



Gujarat Vidyapeeth,
University founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920
in partnership with
OraWorldMandala,
World Theatre for Reconciliation through Art
invite you to participate:

"Synergic Training Seminar for Artists of Ahimsa"



Mission of this alliance:

To train Artists of Ahimsa, Artists of Non-violence.

¿Who is an Artist of Ahimsa?

It is any individual who, through creativity, is educated and educates in Ahimsa, placing at the disposition of society his or her specific abilities for the Welfare of All (Sarvodaya).

Ahimsa: (Sanskrit) Non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi's message of love for all forms of life through an active Non-violence, which is interwoven in our actions, experiences, and lives.

The Seminar will take place in Ahmedabad, India, in the Gandhian University, December 8-18, 2008.

Objectives of the Seminar.

To form a group of Artists of Ahimsa, capable of developing locally educational programs in the field of a Culture of Peace, using methodologies and techniques developed globally by OraWorldMandala.

contact: owm@oraworldmandala.org



Conceptual Introduction to the Seminar.

RECONCILIATION THROUGH ART

Human beings with their intellect and understanding in interpreting emotions and managing them have developed an instinctive nature for justice. The issue of Rights perhaps has its genesis in this basic sense of justice. It has so evolved that the formation of sustainable a society is also perceived in the context of a just society. It is around the sense of justice that right of every human being is insisted upon. Thus if one has to define a just society it could be said that it is a society where human rights of every individual is respected and there is a constant endeavour to uphold it under any circumstances.

Ways and means to fight for human rights and justice have been varying in different societies and during different times in the same society. The most witnessed method for fighting for it has been imposing violence on the violator. Individual, group and collective justice has been mostly sought through violence. There is always a moral righteousness in resorting to violence in fighting for human rights and justice. But there have been instances in history where apostle of peace have arrived amidst us and they have powerfully canvassed and demonstrated the effectiveness and enduring nature of justice acquired through non-violent and peaceful means. The Jesus, the Buddha and more recently, Gandhi are most shining examples. Non-violent approach to fight for justice inherently leads to search for truth and offering *Satyagraha* (appeal to uphold truth) impacting the heart of the opponent or the tormentor. The compromise that is struck in the final stage is harmonious and brings tranquillity without any possible violent backlash. The result is consistent with the instinctive desire of the humanity to honour and uphold the rights of every human being. Theoretically, there is no other approach which guarantees such a sustainable long term harmony in coexistence of the human beings. Further, it is not only the stability in static sense, but the non-violent approach to seek justice for human rights also in a dynamic sense elevates the human species' non-body existence to a higher plane.

We should at this juncture pause and reflect on an important pre requisite for societal level non-violent approaches to peace and justice. Collective mindset for non-violent ways of protest and struggle against injustice and violation of human rights can be achieved only through a continuous and vigilant practice of non-violence at individual level. In the violent approach the arms and ammunition comes from the external sources and are physical in nature. They have tremendous destructive power. In non-violent approaches the arms and ammunition come from an inner understanding which is transformed into individual behaviour. It provides a very power shield and sets in change of mind in those who take the external support of destructive material. Practicing non-violence does not mean that one becomes non-violent for a particular issues or an incidence that has led to severe and widespread injustice or violation human rights, but practicing non-violence is a way of life. It has a daily routine embedded deeply in what one eats drinks, wears and act. This way of life or adoption of the life style creates the soul force. Collective or group approach for fighting human rights in a non-violent way can be established only when the soul force is high and prevalent among the most.



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OraWorldMandala

World Theatre for Reconciliation through Art



Art is a powerful medium that the human specie has developed to communicate and influence emotions. Intellectual discourses have been important, but to create a deeper impression and understanding at the heart level artistic expressions have been found more effective. It is understood that there is inter-individual difference in the level of intellect and there is also strong inter individual difference in interpretation and hence the understanding developed varies. In appealing to the heart, the art almost impacts equally on all because it touches the feeling and feeling is shared similarly almost among all. This is not to say that one should give up the intellectual approach, but the point to register is that working on emotional place is powerful approach to create non-violent mindset. Art is inherently freedom of expression and freedom of expression unleashes enormous creativity. A society that upholds the human rights of all is not only a just society but also perhaps the most creative society.

Creative art also becomes a very powerful medium for bringing harmony among the warring sections. In the times of exploding and violent situations artistic presentations have changes the course of events and brought harmony. Let us look at this particular event in history. In India a saint lives in the sixteenth century. His name was *Kabir*. He was deserted after his birth by his Hindu widowed mother. A Muslim weaver family brought him up. He was a powerful poet and a Sufi. He had a very large following. When he died at the age of 115 or so, there was a clash over his body for last rites. The Muslims claimed him to be theirs and the Hindus did the same. The situation was about to turn violent and when they removed the sheet that had covered the body they found flowers and not the body. This has been one of the most artistic and creative expression in history surrounded by a man who spent his entire life as a poor weaver advising Hindus and Muslims to give up fight and live harmoniously on higher plane. His message after death was extremely illustrious and impacting.

Art thus has a powerful potential for help reconciliation. *Kabir's* body could have been cut into two pieces that would have been the violent decision that the society has generally witnessed. But turning of the body of the flowers is perhaps the most creative artistic expression that led to reconciliation and for centuries to come it has provided scope for enhancing peace. It should be noted that the episode promoted non-violence *Ahimsa*. Thus, to move towards *Ahimsa* reconciliation is a first step and art is one of the powerful medium in the direction.

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Vice Chancellor Gujarat Vidyapeeth

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Contents of the Seminar.

During the 11 days in Ahmedabad, the participants will:

- Learn basic techniques of Gandhian discipline (yoga, safai, spinning, and sarva dharma prarthna);
- Define the areas of conflict in which they intend to operate as Artists of Ahimsa, with specific reference to the social and historical context of their place of origin;
- Meet the different religious communities of Ahmedabad* and learn their role in OraWorldMandala;
- Study the methodology developed by OraWorldMandala (specification of the social and historical contexts for the development of the actions, artistic actions of world theatre and social micro-laboratories);
- Plan and accomplish, in collaboration, on the basis of the same methodology, an action-experiment in Ahmedabad.

Realization of the Seminar.

The Seminar will be accomplished by means of:

- First phase. In-person training which will have a duration of 11 days in Ahmedabad.
- Second phase. Distance training by means of methodologies of networked collaboration which will be available in OraWorldMandala's portal.

Participants.

The Seminar is oriented to the associates of OraWorldMandala (institutions, associated training entities, social activists, artists, students, researchers, teachers, and individuals) who intend to acquire the tools to practice Ahimsa.



Notes:

*Religious Communities: Jewish, Swami Viditatananda (Vedanta), Brahmakumaris, Hare Krishna, Sola Bhagvat School (Veda), Parsi, Muslim, Jain, Buddhist, Sikh, Catholic, Protestant.

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