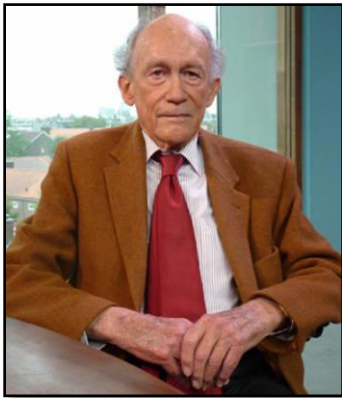




Bio's Spiritual leaders and Keynote speakers

PILGRIMAGE FOR LOVE COMPASSION AND HUMAN UNITY NEW DELHI -AJMER

Chairman Universal Sufi Council ~ The Netherlands



Murshid Dr. H.J. Karimbakhsh Witteveen, who is calling this Sufi conference together with Peer Mudassir from Pakistan, is one of the former leaders of the International Sufi Movement in Geneva and The Hague. At the same time, he is an economist, who has been a professor in economics, Minister of Finance and vice Prime Minister in the Netherlands and later Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund. He has shown in this career how the inner and outer life can grow together, inspiring and testing each other. As leader of the International Sufi Movement – together with Murshid Hidayat Inayat Khan, the son of Hazrat Inayat Khan – he has succeeded in creating a

harmonious cooperation between the different Sufi organizations that are following Hazrat Inayat Khan's message, creating in that way the Federation of the Sufi Message. Murshid Karimbakhsh now hopes to bring many different leaders of Sufi orders who recognise this universal character of Sufism and a few leaders of mystical orders in other religions harmoniously together in a Sufi conference.

Pir Shabda Kahn



USA

Shabda Kahn serves as Pir (spiritual director) of the Sufi Ruhaniat International, a branch within the spiritual lineage of Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan. He is also a teacher and performer of Hindustani classical vocal music, Raga, in the Kirana Gharana style, serving as director of the Chisti Sabri School of Music, within the lineage of his teacher Pandit Pran Nath, at whose direction this school was formed and placed in Shabda Kahn's care. At the request of his Pir Moineddin Jablonski, Shabda Kahn was initiated as a Sheikh (spiritual guide) in 1977 by Pir Vilayat Khan, eldest son of Hazrat Inayat Khan. He was initiated as a Murshid (senior spiritual guide) in 1954 by Pir Hidayat Inayat Khan, son of Inayat Khan. In 2001, at the death of Pir Moineddin Jablonski, Shabda Kahn succeeded him as Pir of the Sufi Ruhaniat International, by Pir Moineddin's appointment. Shabda Kahn is also a disciple of the illustrious Tibetan master, the 12th Tai Situ Rinpoche, and was deeply influenced by his twenty-two year relationship with the great American mystic Joe Miller.

As Pir, Shabda Kahn directs the Leadership Circle of the Sufi Ruhaniat International as well as its Board of Trustees, and serves as spiritual director for the Dances of Universal Peace, worldwide.

Jonathan Granoff (Ahamed Muhaiyaddeen)



USA

Mr. Jonathan Granoff, an international lawyer, serves as a Senior Advisor and Special Representative to the United Nations for the Permanent Secretariat of the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates. He is the President of the Global Security Institute, Chair of the Task Force on Nuclear Nonproliferation of the International Law Section of the American Bar Association, and Ambassador for Peace and Security of the Parliament of the World's Religions. He focuses his advocacy efforts on the legal, moral, political and spiritual dimensions of peace with a particular emphasis on the rule of law and the elimination of nuclear weapons. An award winning screenwriter, he is a widely published scholar and serves on numerous advisory and governing boards such as the NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security at the UN, Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, Middle Powers Initiative, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament, and the Jane Goodall Institute. He is a Fellow in the World Academy of Arts and Science and recipient of numerous awards such as the Arthur E. Armitage, Sr. Distinguished Alumni Award of Rutgers University School of Law. He has represented the Nobel Laureate organization the International Peace Bureau at Nobel Laureate Summits and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014. Since his youth he lived and studied with the Sufi Saint Bawa Muhaiyaddeen and is honored with his namesake Ahamed Muhaiyaddeen.



Brigitte van Baren

The Netherlands

Brigitte van Baren studied Dutch law in Amsterdam and specialized in environmental law. She founded Inner Sense in 1992. Inner Sense aims to enhance inner depth in the corporate and industrial world by applying 'essentials in leadership'. Inner Sense has endorsed the values of the Earth Charter, working with the framework and striving to achieve fair and sustainable leadership. An integral part of this vision is the engagement of young (potential) leaders at events concerning sustainable leadership. Brigitte van Baren has led projects for international organizations; coaching and training people in leadership positions, managers and teams. She is an author and a Zen teacher. She works with the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (known as VNO-NCW) and Nyenrode Business University on leadership programs. She has organized several international conferences and is a member of the commission that organizes the yearly VNO-NCW Bilderberg Conference. She conceptualized and initiated the Wings conferences by organizing Wings for Rio+20 and co-organizing the Wings for Earth Charter (VNO-NCV and Soetendorp Institute) and Wings for Water and Wereld Waterdag (commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) international conferences.



H. Nur Artiran

Turkey

H. Nur Artiran is a specialist of Mevlânâ Jalâluddîn Rûmî and his work. She is a researcher, writer, scholar and educator on the path of Rûmî. In 2011 her first book “Aşk Bir Davaya Benzer” (Love Needs Proofs), in 2014 two other books “Herkes Seni Terk Etse Aşk Terk Etmez” (Everyone may leave you, but not Love) and “Nun Kapsı” (The door of Nun) have been published. They consist of spiritual talks from Mesnevî and other great Sufi Masters. She is the founding President of *Şefik Can International Mevlânâ Education and Culture Foundation*, a founding member of the *World Foundation for the Disabled* and a member of the Scientific Board of the *International Mevlânâ Foundation*.



Syed Salman Chishty

India

Syed Salman Chishty has been engaged in practical research studies on world Sufi traditions and their interaction with world cultures and traditions. His passion for Sufi and spiritual world cultures has enabled him to travel to many Sufi sites around the world. In addition, he has a regular participant in international conferences on interfaith dialogue and has represented the Chishty Sufi Order in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Morocco, Senegal, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Singapore, the United States, the United Kingdom, Bosnia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, among other countries.

A founding member of the Chishty Foundation, he has also served as its director for the last past five years. He has also written several articles on Sufism, spiritual understanding, and related subjects for various English national and international newspapers, journals, publications, blogs, and websites globally.



SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE

PRESIDENT OF INDIA

Shri Pranab Mukherjee assumed office as the 13th President of India on July 25, 2012, crowning a political career of over five decades of exemplary service to the nation in Government as well as Parliament.

Shri Mukherjee is a man of unparalleled experience in governance with the rare distinction of having served at different times as Foreign, Defence, Commerce and Finance Minister. He was elected to the Upper House of the Parliament (Rajya Sabha) five times from 1969 and twice to the Lower House of the Parliament (Lok Sabha) from 2004. He was a member of the Congress Working Committee, the highest policy making body of the Party for a period of 23 years.

A powerful orator and scholar, Shri Mukherjee's intellectual and political prowess as well as remarkable knowledge of international relations, financial affairs and parliamentary process are widely admired. He has been acclaimed for his role as a consensus builder on difficult national issues through his ability to forge unity amongst the diverse political parties that form part of India's vibrant multi-party democracy.

Venu Rajamony

India

A career diplomat with over three decades of experience, scholar of international relations and former journalist, Venu Rajamony is currently Press Secretary to the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, a position he has held since August 2012.

Venu Rajamony has accompanied the President on over 100 official tours within the country and interacted with political leaders and civil servants of every State and Union Territory.

Prior to joining the Rashtrapati Bhavan, Venu Rajamony served as Joint Secretary and head of Multilateral Institutions Division of the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance, Government of India from 2010-2012. In this position, he was responsible for formulating India's policies towards the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Asian



Development Bank, the African Development Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. He also supervised external assistance to India of around \$34 Billion (spread over 140 projects) from multilateral development banks. During this period, Venu Rajamony was India's Deputy to the International Development Association and member of India's delegations to the Spring Meetings of the International Monetary and Financial Committee of the IMF and the Development Committee of the World Bank Group as well as the Annual General Meetings of the ADB.

Venu Rajamony's tenure as Consul General of India in Dubai from 2007 to 2010 marked a high point in relations between India and the UAE.

Fluent in Chinese, Venu Rajamony has served in Indian missions in Hong Kong, Beijing, Geneva and Washington, D.C. as well as the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi. An Asia Foundation Fellow at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington DC between 2001–2002, he authored a much-acclaimed monograph titled 'The India-China-US Triangle: A Soft Balance of Power in the Making'.

Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

India

Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar is a humanitarian leader, a spiritual teacher, and an ambassador of peace. His vision of a stress-free, violence-free society has united millions of people the world over through service projects and the courses of The Art of Living. Numerous honours have been bestowed upon Gurudev, including the highest civilian awards of Colombia, Mongolia and Paraguay. He is the recipient of the Padma Vibhushan, India's second highest civilian award and has also been conferred with 15 honorary doctorates from around the world.



Gurudev is the Chancellor of Sri Sri University and the Chairman of the Quality Control of India Yoga Certification Committee. He is also a member of the Amarnath Shrine Board (appointed by Government of Jammu and Kashmir, India). Gurudev was the Chairman of Reception Committee for the 500th anniversary celebrations of the Coronation of Krishnadevaraya (by Government of Karnataka, India).

Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasi

India

Imam Dr Umer Ilyasi , Chief Imam, is the legitimate voice of the half a million Imams of India who happens to be the religious and spiritual guide of two hundred ten Million Indian Muslims. AIIO is recognized in that capacity and role both at the national and international level. This is the largest Imam Organization in the world and is so uniquely placed that prominent national and global bodies belonging to all walks of life utilize its services. Indian Muslims too are most uniquely placed because they are the only Muslim in the world who are naturally groomed in a cosmopolitan environment. In that capacity this remains the untapped treasure of humanity, which is yet to make good of us. However, we in AIOIM are doing everything that our resources permit us. Most recently, **Dr Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasi** has been awarded Doctorate of Philosophy by Desh Bhagt University, Punjab (INDIA) which happens to be one of the most prestigious Universities among private Indian Universities. This is a rare distinction, which for the first time in the post India history that an Imam of Mosque has been honoured by the highest seat of learning. It is indeed recognition of the multi-dimensional services that the Chief Imam is rendering for the good of the nation, community and the global society.



XII Kenting Tai Situ Rinpoche

India

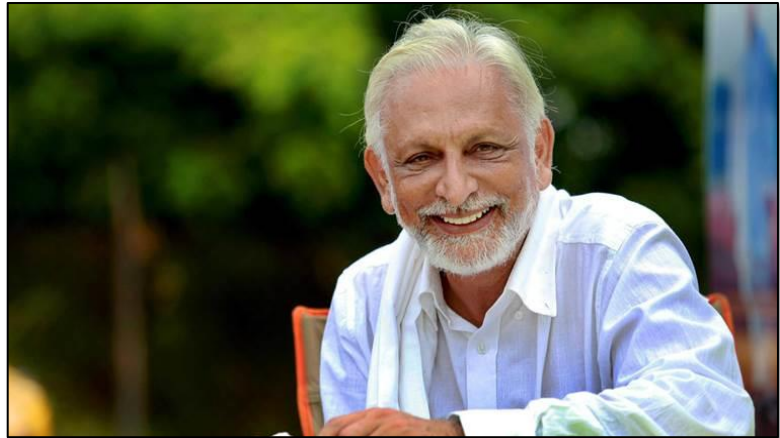


The 12th Kenting Tai Situpa is a Buddhist master of the Karma Kagyu tradition. He was one of the closest students of the 16th Gyalwang Karmapa, and in turn became the main teacher of the current Gyalwang Karmapa, Orgyen Trinley Dorje. The 14th Tai Situ Rinpoche oversees a vast network of Karma Kagyu monasteries, retreat centers, and Dharma centers worldwide, and has made great contributions toward training the next generation of Buddhist masters. In 1989, Chamgon Kenting Tai Situpa led the Pilgrimage for Active Peace and organized an Interfaith Symposium, visiting holy sites around the world and meeting the leaders of different religious traditions, including Pope John Paul II. Meeting at the most sacred Catholic seat, the Vatican, they discussed the vision of Chamgon Kenting Tai Situpa, which is how to inspire people to take an active involvement in world peace. In 2014, the 25th Anniversary of the Pilgrimage of Active Peace was commemorated with an Interfaith Confluence at the Palpung Sherabling Monastery , where nearly 3000 people participated. He is also a scholar, poet, calligrapher, artist, author, architect, and geomancer.

Sri M

India

Sri M – spiritual guide, social reformer and educationist – was born into a Muslim family on November 6, 1949 in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. His transformational journey, from a young boy to a living yogi, is a fascinating story symbolized by single-minded discipline and dedication.



At the age of nine, his spiritual transformation was initiated by his future Master, Babaji (also known as Maheshwarnath Babaji),

After His reconnection with Babaji in the Himalayas at the age of 19 the next decade saw him go through a dichotomy of experiences -both material and mystical – combining the adventure of his teenage years with the esoteric magnetism of religious texts and the spiritual allure of local holy men and saints. The next three and half years, he lived and travelled extensively through the Himalayas with his Master. Maheshwarnath Babaji guided him right through his initiation, his Kundalini awakening, the grueling journey to Tholingmutt and, the eventual meeting with the Grand Master, Sri Guru Babaji also known as Sri Mahavatar Babaji.

His Master then encouraged him to return to the plains – to start a family life and prepare for his life’s mission. Few years after his Master passed away, he received the spiritual go-ahead to commence his mission. In 1998, he started his teachings, eventually leading to formation of the Satsang Foundation. Traveling extensively unto the present day, he has quietly gone about his life’s mission – teaching and guiding people as per his Master’s instructions: “Quality, not quantity. Spiritual evolution is individual and cannot be a mass phenomenon. Conversant with teachings of most major religions, Sri M says: “Go to the core. Theories are of no use.” His message seeks to transcend the outer-shell of all religions, by exploring their mystical core to nurture the innate goodness in every human being.

In 2011, he wrote his memoir “Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master – A Yogi’s Autobiography“, which became an instant bestseller. The much awaited sequel to this called, “ The Journey Continues” has just been released in 2017. Over the years, his mission as a spiritual guide, social reformer and educationist have given rise to many initiatives including:

The Satsang Vidyalaya – providing free, high-quality, multi-lingual education to rural children from the tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh

Satsang Rural School , The Peepal Grove School – a co-educational, residential school committed to providing an environment conducive to the in-depth exploration of knowledge.

Manav Ekta Mission – for promoting inter-faith harmony and transcending religious, racial, geographical, cultural and ideological differences

Walk of Hope – A 15-month long padayatra from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, led by Sri M, spanning 7500 kms across 11 states of India in 2015-16 for peace, harmony and tolerance. This year, the Walk also spread its message of Peace and Oneness in Switzerland, Germany & Netherlands.



H.H. PUJYA SWAMI CHIDANAND SARASWATIJI

H.H. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji's motto in life is, "In the Service of God and humanity." Selflessly dedicated to the welfare of all, He leads, directs and inspires numerous large-scale initiatives that are touching the lives of countless people across India and around the world.

Touched by the hand of God at the tender age of eight, Pujya Swamiji left His home to live a life devoted to God and humanity, spending His youth in silence, meditation and austerities high in the Himalayas. At the age of seventeen, after nine years of unbroken, intense spiritual practice, He returned from the forest under the direction of His guru, and obtained an academic education to parallel His spiritual one.

Today, Pujya Swamiji's religion is unity, and he has been a leader in numerous international, interfaith events, summits and parliaments, including at the United Nations, the Vatican, the World Bank, the World Economic Forum, the House of Commons, the Parliament of World's Religions, Religions for Peace, KAICIID, the Hindu-Jewish Summit in Jerusalem, and countless others.

Pujya Swamiji is President and Spiritual Head of Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh, India, one of the largest interfaith spiritual institutions in India. Under His divine inspiration and leadership, Parmarth Niketan has become a sanctuary known across the globe as one filled with grace, beauty, serenity and true divine bliss. (www.parmarth.org).



Lakshmi Menon Bhatia

India

*India National Coordinator, U-Day 2019, World Weavers
Strategic Advisor, Traidcraft, UK
Honorary Director (India), Sustainability, U.K
Former Director, Global Partnerships, Social Responsibility, GAP Inc.
Former Board Member, Board of Directors, Ethical Trading Initiative, U.K*

*Former Director, Stakeholder Engagement, Fair Labor Association (Washington D.C).
Member, Sustainability Council, Sustainability, U.K*

The vibrant Indian social activist, was at the helm of Gap Inc's 'Social Responsibility' agenda for nearly a decade and a half & then went onto head the Fair Labor Association's team developing its Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and is now the Honorary Director for Sustainability in India & Strategic Advisor for Traidcraft, UK. Earlier, she was also nominated as a Member of the Global Sustainability Council, UK.

Lakshmi joined Gap Inc. in the mid nineties, as one of the oldest members of a 80+ member Social Responsibility team that was instrumental in transforming Gap Inc.'s image from being the poster child of the Anti sweat shop movement to have been rated by as one of the leading Brand in Social Responsibility & Stakeholder engagement. Lakshmi's efforts at a Global Level (with International NGO's, Unions, ILO, World Bank-IFC etc.) resulted in formulation of a number of highly successful partnerships including with the Global Union Federation for the Apparel Industry on Freedom of Association/ Collective Bargaining issues in the Gap Inc. Supply chain.

She was involved in a number of successful negotiations in Supplier factories for Gap Inc. as well as for other Brands as a Board member of the Ethical Trading Initiative in the UK. She has driven Brand Collaboration on common issues in the Supply chain resulting in the setting up of various Brands/ Retailers Working groups in a number of countries including India.

She is currently advising various organizations in the field of Business & Human Rights as well as driving the Sustainability & CSR Agenda.

Lakshmi has addressed various international fora worldwide as Gap Inc's spokesperson and is widely quoted in leading international media including BBC and CNN.

Apart from this she has been personally involved in furthering the cause of Inter Faith Harmony & Oneness thru her Internet radio show, as well by being Blessed to assist in various Events that Support the Global Oneness initiatives. She assisted in the Sherabling Inter Faith Confluence organized by the XII Tai Situ Rinpoche in November 2014, assisted in the Walk of Hope led by the Great Mystic and Social Reformer Sri M which focused on various Social issues including Inter Faith Harmony, helped assist in various Sufi Council Events and is now working on INDIA U-DAY 2019, another Global Confluence of Music & Art to raise the awareness on the One World family and Inter Faith Harmony. She is also very passionate about Natural Farming and Animal Rights.



Shajada Syed Saifuddin Ahmed Al-Hasani Maizbhandari

Bangladesh

Shahjada Syed Saifuddin Ahmed Al-Hasani Maizbhandari (M.J.A.) is the prominent Imam of Darbar-E Gausul Azam Maizbhandari, a holy centre of Sufi practice carrying the essence of the

'MaizbhandariTariqa'. This pre-eminent Sufi order was established at the South-eastern region of Bengal in the mid 19th century by the 27th descendent of holy Prophet (SAW) Gausul Azam Hazrat Shah Sufi Syed Ahmadullah Maizbhandari ® (1826-1906). The order is renowned for its open spiritual method or Sufi way where any one can join despite caste, creed, sex, religion. It is based on humanity and love which connects creator and creation. After the departure of Hazrat Ahmed Ullah ®, the Maizbhandari philosophy spread through his competent successor Gausul Azam Hazrat Shah Sufi Syed Gulamur Rahman ® (1866-1937), who was lovingly called 'Baba Bhandari'. Among the other saints of the Maizbhandari 'Silsila' (Lineage) were Hazrat Shah Sufi Syed Abul Bashor Maizbhandari ® (1906-1956) and his successor Hazratul Allamah Shah Sufi Syed Mainuddin Ahmed Al Hasani Wal Hossaini Maizbhandari ®) or Baba Mainuddin (1937-2011), who played a vital role in spreading the Maizbhandari philosophy globally.



Audrey E. Kitagawa

USA

Audrey E. Kitagawa, JD, is the President/Founder of the International Academy for Transcultural Cooperation, the President of the Light of Awareness International Spiritual Family, the former Advisor to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict at the United Nations, and a Trustee of Council For A Parliament of The World's Religions, and a founding Trustee of the New York City Peace Museum. She is a member of the international advisory council of the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, a United Nations Representative for the United Religions Initiative, and Chair Emeritus of the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns, A Committee of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations. She has been enstooled into the royal family as the Nekoso Hema (i.e. Queen Mother of Development), of Ajiyamanti in Ghana, West Africa, and has a school which she helped to build named after her in her African name, the Nana Ode Anyankobea Junior Secondary School. She is a recipient of the Spirit of the United Nations Award, an award which is presented to members of the UN community, who uphold the founding spirit of the United Nations.

She is a recipient of an Honorary Interfaith Minister Degree from The New Seminary.



Martien den Blanken

The Netherlands

Mr. Den Blanken (1951) has a background in agriculture. He has a Master Degree in Land and Water Management at the Agricultural University of Wageningen. In 1976 he started his professional career at KIWA Watercycle Research Institute (KWR), with research in the field of protection and management of sources for drinking water. Later he held several management functions at drinking water utilities in the Netherlands. From 1993 until his retirement in 2015 he acted as CEO of PWN Water Supply Company of North Holland, one of the 10 drinking water companies in the Netherlands. In these years he was also nationally and internationally active in a great number of water related organisations. Under his leadership PWN developed into an internationally recognised technology provider. At his farewell of PWN he was honoured with the honour medal of the Province of North Holland and with an honorary fellowship of KWR. Momentary Mr den Blanken fulfills several supervisory functions in the water- and waste sector and is an active member of the Roman Catholic Church.



Valérieane Bernard

Switzerland

Since 1992, Valérieane Bernard has been actively involved in the ecological movement, promoting sustainable development and raising public awareness about the forces that drive climate change. She has produced radio programs on the theme of culture of peace, personal development, and quality of life in Costa Rica and was the Assistant to the Director at the *NGO Ecole Instrument de Paix*, Geneva, Switzerland. She is fluent in four languages French (her mother tongue), English, Spanish, and Portuguese and is a sought-after translator for many international events. Her refined ability to work with people from different cultural contexts has been an asset for bringing ethics and values into the workplace, improving teamwork and customer relations and aiding conflict resolution. She is a co-founder of **The Geneva Interfaith Forum on Climate Change, Environment and Human Rights**.



Gabriel Hagai

France

Gabriel Hagai is an Orthodox Rabbi, lecturer, linguist, philologist, paleographer-codicologist, poet, calligrapher and singer. Educated in Jerusalem and Boston, he has been a researcher at the EPHE (École Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Sorbonne, Paris), and a guest lecturer at ISTR (Institute of Science and Theology of Religions, Catholic University, Paris). Very invested in interreligious dialogue, he is a member of the Interfaith Committee of the Franciscan Family (CIFF), and serves on the Council of Sages of the association Tout Est Un (Paris). He is also a Master-Initiator in a mystical tradition of Sephardic Judaism. Gabriel Hagaï is co-author of the books: Rites – Fêtes et Célébrations de l'Humanité (dir. Thierry-Marie Courau et Henri de La Hougue), Bayard, 2012; and L'Aventure de la Calligraphie (dir. ColettePoggi), Bayard, 2014.



Paramahansa Prajnanananda

India

Paramahansa Prajnanananda, Kriya Yoga master and instructor, is the spiritual leader of International Kriya Yoga Institute. He devoted himself to spiritual training, social and health services and charity, has set up a boarding school for poor and orphaned children in India. He gave speeches on reducing poverty and on Yoga at The Assembly of World Religions Conference in 1999 at South Africa, is continuing to represent Kriya Yoga teachings in international events he participates and travels.



Sadvhi Bhagawati Saraswati was raised in an American family in Hollywood, California and graduated from Stanford University. She was completing her Ph.D. when she left America in 1996 to come and live permanently at Parmarth Niketan Ashram in Rishikesh, India. She has been living there for the last twenty years, engaged in spiritual practice and dedicated service. She was officially initiated into the order of Sanyas (monastic renunciation) in the year 2000, by her Guru, His Holiness Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji. Sadvhiji is a renowned speaker who gives keynote addresses at large forums, on a wide variety of topics ranging from conscious business to science and spirituality to sustainable development to the keys of happiness and peace in life

to all aspects of yoga. She has also been a speaker at the United Nations, Parliament of World Religions and many international conferences and summits. Sadhviji is Secretary-General of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, an international interfaith organization dedicated to bringing clean water, sanitation & hygiene to the children of the world

Sheikh Ahmed Tijani Ben Omar

Ghana

Ahmed Tijani Ben Omar specialised in Islamic Law and Jurisprudence, including comparative religion, astronomy, spiritual science and healing, divine poetry and chanting, fine arts and culture He took Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Kulliyat Athakaffah Al Arabiyah in Ghana and studied Biblical Science and History through the Methodist Missionary High School in Ghana. Tijani is a leader of the Tijaniyyah, which came to the United States in the 1980s. He is also the National Advisor International Association of Sufism USA; Advisor Islamic Studies and Research Association ISSRA USA; President and Imam Universal Islamic Center USA; Member of the World Council of Religious Leaders under the auspices of The United Nations Millennium World Peace Summit . He has been involved in peacemaking work in Chicago's inner cities and inter-faith activity across the world.



Swamini Adityananda Saraswati India

Director, Programmes, Policy & Development, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance

Global Trustee, United Religions Initiative A disciple of HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Swamini Adityananda Saraswati has been serving the poor and working towards helping to realize an improved environment and healthier world for nearly three decades. Her lifetime of service includes years of helping to resettle refugees and torture survivors from around the world, so that they could overcome their traumas and receive the knowledge, compassionate help and skills necessary for living happier lives in the wake of their tremendous suffering. As part of this work, she co-founded a refugee agency which continues to provide crucial direct

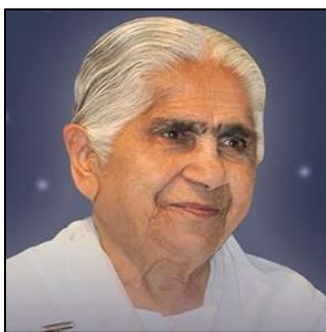
services for thousands of survivors of war, hunger, genocide, persecution, and torture a year from over twenty nations. Swamini Adityananda also worked around the world with prayers of helping to do her part in alleviating the sufferings of humanity. In so doing, she served from the ground level to the United Nations and World Bank policy levels in the race to abate hunger, thirst, violence, AIDS, war, environmental degradation, and injustice within nations including India, the United States, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Thailand, and others. Swamini Adityananda was graced with sanyas (monasticism) by the hands of HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji.



Dharma Master Hsin Tao

Taiwan

Dharma Master Hsin Tao born in upper Burma in 1948 to ethnic Chinese parents, Master Hsin Tao was left orphaned and impoverished at an early age. Having been taken in by the remnants of ROC military units operating along the border of Yunnan, China, he was brought to Taiwan in 1961. At the age of 15, he was deeply moved by the compassion of Guanyin Bodhisattva (Avalokitesvara) and resolved to seek the supreme truth and to bring relief to all who suffer. As an offering to the Buddha, he had himself tattooed with the vows "May I awaken in gratitude for the kindness of Guanyin," "I will never rest until Buddhahood is attained," and "Liberating all beings by living in suchness." After ordaining at the age of 25 and making a vow to attain enlightenment, Master Hsin Tao travelled on foot for over ten years, practicing austerities in lonely and secluded locations. Having arrived at the Fahua Cave on Fulong Mountain in early 1983, Master Hsin Tao undertook a fast which was to last over two years, during which time he attained deep insight into the meaning of "Only when all beings are liberated, is enlightenment fully attained."



Dadi Janki

India

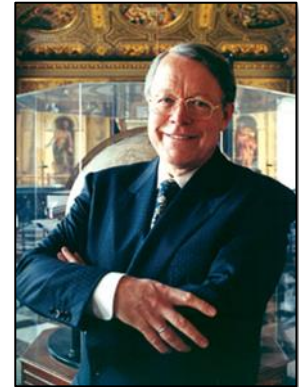
Written message for the Peace Pilgrimage Conference from RAJYOGINI DADI JANKI - Chief of Brahma Kumaris Overview Dadi (Elder Sister) Janki has dedicated more than 70 years of her life to the work of the Prajapita Brahma Kumari Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya (Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University) of which she is the Administrative Head. After serving throughout India in the years following independence, she moved to London, UK, in 1974 and from there her vision and drive saw the organisation's teachings carried into more than 100 countries. She has been based back in India since August 2007, at the main headquarters in Mt Abu, Rajasthan, following

the passing away of Dadi Prakashmani, the former head. Now internationally acknowledged as a great spiritual leader, Dadi's lifelong focus has been to align.

Joost R. Ritman

The Netherlands

Joost R. Ritman (1941) is an active Amsterdam business man with a deep interest in spirituality. He began collecting rare books at a young age, after his mother had presented him with a copy of a seventeenth-century edition of the Aurora, a work by Jacob Böhme, one of the authors who are a lasting source of inspiration to him. When he conceived the plan to turn his private collection of books into a library, his vision was to bring together under one roof manuscripts and printed works in the field of the Hermetic tradition, and to show the interrelatedness between the various collecting areas and their relevance for the present day.



In addition to his passion for books, Ritman also feels greatly committed to his native city Amsterdam, in particular its cultural treasures. Museum Het Rembrandthuis, the Westerkerk and the Library of the Royal Concertgebouworchestra are some of the institutions to have benefited from his sponsorship. His merits for the world of the book were acknowledged with a number of notable awards. In 1995 Ritman was presented with the Laurens Jansz Coster award, a prize annually presented in the Coster city of Haarlem. In 2002 he was awarded the silver medal by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW); in the same year he was also knighted in the Order of the Dutch Lion.

Andrew Vidich

USA

Andrew Vidich, PhD, is an author, educator, international speaker, and editor. Dr. Vidich has been an adjunct assistant professor of religion at Manhattan College in Riverdale NY and at Iona College in New Rochelle. He is also a Senior Advisor and History Chair, at Repertory High School for the Theatre Arts in New York City. Dr. Vidich holds degrees in music SUNY (B.A.) Comparative Mythology and Religion, New School University (M.A.) Education New School University (M.S.) and a PH.D in Religion from Bernelli International Graduate School. (2000)



He is a founding member of The Interfaith Council of New York and a member of the council of trustees of The Temple of Understanding, an international interfaith organization. His consulting firm The Leadership Institute-inc. teaches and trains people in conflict management, leadership

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Former political correspondent for the Dutch National Broadcast Company and known moderator. In 2004 she started 'Mediavrouw' wich provides media/speechtraining. Since 1999 Eva is connected to the Mevlana Sufi Order in the Netherlands.