

## **“Without Love There Is Nothing in Life”: Interfaith Reflections on Love as the Essence of All Religions**

“Without love there is nothing in life,” said Prabhu Rishikesh Anand Das from ISKCON Girgaon, opening an evening that celebrated love in its many spiritual dimensions. The gathering, organised by the Inter-Religious Solidarity Council and the Bahá’ís of Mumbai, was held at the Bahá’í Centre in Marine Lines on October 25 to mark the birth anniversaries of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh. Themed “*Love: The Essence of All Religions*,” the event brought together representatives from multiple faiths who reflected on how their traditions view love as the foundation of human connection and divine relationship.

Prabhu Rishikesh Anand Das began with the hymn *Achyutam Keshavam*, invoking devotion to the divine as the purest expression of love. Referring to the sacred month of Kartik, he reminded the audience that love is what sustains both faith and life itself. The Bahá’í prayer that followed reaffirmed unity, compassion, and peace — principles deeply intertwined with the Bahá’í understanding of love as the force that leads humanity toward oneness.

Representing the Islamic tradition, Maulana Suraqa Rajjab Barmare recited verses from the Holy Quran, emphasising that humanity is bound together in brotherhood and sisterhood. “Every religion,” he said, “ultimately teaches kindness and togetherness.” His words resonated with the belief that love, in Islam, extends beyond affection — it is expressed through mercy, justice, and care for creation. Sister Anju from the Brahma Kumaris led a brief moment of silence, describing love as the energy that unites all souls with the Supreme. Through peace (*Shanti*), love (*Prem*), and bliss (*Anand*), she said, we remember our shared spiritual essence.

Father Lawrence D’Souza from the Christian community added a melodic prayer, singing *Mein joh gaaya tune gawayaa, maine suna joh tune sunaya*, before quoting Saint Paul’s words on love as the highest virtue. He reflected on how love, in Christianity, is not only an emotion but an act of faith and compassion that mirrors divine grace. Professor Surinder Kaur spoke from the Sikh perspective, highlighting the universality of love. “All gods are one,” she said, explaining that Sikhism teaches love as the path to experience divine truth and equality among humans.

From the Zoroastrian faith, Ervad Dr. Cyrus Dastoor shared that love forms the moral fabric of society — realised through *humata, hukhta, huvarashta* (good thoughts, good words, and good deeds). He underscored that love is not merely felt but lived through acts of charity, integrity, and collective wellbeing.

The evening concluded with a serene prayer for peace offered by journalist Dinesh Marathe, who chanted “Om Shanti.” A short video introducing the prophet-founders of the Bahá’í faith and its principles was then screened, encapsulating the spirit of unity, fellowship, and the shared reverence for love that connected every speaker.

What emerged through the evening was a beautiful harmony — a mosaic of spiritual traditions, each distinct in its symbols and teachings, yet united by the belief that love lies at the heart of all religions, as the truest expression of the divine in human life.