'India'

Original Name of India:

**Bharatvarsh or Aryavart** -  
the land that lies south of the Himalayas

Original Name of Hinduism: **Sanatan Dharm**

**Sanatan**: eternal, eternally exists in God and is revealed on the earth by God

**Dharm**: those actions, thoughts and practices that promote physical and mental happiness in the world and ensure God realization in the end

# Brahman

Nirgun Nirakar

Sagun Saakar

Formless

Form

Limitless

Name

Eternal

Attributes

Beyond

Avatar-

Qualities

Incarnation

All-inclusive

Savior Form of God

**The program ended with a very interactive Q and A session.**

## **Future Plans:**

God willing, we are planning similar seminars every 3 to 4 months on various topics from all different faiths with interfaith dialogues.

Once the video recordings are edited, we will post it on You Tube to spread the message of interfaith harmony and peace worldwide.

With the overwhelming success and approval of this seminar, we have been invited to conduct the same seminar in various locations of the Tristate area in USA by several organizations.

Eventually, we may conduct this seminar throughout the USA and on international platforms.

### **Blessings and Duaa by attendees:**

Many attendees extended their blessings and good wishes for the seminar and future events.

- 1. Here is the best Duaa or blessings one can hope for, received from Dr. Munir Shikari, a leading cardiologist and the president of Hudson Valley Cardiologists, P.C. who also was our Host.**

*“Dil Badast Aawar Ke Hajje Akbarast  
Az Hazaaran Kaaba Ek Dil Behtarast”*

Meaning there by;

“To Capture a heart is a Grand Pilgrimage  
Making one heart happy is better than one thousand Kaabas”

- 2. Here are the blessings and Duaa from Dr. Chaudhary**

“I offer you **Duaa, (blessings)** that may Allah give you strength and wisdom to conduct many more such spiritual programs.”

### **Testimonials:**

We have received numerous phone calls and emails from attendees offering their praise and feedback.

Following are a few representative samples of unsolicited testimonials.

(Please See attached document, **Testimonials from the Attendees of “Sajda”**)