

**Office of the Media Coordinator
Jamia Millia Islamia**

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Press Release

Gandhi and Buddha indisputable part of Indian History says Prof. Anand Kumar at observance of 69th Martyrdom Day of Father of the Nation at JMI

Mahatma Gandhi and Gautam Buddha are two names that are indisputable part of Indian history” said Prof Anand Kumar, Former JNU Professor, speaking on the “Relevance of Gandhi Today” on the observance of the 69th Martyrdom Day of the Father of the Nation at Jamia Millia Islamia.

The special lecture was jointly organised by the Society for Communal Harmony (SCH), New Delhi and JMI today at the Faculty of Engineering and Technology Auditorium, JMI. The function was chaired by Prof. Talat Ahmad, VC, JMI.

Prof. Kumar, drawing a rather large canvas from the Gandhian way of life, said that in principle there can be no dispute on the relevance of Gandhi today, more so at a time when identity politics is threatening to strike at the very root of Indian democracy. However, he said that there were a few detractors of Gandhi, who have argued otherwise. It is important for the youth of the country to understand Gandhian thought and philosophy which has to do with truth, non-violence and Satyagraha, communal harmony and uplift of the oppressed classes.

Prof Kumar, who is Fellow at Indian Institute of Advance Study, Shimla cautioned students against falling into a trap of cynicism especially “at a time when we are fast forgetting about the founders of the nation. It is important that we not only remember their contributions to our country but also learn from their lives. “

“Democracy is getting polluted and black money and corruption have become so entrenched in the system that there is a growing disconnect and disenchantment in society” Prof Kumar added.

Touching upon secularism, Prof Kumar said it was a key Gandhian philosophy that emanated from his belief of *Sarva Dharma Sambhav* that is important for maintaining communal peace and harmony.

Veteran Gandhian and journalist, Shri Kuldeep Nayar, President, SCH, said that “Gandhiji stood for a sense of accommodation and a spirit of tolerance. If these values were to be taken away it will not be in the interest of the country”.

Shri Nayar said that he used to attend Gandhi’s prayers meetings where recitations from the Bible, Quran and Gita were made.

He reminded the students that India is governed by a Constitution that deems everyone as an equal citizen and protects the interests of minorities.

Prof Ahmad asked students to follow the path shown by the Father of the Nation and work towards upliftment of the country with confidence, dedication and devotion without being carried away by momentary disturbances that threaten to disrupt the fabric of the nation. He added that “India has

seen many upheavals but they have eventually died down and settled. We should, therefore, be optimistic about our future.”

Shri C B Tripathi, Vice President, SCH praised the Vice Chancellor, JMI, for having the vision to grant them the opportunity to discuss an important subject like this at the university which has a rich nationalist past.

Dr Syeda S. Hameed, former Planning Commission member who is also Vice President, SCH, said that she too was grateful at the graciousness shown by the Vice Chancellor, Prof Ahmad in hosting this special programme on an important day like this. Quoting widely from Gandhiji she said that his humility was exemplary and “we must learn from it.”

“In a world where there is a madness of arms race and total disregard of environment and humanity, the two things Gandhi stood for, we have to learn from his life ” she said.

The function was coordinated by Prof. Tasneem Meenai, Dean of Students’ Welfare, JMI, and was attended by the Finance Officer, Mr. Sanjay Kumar, Deans, Controller of Exams, Dr A A A Faizi, Heads of Departments, Directors of Centres, faculty members, staff and students of the university.

Prof. Saima Saeed

Hony. Deputy Media Coordinator