

UPLIFTING HUMAN VALUES

Sri Sri unveils Universal Declaration of Human Values



Highlights of the Art of Living Silver Jubilee

March 28, 2007
Kennedy Center, Washington DC



Congressmen, senators, diplomats, Nobel laureates, judges, business leaders and others joined His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar on stage at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. during the Art of Living Foundation's 25th anniversary celebrations. photo by ART BALTROTSKY

The movers and shakers of the United States of America felicitated His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar for his invaluable contributions to the world community at the prestigious John F Kennedy Centre in Washington DC on March 28, 2007. Prominent members of Congress and Senate, educators, professionals, scientists, ambassadors, judges and business leaders came together in acknowledging and honouring the work of the Art of Living and H H Sri Sri Ravi Shankar at the Art of Living Silver Jubilee gala, held at the Kennedy Centre.

The administration in Washington was so enamoured by Sri Sri's vision of fostering harmonious coexistence among different peoples and cultures that March 28, 2007 was proclaimed as Sri Sri Ravi Shankar day in Washington DC and March 25-30, 2007, was proclaimed "Human Values Week."

"We need more than ever the contribution of men and women of faith who defend and promote the human values that bind us together...The values you champion including non violence, compassion, and the sanctity of all life go to the heart of what the United Nations stands for."

Hon. Ban Ki Moon
Secretary General,
United Nations



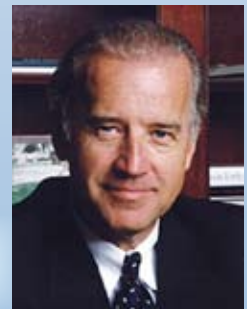
"Guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's contribution to the spiritual uplifting of the people of the world, and to the development and dissemination of human values across the "globe has been truly unique and unprecedented"

Ambassador Vijay Nambiar
Chief of Staff,
Office of UN Secretary-General



"So here in this artistic shrine to our former President, it is fitting that we celebrate the 25th anniversary of one of India's stars - the Art of Living Foundation."

**Presidential candidate &
Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr.**
US Senate





His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, center, is joined by (from left) U.S. Congressman Joe Wilson, U.S. Congressman Jim Gerlach, U.S. Congressman Luis Gutierrez and Natwar Gandhi, the chief financial officer for the District of Columbia, at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. before the Art of Living Foundation's 25th anniversary celebrations. photo by ART BALTROTSKY

Calling Art of Living as one of India's stars, presidential candidate and Senator Joseph R. Biden lauded the Art of Living Foundation for its 25 years of service, "of promoting peace, combating violence and drug addiction and empowering our youth"

Hon Steny Hoyer, Majority Party leader headed the reception committee for the event. Among other prominent members of the Reception committee were Senator Hon Dianne Feinstein, members of Congress - Hon Gary Ackerman, Hon Melissa Bean, Hon Phil Gingrey, Hon Jesse Jackson Jr, Hon Jerry Lewis, Hon Jim McDermott, Hon Eleanor Holmes Norron, Hon Frank Pollone, and Hon Chris VanHollen- and several dignitaries.

"I came here to listen and learn and to appreciate all the great work that Your Holiness (Sri Sri) and foundation (The Art of Living) have been doing around the world and here in the US."

Congressman Jim Gerlach
US House of Representatives



"The foundation's (The Art of Living's) programmes are helping American youth in inner cities turn away from gang violence, drugs and alcohol, on to a path of service and generosity. Thousands of students have gone through Sri Sri's youth empowerment programmes, and practiced random acts of kindness through its Kids for Kids and Teens for Teens programmes."

Congresswoman Diane E. Watson
US House of Representatives



"I came here primarily to express my solidarity with the people of India and to strengthen the relationship between the people of the United States and the people of India."

Congressman Luis Gutierrez
US House of Representatives





His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, right, greets U.S. Congresswoman Schakowsky at the Art of Living Foundation's 25th anniversary celebrations in Washington D.C. as U.S. Congressman Joe Wilson looks on. photo by ART BALTROTOSKY



Floyd "Shad" Meshad, president and founder of the American Veterans Foundation, presented Sri Sri with an award honoring his outstanding service to returning veterans and their families at the Art of Living Foundation's 25th anniversary celebrations. Photo by ART BALTROTOSKY

Twelve judges from the High Court of District of Columbia were among the 2,500 people who flocked to the gala event. Unfortunately several dignitaries, officials from embassies in Washington DC, Congressional leaders and their aides had to be turned down because the hall was filled with capacity.

Floyd 'Shad' Meshad, president and founder of the National Veterans Foundation, presented Sri Sri with an award honouring his outstanding service to returning veterans and their families. Meshad, who recently took part in the Art of Living's 'Project Welcome Home Troops,' program said, "Anything we can do to bring our troops peace of mind and let them come back and reintegrate into society, is worth its weight in gold."

"I am proud to be part of the group that is helping to create the important bonds and look forward to working with a man of peace, a man of vision, a man of compassion and man of action. We certainly need that in this world today."

Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky
US House of Representatives



"I am especially happy to have Sri Sri in our midst as his strong voice against terrorism, against the use of religion as a tool of violence is much respected here and around the world... His courage in going to Kashmir, Pakistan and Sri Lanka with the message that religion does not countenance violence is to be admired as it should be imitated by representatives of other religious traditions."

Congressman Jerry Lewis
US House of Representatives

I cannot express my thanks without commenting on the friendliness, happiness and freedom of soul that was transmitted to me upon my very first meeting with His Holiness."

Judge Tyron T. Butler
Chief Administrative Law Judge
Washington, DC



His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar introduced the Universal Declaration of Human Values at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. during the Art of Living Foundation's 25th anniversary celebrations. The declaration provides a pragmatic vision for the world community, representing a roadmap to foster understanding and harmonious coexistence among different peoples and cultures. Photo by ART BALTROTISKY



Sentoria Collins, Alexis Hernandez, Tika Simone Herman, Joel Filpo and Christian Walton pledged their support for the Declaration of Human Values at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. during the Art of Living Foundation's 25th anniversary celebrations. Photo by ART BALTROTISKY



His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar walks backstage with Nobel laureate Myron Scholes and Art of Living executive director Jeff Houk at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. before the Art of Living Foundation's 25th anniversary celebrations. photo by ART BALTROTISKY

The high point of the celebrations was the unveiling of the Universal Declaration of Human Values, prepared by H H Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. The declaration, drafted in the form of a proposed resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, represents Sri Sri's vision for a fresh approach to fostering understanding and harmonious coexistence among different people and cultures. New Orleans, Maryland, Chicago, Baltimore, Milwaukee were among the various cities that honoured H H Sri Sri Ravi Shankar during his visit to the United States in March 2007.





SUMMARY

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN VALUES

AS PROPOSED BY HIS HOLINESS SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

BACKGROUND

His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has developed a proposed *Universal Declaration of Human Values* which represents his vision for a fresh approach to fostering understanding and harmonious coexistence among different peoples and cultures. It is drafted in the form of a proposed resolution of the United Nations General Assembly. It is hoped that, in due course, member States will formally bring this document forward to the United Nations in accordance with normal General Assembly processes and channels, for discussion, adoption, and subsequent implementation. It is Sri Sri's intention that this proposed Declaration serve as a tool to begin a global discussion of the crucial issues it raises.

Preamble

Given the increasing conflict and violence in the world today, much of which is attributable to religious and ethnic divisions, the preamble recognizes the paramount importance of fostering understanding and harmonious coexistence among different peoples. It expresses a determination to address the root causes of violence and conflict, and points out the need to address the spiritual aspect of human existence in order to achieve the purposes for which the United Nations was formed, including universal human rights as set out in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* as well as the objectives of the *Millennium Declaration*.

ARTICLE 1

Global Commitment and Call to Action

Member States, recognizing the urgent need to rekindle universal human values throughout all sectors of society, commit to nurturing and strengthening human values through working with all institutions of society to ensure that human values are acknowledged, honored, encouraged and rewarded. Broad-based education in human values and multi-cultural, multi-religious education, particularly for all youth, is urgently needed to foster harmony in diversity.

Member States commit to working with partners to ensure such education is available. All individuals and all institutions of society are called upon to join in this sacred endeavor of reawakening human values throughout all sectors of society.

ARTICLE 2

Human Values

Human values are those attributes and qualities that are the very heart of humanity, representing the highest expression of the human spirit. They are innate in all people and include: (1) **a deep caring for all life**, which is the basis for all the other human values, ultimately manifesting as unconditional love; (2) **non-violence**, which arises spontaneously from an awareness of the sacredness of all life; (3) **compassion**, characterized by the desire to eliminate suffering and misery for all life; (4) **friendliness and cooperation**, which blossom with the awareness that we belong to one world family; (5) **generosity and sharing**, qualities that grow with the awareness that true prosperity is the result of giving, not of hoarding; (6) **a feeling of belonging and oneness with all life**, which comes naturally with the awareness that we are all part of one universal spirit; (7) **an eco-friendly attitude and caring for the planet**, arising

from the understanding that the earth is our mother, to be revered and cared for; (8) **service to society**, rooted in the awareness that we are here to contribute something of value to society, not to get something for ourselves; (9) **a sense of commitment and responsibility**, ultimately extending to all of society and all life; (10) **peace and contentment**, part of our deepest nature, to be nurtured and encouraged, bringing peace in our surroundings and ultimately throughout the entire world; (11) **enthusiasm**, to be supported and nurtured as life itself; and (12) **integrity, honesty and sincerity**, honored by all spiritual traditions without exception and forming the foundation of social order and justice.

Human values do not depend on, and are not derived from, any external authority. As the infinite potentiality within all people, human values are already present in every human being; they need only be rekindled to thrive and grow.

There is a close relationship between human rights and human values. However, despite the focus on human rights over the past half-century, little attention has been paid to human values. For human rights to flourish, human values must be nurtured, just as the roots of a tree must be watered for the fruit to grow. Rekindling human values throughout the world is essential to achieving universal human rights, peace and security on the planet, and harmonious coexistence among different peoples and cultures.

ARTICLE 3

Creating New Heroes of Humanity

Society today often glorifies violence, aggression and domination. These baser qualities are often erroneously associated with bravery and heroism, as well as a great sense of pride, particularly among youth. This situation needs to be reversed. To reawaken human values, we need to foster the creation of new role models and heroes who exemplify the qualities of non-violence, friendliness and cooperation. A sense of pride needs to be attached to these human values, which must come to be recognized as the hallmarks of today's true hero.

ARTICLE 4

Human Values and Conflict Resolution

Only one in whom human values have fully blossomed can be truly effective in promoting dialogue in areas of conflict around the world. The very presence of such an individual, considered by all to be a trusted friend, will soothe, calm and comfort. In creating arbitrators and negotiators to work in areas of conflict, primary consideration must be given to choosing individuals such as these, who exemplify the essence of what it means to be human.

ARTICLE 5

Spirituality, Human Values, and Identity

There is an urgent need to reverse the growing lack of spirituality in the world that is contributing to the current increase in conflict and violence. In this document, "spirituality" means living and honoring human values, having a deep caring for all life and an awareness of the sacredness of life. It means rising above limited concepts of one's own identity and seeing one's basic identity, first and foremost, as part of one universal spirit; secondly, as a human being; thirdly, as a man or woman; and, finally, as a member of a particular religion and citizen of a particular nation. Today, however, this hierarchy of identity is reversed, as most people identify themselves with their religion first, failing to recognize that we are all part of one universal spirit, one world family.

ARTICLE 6

Human Values and the Millennium Declaration

A resurgence of human values is needed to achieve the objectives of the *Millennium Declaration*. The shared societal values set out in the *Millennium Declaration*, which are essential to international relations and which govern the conduct of nations, need to be strengthened by focusing on human values, which are part of our deepest nature and which govern the conduct of human beings.

ARTICLE 7

Globalizing Human Values and Wisdom

Although we have globalized the market economy today, we have not globalized human values and wisdom. The *Millennium Declaration* calls for equitable and inclusive globalization, so that it becomes a positive force for all the world's people. We need to further expand and refine this principle. Globalization of wisdom must now be our focus.

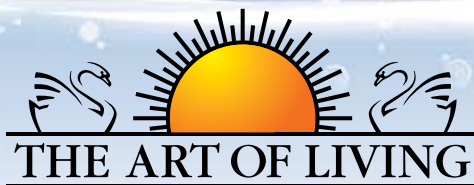
ARTICLE 8

Follow - Up

The General Assembly is called upon to monitor and review progress of member States in implementing the common commitments in this Declaration. The Secretary-General is requested to issue periodic progress reports as a basis for further action.



Kennedy Center, Washington DC



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