



## **BRAHMA KUMARIS WORLD SPIRITUAL UNIVERSITY**

### **Experiments with Peace and Disarmament**

Statement for the

62nd Annual DPI/NGO Conference, "For Peace and Development: Disarm Now!"  
September 9-11, 2009, Mexico City.

The season from September to December includes four UN days acknowledging the primacy of values in human engagement: September 21, the United Nations International Day of Peace; October 2, the UN International Day of Nonviolence; November 16, the UN International Day of Tolerance; and December 10, the UN Human Rights Day.

These are days when people of the world pause to remember these intrinsic values and to commit themselves anew to bringing these values into the domain of human relationship and civic engagement. It's good that we make speeches commemorating these values and those who lived by them, but making speeches and writing papers don't have enough power to bring about even a single day of peace, much less a global shift to a consciousness of peace.

In the interest of seeding real change in the world, the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (BKWSU) is proposing a season of experimentation and learning, which might lead to new kinds of action. It was Gandhi who, in *Satyagraha*, described his personal experiments with truth and his subsequent engagement in principled actions. What he understood was that awareness and personal experience are the necessary ground from which principled action in the world proceeds.

In spite of decades of peace negotiations and disarmament talks, the world is more armored than ever before and the opportunities for peace seem as remote as at any time in history. The sheer magnitude of the challenges seems to call for sweeping legislation and institutional engagement, but the flaw in this premise is that external commitments without internal experience and conviction cannot succeed. All real change – big changes in the world and small changes in a single life – occur as a sequence of subtle shifts, beginning with a change in awareness. A change in awareness precipitates a change in attitude; one's attitude colors one's vision; when we see the world in a new way, we can no longer take the same action we would have taken before; and our new actions generate a new world. So the subtle sequence for all real change is awareness, attitude, vision, action, the world.

This subtle sequence is values-neutral. It is the same sequence whether we are talking about a move to fear or a move to peace. An awareness of fear expands to become a fearful attitude. Someone with a fearful attitude sees danger everywhere. In seeing danger everywhere, he or she takes actions to protect him or herself, eventually creating an armored world.

### **September: Experiences with Peace**

In the month of September we propose to experiment with peace – to create experiences of peace, which will in turn lead to an awareness of peace. Our belief is that as we inculcate an awareness of peace, our attitude will shift to an attitude of peace, affecting our vision so that we look with peaceful eyes. Our peaceful vision will lead us to take peaceful action, and we will begin to see evidence of peace in the world we generate around us.

The foundational knowledge of the Brahma Kumaris speaks of peace as the original religion of the soul. Peace is a quality that is innate in all souls. Seen from this perspective, the desperate search for peace at this time is based in the longing of souls for something that we remember – a state or condition in which we find our natural nature.

Though worldly examples are rare, they are not nonexistent. Tibetan spiritual and political leader, His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, is an example of one who has cultivated an inner awareness of peace. This awareness has led to his benevolent attitude towards all. His benevolent attitude has led to a compassionate vision that he has maintained over the years in spite of extraordinary pressure from Tibetans. His compassionate vision has led to a policy of determined peace-making even under pressure from disenchanted Tibetan youth, who feel his policies have failed. Pico Iyer, author of “The Open Road: The Global Journey of the 14th Dalai Lama,” noted in a *New York Review of Books* article that “in the 34 years I’ve been regularly talking and listening to him, I’ve grown used to seeing the [Dalai Lama] begin each day by praying for his ‘Chinese brothers and sisters,’ and constantly asking his fellow Tibetans to ‘reach out to the Chinese people and make better relations.’”

### **A Call for Experiments with Peace: The Subtle Dynamic of Deep Change**

During this next four months we are issuing an invitation to thoughtful people in the public, civic and private sectors to participate with us in a season of experiments, beginning in September with experiments with peace. The experiment has three steps:

- (1) Use your own spiritual practice to cultivate an inner awareness of peace as the natural nature of the soul. Do this practice at some time each day. It can be morning, evening, or while you are in action in the world. It can be

prayer, meditation, chanting, or whatever is your own spiritual practice, but it needs to be a daily practice.

- (2) Notice what experiences of peace begin to emerge from inside of you and manifest around you. Make a note in a journal of these experiences each day.
- (3) Share the story of your daily practice and your subsequent observations once a week – sometime over each weekend. In sharing the story of your observations, we will be especially interested in whether you notice a change in **awareness, attitude, vision, and action**. We would like you to share your observations of your practice and resulting inner and outer changes on the BK UN blog – [www.bkun.org/blog](http://www.bkun.org/blog). (Under “Experiments with Values” on the right side of the page.)

We will collect and read the results of these submitted stories. Over time we will analyze the results to see if conscious spiritual experiments with these truths (peace, nonviolence, tolerance and dignity) lead to a tangible change in awareness, attitude, vision, and action. We will publish the results of our experiments in early 2010.

Our hope is to expand awareness of the spiritual dimension of the call for peace and disarmament so that it becomes, not just a deeply held wish, but a viable way forward, starting with the personal commitment of those at the forefront of the peace and disarmament movement. We believe that consistent spiritual practice intended to shift the inner awareness to one of deep peace will set in motion a spiritual chain reaction of peaceful thoughts, peaceful vision, and peaceful actions, leading to a new and peaceful world.

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## **Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University**

The BKWSU is a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and in consultative status with UNICEF.

The University was founded in India in 1937 and has branches in over 100 countries worldwide.

It has been affiliated to the United Nations Department of Public Information since 1980.

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