

Concept Note:

This conference aims to explore the multifaceted contributions of Indian scholars to interfaith dialogue, tracing their impact from ancient to contemporary times. By examining the works and ideas of influential figures such as Buddha, Mahavira, Adi Shankaracharya, Baba Farid, Kabir, Guru Nanak, Dara Shikoh, various Muslim Sufis, Abdul Karim Sharistani, Al-Biruni, and key leaders from the Bhakti Movement, as well as modern reformers like Rehmatullah Keranwi, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Vivekananda, Muhammad Ali Jauhar, Dr. Iqbal, Mahatma Gandhi, Aurobindo Ghosh, Husain Ahmad Madani, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Ali Shariati, Murtadha Mutahhari, Shamas Navid Uthmani, Muhammad Farooq Khan, Asghar Ali Engineer, Syed Hamid Ali, and Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, this conference will highlight how these scholars and movements have both shaped and been shaped by India's diverse religious and philosophical landscape. Additionally, the role of institutions such as the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) Malaysia, the World Forum for Inter-Religious Councils Kerala, Henry Martin Institute (HMI) Hyderabad, and the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS) New Delhi in fostering interfaith understanding will be addressed. Through detailed examinations, the conference will discuss the dimensions of interfaith dialogue, its evolution, the challenges encountered, and the strategies adopted to promote mutual respect and understanding among various faiths.

Dimensions of Dialogue:

1. **Dialogue of the Mind:** The dialogue of the mind refers to intellectual and philosophical discussions between individuals from different faith backgrounds. This dimension focuses on exchanging ideas, theories, and philosophical insights about religious doctrines, ethics, and metaphysics. It aims to deepen understanding and refine intellectual perspectives on religious and spiritual matters, contributing to a more nuanced and informed discourse.
2. **Dialogue of the Heart:** The dialogue of the heart involves empathetic and emotional exchanges between individuals of different faiths. This dimension focuses on building personal connections, fostering emotional understanding, and cultivating compassion. It aims to bridge emotional gaps and create a sense of shared humanity and mutual respect through heartfelt interactions and personal engagement.
3. **Social Dialogue:** Social dialogue refers to conversations and interactions between different social groups or communities aimed at addressing and resolving social issues. In interfaith contexts, this involves discussions between adherents of different

religions to tackle social challenges, promote social justice, and enhance community cohesion. This dimension emphasizes practical solutions and collaborative efforts to improve societal well-being and foster inclusive communities.

4. **Dialogue for Social Action:** This dimension highlights how dialogue can be a catalyst for social change. It involves using interfaith conversations to address critical social issues such as poverty, inequality, and environmental sustainability. The goal is to translate the insights and agreements from interfaith dialogue into concrete actions that address societal needs and promote social equity.
5. **Comparative Study of Religion:** The comparative study of religion involves analysing and comparing different religious traditions to understand their similarities and differences. This dimension aims to foster mutual respect and learning by highlighting common values and exploring divergent beliefs. It provides a framework for understanding how different religions address similar questions about human existence, ethics, and spirituality, thereby promoting intellectual and academic engagement.
6. **Dialogue of the Souls (Sufi Perspective):** This dimension explores the Sufi perspective on interfaith dialogue, emphasizing the mystical and spiritual dimensions of dialogue. It involves understanding how Sufi traditions approach the divine and the human soul in relation to other faiths, promoting an experiential and profound connection between different religious paths.

Objectives:

1. **Historical Exploration:** Investigate the role of key Indian scholars and figures in shaping early dimensions of interfaith dialogue and their philosophical foundations.
2. **Muslim Scholars on Indic Religions in Medieval Times:** Explore the contributions of Muslim scholars such as Al-Biruni, Abdul Karim Sharistani, Amir Khusro, Mullah Muhsin Fani and Dara Shikoh in their interactions with and interpretations of Indic religions.
3. **Evolution of Thought:** Trace the development of interfaith dialogue through various historical periods, focusing on influential figures and movements.
4. **Modern and Contemporary Perspectives:** Analyse the contributions of modern scholars and modern leaders in advancing interfaith harmony and how their approaches relate to historical precedents.

5. **Critical Discussion:** Provide a platform for critical discussion on the successes and challenges of interfaith dialogue as approached by these scholars.

Expected Outcomes: The conference aims to deepen understanding of the historical and ongoing contributions of Indian scholars to interfaith dialogue. By integrating historical insights with contemporary practices, the event seeks to enhance appreciation for the continuous pursuit of interfaith harmony and mutual respect.

Target Audience: Scholars, researchers, practitioners, and students of Islamic Studies, religious studies, philosophy, Indian history, and interfaith relations. The conference also targets individuals and organizations engaged in dialogue and peace-building initiatives across faith communities.

Conference Structure:

❖ Inaugural Session:

- Welcome address
- Introduction of theme
- Keynote address

❖ Technical Sessions:

1. Foundations and Early Contributions

- **Keynote Address:** "Adi Shankaracharya and the Philosophy of Advaita Vedanta: Implications for Interfaith Understanding".
- **Panel Discussion:** "Early Dialogues: Interaction Between Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Islam".

2. Medieval Indian Scholars and Interfaith Dialogues

- **Keynote Address:** "Understanding Interfaith Dialogue from Ramanuja to Guru Nanak".
- **Panel Discussion:** "Kabir, Farid, Guru Nanak, and Other Saints of the Bhakti Movement".

3. Medieval to Modern Transformations

- **Keynote Address:** "Muslim Scholars on Indic Religions in Medieval Times: Al-Biruni, Abdul Karim Sharistani and Mullah Muhsin Fani".
- **Panel Discussion:** "Mahatma Gandhi and the Role of Religion in Social Reform and Interfaith Harmony".

4. **Modern Scholars and Reformers**

- **Keynote Address:** "Renaissance Thinkers and Reformers: The Impact of Rammohan Roy, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghosh on Interfaith Relations".
- **Panel Discussion:** "Impact of Mohammad Ali Jauhar, Allamah Iqbal, Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and Bhimrao Ambedkar".

5. **Contemporary Dialogues and Future Directions**

- **Keynote Address:** "Syed Hamid Ali, Asghar Ali Engineer and Modern Interfaith Dialogue: Bridging Tradition and Contemporary Needs".
- **Panel Discussion:** "Contemporary Interfaith Initiatives: Challenges and Possibilities".
- **Round Table:** "The Future of Interfaith Dialogue in India: Lessons from Historical and Modern Perspectives".

❖ **Valedictory Session:**

- Conclusion of deliberations

Submission Guidelines:

- **Abstracts:** Proposals should include an abstract of no more than 300 words outlining the presentation's key focus, methodology, and relevance.
- **Papers:** Full papers should be between 5,000 and 7,000 words, including references and adhering to academic standards.

Deadlines:

- ❖ Conference Dates : **3rd & 4th February 2025**
- ❖ Last Date of Receiving Abstracts : **15th October 2024**
- ❖ Acknowledgment of the Abstracts : **18th October 2024**
- ❖ Last Date of Paper Submission : **15th November 2024**
- ❖ Email for submission : **conferencedois25@gmail.com**

Note: Selected Papers will be published before the Conference.

Organisers:

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