

January 31, 2025

Press Release

JMI organises Special Lecture on "Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue"

A special lecture on 'Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue' was jointly organised by the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Centre (MMTTC) and the Centre for Comparative Religions and Civilizations (CCRC), Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), at MMTTC on Tuesday, 28 January 2025.

The Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of JMI, Prof. Mazhar Asif, was the chief patron and Chair for the event, and Prof. Md. Mahtab Alam Rizvi, Registrar of JMI, was the Guest of Honour. The keynote speaker was Prof. Angeliki Ziaka, an eminent scholar at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, and Programme Executive for Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation at the World Council of Churches (WCC), Geneva.

In her introductory remarks, Prof. Kulwinder Kaur, Hony. Director of MMTTC and CCRC, said that the theme of the lecture "Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue" resonated deeply with Jamia's ethos of religious and cultural tolerance, respect for diversity, and inclusiveness. She also spoke of the relevance of dialogue in today's world, its role in breaking down prejudices, and bringing healing and reconciliation even in the most challenging situations. Drawing on her experience of working with the Sikh tradition, she spoke of the role of seva (community service), and Langar (communal kitchen), as great bridging institutions.

In his remarks, Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Mazhar Asif, highlighted India's rich tradition of religious and cultural diversity and tolerance. Quoting verses from the Quran, Persian and Urdu poetry, the Vice Chancellor emphasised that the true spirit of religion lies not only in the performance of rituals but that the best form of worship is love, compassion, and service of humanity. Speaking on the occasion, Registrar of JMI, Prof. Mahtab Alam Rizvi, highlighted the role of interfaith dialogue in promoting peace. He stressed the need for intercultural and interreligious communication for harmony and conflict resolution.

The keynote speaker, Prof. Ziaka discussed the genesis and history of interreligious dialogue, with particular reference to her country, Greece, and highlighted the distinction between interfaith and interreligious dialogue. She recounted the struggles and the birth of the undergraduate programme in Islamic Studies at her university,

which now offers training in areas encompassing the different expressions of Islam, including the study and interpretation of the Quran. She stressed that the success of interreligious dialogue depends on the will to know, respect, and protect the other and that dogmatism and fear of losing one's religious values are detrimental to interreligious dialogue. Instead, intercultural dialogue, characterised by a social and humanistic approach, could be used as an alternative, as it is free from religious prejudices.

Prof. Ziaka's presentation was followed by remarks from the two discussants, Prof. Azra Abidi (Department of Sociology), and Dr. Annie Kunnath (CCRC). Dr. Ahmad Sohaib, Faculty, CCRC, moderated the discussion. The formal vote of thanks was presented by Dr. Khalid Raza.

Public Relations Office
Jamia Millia Islamia















Prof. Mazhar Asif
Vice-Chancellor, JMI

Prof. Angeelki Ziaka
Assistant University of Pennsylvania, USA

Prof. Mohd. Musim Khan
Dean, F.A Social Sciences, JMI

Prof. Sara Begum
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