

Testimonials From Attendees of “Sajda” Presenter Dr. Narendra Bhalodkar

1.

I consider it indeed a privilege to be a host for Dr. Narendra Bhalodkar's enlightening presentation of "Sajda" or humble prostration of divinity as seen in various leading religions of the world.

However it also equally enlightening to see the cultural and emotional aspects of Sajda in expression of true love and devotion in all other aspects of our day-to-day life.

Dr. Bhalodkar's hard untiring efforts of collection of gems of prose, poetry and compile them in the presentation on ‘Sajda’ was informative and equally entertaining.

It was interesting to see how an act of prostration reserved for praising of the Almighty was extended to all forms of love and devotion among all living!

We thoroughly enjoyed the interfaith presentation “ Sajda” organized by Dr. Narendra C Bhalodkar on the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and Commemorating “ World Interfaith Harmony Initiative in Partnership with the “ Parliament Of the World’s Religions.”

It surely must have been an enormous task to selectively pick up excerpts of milestones in the Mahatma’s struggle for preaching “Non-Violence.”

It was illuminating to listen to Dr. Bhalodkar's discussion regarding his faith, unwavering beliefs and devotion towards God and humility and peace for all on earth.

Dr. Bhalodkar made deep philosophy of Islam as well as Hindu Scriptures such as, Vedas, Geeta and Puranas seem very easy to understand and comprehend.

It was eye opening to see similarity and commonality among these scriptures.

His comparison of lyrics of "Allahu" and Chatushloki Bhagwat left all of us mesmerized and spellbound.

It is interesting to know that the person in question - Associate Professor Narendra C Bhalodkar who from 1982 to 1991 had a significant influence in my life as a mentor - teacher during my residency and fellowship in Cardiology also has this unfathomable wealth of knowledge in multiple religious faiths of us all human beings at large with an unrelenting passion for universal peace and harmony.

Dr. Bhalodkar's message of Interfaith Harmony, understanding and Peace resonated well with all the attendees.

Thank you Dr. Bhalodkar for enlightening us all, as you have done over the years in your quest to strengthen universal peace and harmony

God Bless Him.

Reminds me of couplet in Urdu which signifies my admiration for Dr. Bhalodkar - Teacher, Mentor, Colleague and a Friend

Teray Qadmo Mey Sir Hoga

تیرے قدموں میں سر ہوگا

Qaza Sir Par Khari Hogi

قضا سر پر کھری ہوگی

Wallah, Kya Bandagi Hogi

وللہ کیا بندگی ہوگی

Munir A Shikari, MD

President, Hudson Valley Cardiologists P.C.

Mrs. Gulzar M. Shikari

Newburgh, New York

2.

Dear Dr. Narendrabhai,

First I want to thank you for inviting me and my husband for the Sajda event. We knew you had performed this program many times before but somehow we didn't get an opportunity to attend this program. As you know we have been to many of your presentations and always come home with a wonderful feeling of learning something new and unique in most creative ways.

When we found out that you are presenting "Sajda" to a very sophisticated all Islamic audience, we thought that this itself was a daring achievement or more like walking into a "Lion's Den", where the audience was totally well versed in Urdu language, Sufi music, their holy Scripture and somewhat limited understanding of Hindu religion or various Hindu holy scriptures like Gita, Mahabharata, Purana, and different Vedas.

Now, this was a true interfaith experience for all of us. You very succinctly explain the concept of Sajda and its various interpretations in Urdu as well as various Indian languages like Sanskrit, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati and using Sufi music coupled with Hindu prayers and songs.

The audience was mesmerized for two hours. After the conclusion of the program, few Islamic ladies came to me and expressed their feelings that they had appreciated and learned more about Hindu deities and religion than ever before.

This is the true testimonial for bringing Harmony and tolerance in today's world by not just talking about one religion but how it relates to the rest of the religions.

I definitely learned that God is universal, it doesn't matter whichever path you take to reach him.

It doesn't matter if you study the Bible, Koran, Gita or Old, and New Testament, the teaching is parallel.

You did a wonderful job in bringing at least a small Newburgh Muslim population closer to the understanding of Hindu religion, its similarity to Islam in fundamental principles and meaning of Interfaith unity at large.

You threw a pebble in the lake and created a big ripple. We need more of these events and seminars to spread the Multifaith Peace and Harmony in these troubled times.

Please continue your mission and wish you all the Best!

Best Regards,

Dr. Nayana Parekh

3.

In the ups and downs of life we meet hundreds or maybe thousands of people who interact with our life in some form or another.

Once in a while you come across someone who leaves a lasting, positive impression in a short time enriching it forever Dr. Narendra Bhalodkar is a person in this category.

He is my younger brother Munir's mentor, professor and a dear friend. As such, I have had Munir talk to me numerous times about his skills and achievements as a medical doctor and his passion for poetry. Not knowing much about the profession, I still have developed an understanding and appreciation of his unique and outstanding contributions in the field of Cardiology.

Leaving that aside for the time, Dr. Bhalodkar has achieved excellence in a totally unrelated and noble field, which is the area of spirituality.

Dr. Bhalodkar comes from a devout, Hindu Brahmin family yet you notice immediately that he is not limited by his background to a narrow focus on his religious beliefs.

His spirituality is demonstrated very clearly by his humility, inclusiveness and tolerance for other beliefs and ongoing desire to learn about them.

I had the good fortune to listen to one of his interfaith presentation where 40 of us listened and watched his presentation for two hours in rapt attention and some of us stayed back to learn more about his views for several more hours late in the night.

It was a memorable experience discussing the subject of Sajda as an ultimate demonstration of devotion to the object of your veneration, love, and devotion transcending your religious beliefs.

He sourced his material from many directions including religion, philosophy and music and educated and entertained us like seldom before.

Narendrabhai this is a humble homage to your unique and outstanding presentation.

I wish and pray for your continued success in conveying your message of interfaith to many more audiences. I have no doubt that we all will be the better for having been exposed to this beautiful message of love and humanity.

**KYA SAJDE KI PEHCHAAN KARAAYI MERE BHAI
ALLAH KARE ZORE QALAM AUR ZIYADA!**

Respectfully

Anis Shikari

4.

I am writing this testimonial to endorse and commend Dr. Narendra Bhalodkar for his very informative and educational lecture on Sajda - A Soulful, Spiritual and Blissful Interfaith presentation.

Sajda, which is the Arabic word for prostration to Allah, is a very fundamental and requisite function of one of the most important pillars of Islam. In the Muslim religion, when performing the five mandated prayers on a daily basis, the Sajda represents both a symbolic and substantive gesture of dedication and devotion to Allah, required of every Muslim. The physical act of the Sajda and its accompanying vulnerability, confirms both the commitment to, and acknowledgement of Allah as the savior, the master and the protector.

The symbolic part of the Sajda confirms our total submission to the will of Allah, and the Sajda, which is exclusively limited to the only supreme and singular deity in this universe, confirms the substantive validation of the core Muslim belief in the singularity of Allah's existence and presence.

Most of the major religions of the World, regardless of the name they use to refer to the Supreme Being as Allah, God, Bhagvan or Adonai, do so without any deviation or reservation.

It is critically important that we start a meaningful and constructive dialogue and discussion to promote religious and racial harmony, particularly when one considers the tremendous commonality of messages and purpose espoused by most of the major religions in the world. We also need to build bridges and accentuate this

universal message of compassion, kindness and humanity, which seems to be the central theme and the binding glue of all the World's major religions.

Dr. Bhalodkar's lecture series and multi-media presentation, are in my opinion a major step and a very positive factor in promoting and creating this critical understanding and awareness of the commonality of purpose, and the implicit and explicit links that bind us through the consistency and overlapping messages of the world's religions.

Once we start promoting this concept and validate it with a greater understanding of the messages inherently present in all the World's religions, we will be able to see the reflection of our beliefs, values and principles highlighted and presented to us in gestures and acts that are familiar to us. It is only then that we start to overcome our inhibitions and prejudices, which are in most cases based on ignorance, intolerance and irrational fear.

Dr. Bhalodkar through his commendable efforts and lecture series is on a very sincere and important mission of trying to build bridges and pathways that will help remove some of the philosophical and religious barriers that have been built, and in some cases imposed on us.

This journey could be at times long and sometimes challenging, but it is imperative that we continue this dialogue and debate because the risks of not doing so could be quite monumental and devastating, and the rewards could be so amazingly gratifying and extremely beneficial. It is through these discussions and discourse that we get the best educational and informational opportunities to contain our ignorance and remove our fears.

“Ignorance and prejudice are the handmaidens of fear and bigotry, and therefore our most important task and objective must be to promote the beauty, elegance and greatness of our Creator and the common message of all the religions”.

I wish Dr. Bhalodkar a lot of success and progress in his efforts and commitment to heal our fissures and differences, because ultimately we all came from the same creator and have to go back to him to account for how we lived our lives in this beautiful world he created for all of us.

Mr. Adil Ameer the Ex CEO of Health Quest