

## **Press Blurb**

The heritage of India's inclusiveness, its multi-religious, multicultural, multilingual and multi-racial diversity, has been forged through centuries. India has been home to very significant number of practitioners of practically every religion on earth, be it Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism or the Bahaism for centuries.

*The remarkable capacity to share, integrate and interweave strands of artistic, philosophical and other achievements of various cultures fostered an enriched cultural repertoire that has thrived and blossomed over a span of centuries.*

It is this intrinsic unity, integrity and harmony that enabled India to fight against the British might as one force for the cause of freedom. There were many languages but one voice. And it is this unique inherent unity that is the cornerstone to growth of India's success.

This powerful idea of India stretching across half a century in the midst of spectacular and often turbulent events is the existence of its strong secular, democratic, tolerant , pluralist ideals.

We have, at times, seen our relationships getting soured. However, the ethos of India's pluralism, tolerance, inclusiveness, the sacred tradition of Sarva-Dharma-Samabhava or the Equality of all Religions have kept us together. This cherished bond is threatened and this idea of India is at stake of late due to rising tide of intolerance.

Tolerance is an integral part of democracy. It entails not only tolerance of those who agree with us but also of those who do not agree with us. India has been most tolerant. However, a few people are intolerant. We need to concentrate on national integration, inclusion and social cohesion.

The Paris terror attacks last week were horrendous, heinous and condemnable. They were totally irreligious and un-Islamic. President Obama said it is time for the Muslim world to ask some tough questions about how extremist ideologies take root in their midst. The question is certainly pertinent but is it confined to the Muslim world alone? World leaders need to ask some tough questions on what led to the flowering of Daesh? As our Hon'ble has said, it is time to de-link terrorism from religion.

Revenge is not the answer. Killing innocents can never be condoned under any circumstances. It runs counter to humanity and compassion that all religions teach. A sane, safe society is not possible if every community wants to avenge events of the past. Every community needs to move on leaving the past behind accepting that two wrongs do not make a right. Some communities like the Germans have succeeded in doing this after World War II-and that has been the basis of civilized progress.

The challenge before us is to preserve and safeguard India's secular nationhood that forms part and parcel of our Constitution and is fundamentally vital. We need many languages with a melodious tenor to bind us in the bonds of communal harmony, solidarity and peaceful co-existence.

**In keeping with this spirit of Unity in Diversity, The Wisdom Foundation has invited respected Religious Leaders of ALL Religious Traditions and Scholars to a Meeting on PEACEFUL-COEXISTENCE AMONG ALL RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS IN INDIA: AN INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE to take a lead role in sharing their knowledge, thereby suggesting solutions to resolve the dilemmas facing Indian communities by constructing a historical narrative based on perspectives that will help all Indians to co-exist with respect, honor and peace .**

**Pls give wide coverage to the event and oblige**

**Zeenat Shaukat Ali**

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