



Tourism and Culture Minister, Ms Ambica Soni, inaugurating World Convention on Science and Spirituality in New Delhi.

## World Convention on Science and Spirituality

The first World Convention on Science and Spirituality and the fourth International Vedic Convention was held in New Delhi on January 13-14, 2007. The two-day event organised by the World Academy of Spiritual Sciences (WASS), Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, and the Research Institute of Vedic Culture witnessed a host of spiritual leaders from different countries addressing the delegates. The convention, which was inaugurated by the Tourism and Culture Minister, Mrs Ambica Soni, began with Dr Deepak

Chopra revealing secrets of enlightenment.

Mr Deepak Chopra explained a packed hall of audience how ancient habits of human beings when combined with modern technology gave birth to a very dangerous combination. "What sets us apart from other creatures is our ability to think and question. Wisdom is the criteria for evolution. Reality can be understood in three ways through the instrument of science, mind, and finally through the eyes of the soul. The senses, however, cannot be

believed as they show you what you want to see, in other words, *maya*," he said. According to him, the body is a void and the world is a series of discontinuities. The discontinuity, however, has infinite possibilities.

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, on the other hand, attempted to define the apparent incongruities between science and spirituality. "Science makes sense because technology was used to put it into application. Spirituality had no such backing and thus went out of focus. It became philosophy. However, philosophy and

spirituality are intrinsically different. Philosophy could be concocted, whereas spirituality needs to be explored. And for that, one needs enhanced perception."

He further explained what spirituality is and how it can be attained by ordinary individuals. Peace of mind is not spirituality, he said. "Spirituality is beyond the realm of language. One needs to see the Creator as a living reality, not someone up there. Only then will one be truly spiritual."

According to Sadhguru, yoga is a discipline and not a therapy and health benefits derived from yoga are its sideeffects. "Yoga is actually a ladder to the divine. It is a grand unification, a level of perception where everything is one. One can perform it at all times but one has to be methodical while doing it."

Swami Nikhilananda of Chinmaya Mission said that he did not consider science and spirituality as two different entities. Spirituality is deeper aspect of science. "If we go deeper into the science, we find that we cannot observe an object without influencing the object. It is believed that the world exists irrespective of the observer. Whether I observe the world or not, the world exists. But as we go into the deeper science of quantum mechanics, we realise that the observer influences the world, which he is observing. What influences the world is our intention, our thinking, and our feelings,"

He said.

Describing love as an essential component of spirituality, Swami Nikhilananda said, "the key to real happiness is when a person develops love for something or somebody beyond his/her own self. Love has no opposite because it is the key to



Spiritual leader Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev being felicitated at the World Convention on Science and Spirituality.



Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev and other dignitaries at The Eternal Solutions stall of the spirituality convention.

realising the oneness of the entire creation."

Speakers at the convention were unanimous that the Indian way of spirituality is gradually becoming a part of the world's conscious efforts towards achieving holistic health. Sister B K Dennis of Brahmakumaris said, spirituality in sharp contrast to materialism teaches one to view

oneself as a being rather than an object.

Dr W Selvamurthy, the Chief Controller (R&D) of DRDO said that science and spirituality are not two parallel entities but it is a point of convergence and yoga does that convergence. "We (DRDO) have a very strong group who has been looking at application of yoga, herbal

and ayurvedic medicine for the welfare of armed forces. We look not only at the level of health, we also look at mantra and yoga including hatha yoga," he said.

Dr Selvamurthy said, science and spirituality both are trying to realise the ultimate truth. Science uses experimentation through which we make observations, gadgets, instruments, etc to realise the truth and understand mysteries of nature. Spirituality uses experiential learning, experiential experimentation to realise the truth, he said.

The speakers were in favour of imparting spiritual education to youths at school level itself. Dr S C Manchanda of Sir Ganga Ram Hospital said that despite there being no concrete definition of spirituality, medical community has for long recognised its importance for the general wellbeing of patients.

Dr H K Chopra of Moolchand Medcity and Vice Chairman of the WASS, underlined the importance of

anger management in achieving a spiritual and healthy life. Classifying anger as justified and unjustified, he said some amount of anger is needed to increase productivity. But long term anger can cause a host of health problems like angina, high blood pressure, and heart attack. It is an important emotion and should not be misused.

The Advisor to the World Health Organisation (WHO), Dr Vijay Chandra, said that WHO had made an attempt some years ago to include spirituality in its definition of health. But it could not be done because there was not enough scientific evidence to convince the World Health Assembly. He stressed the need to define spiritualism away from its esoteric connotations so that the queries of the scientific community and health policy makers across the world could be answered.

Dr Chandra said, "WHO defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing. Health is

not merely the absence of disease and what is missing from this definition is spirituality. It is for us to take leadership role and to ensure that spirituality also gets included in this definition. For this, a new approach is required. We must promote our traditional practices but we need research on mind-body medicine to establish our credibility, he said.

The Chairman of WASS, Dr S K Sama, said that spirituality is about living by choice. But the choices should be made consciously and not accidentally. He said, while India had been propounding the yogic way of life for centuries, it got international exposure only recently. It has been proved scientifically that yoga is a holistic life. Spirituality is not just a belief but it lends to the overall health of a being.

Dr Jitendra Nagpal of VIMHANS said for the youth, spirituality is an indescribable support system with healing and growth inducing powers but different from organised religion.