

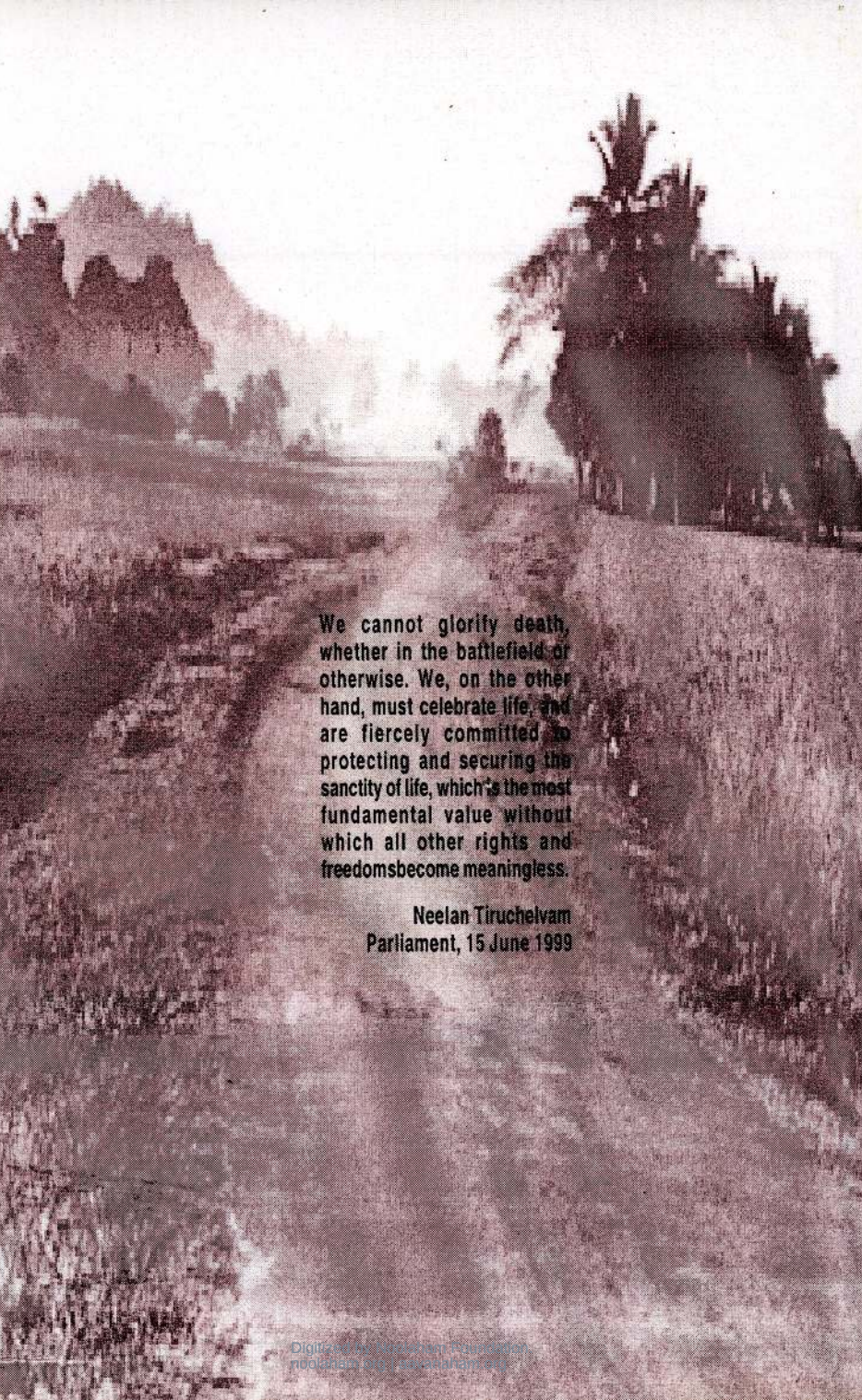
Neelan Tiruchelvam Commemoration Programme

We cannot glorify death, whether in the battlefield or otherwise. We, on the other hand, must celebrate life, and are fiercely committed to protecting and securing the sanctity of life, which is the most fundamental value without which all other rights and freedoms become meaningless.

Neelan Tiruchelvam
Parliament, 15 June 1999

January 30th - February 1st, 2000





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It is not possible for me to accept the inevitability of violence.

-Neelan Tiruchelvam

This world lives
Because
 some men
 do not eat alone,
not even when they get
the sweet ambrosia of the gods;

they've no anger in them,
they fear evils other men fear
but never sleep over them;

give their lives for honour,
will not touch a gift of whole worlds
if tainted;

there's no faintness in their hearts
and they do not strive
for themselves

Because such men are,
this world is.

- Iḷam Peruvaḷuti

Neelan Tiruchelvam- A Commemoration

On July 29th, 1999 life seemed to stop and we were left with darkness, until darkness could be no more. And Neelan challenged us, in death as he had in life, to tread beyond the shadows cast by hatred, fear, anger and desolation. January 31st, 2000, barely more than six months since, we light a candle for what should have been Neelan's 56th birthday. We celebrate in the way we think Neelan would have wanted — a gathering of close friends and colleagues in the pursuit of intellectual exchange, new ideas and a future better than today.

Neelan Tiruchelvam was born on the anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. The torch was to be carried on. Never a cruel word; never a raised voice or a harsh gesture. Non-violence was the central tenet of Neelan's life and work. It inspired his scholarship, drove his activism and was the main faith of his political beliefs. It was the core and essence of his being, reenacted in his every encounter and interaction. Neelan never wavered from this path.

Neelan was a scholar. Knowledge was sacred and scholarship, a precious duty. His mind was a wellspring of ideas, fueled by boundless passion and energy. Always a new concept, a new direction, a new initiative. Those who surrounded him at the institutions he created and nurtured struggled to keep pace, but usually found themselves at least one step behind. It was 'Doctor' — as he was affectionately called — who had the idea. It was 'Doctor' who asked the question. It was 'Doctor' who nudged you from your comfortable silence. He did so quietly, and in his unassuming way, but he did so assiduously. The institutions he founded serve as testaments to his many interests and commitments — ethnicity, human rights, constitutionalism, gender, cultural studies, religion, literature, philosophy, jurisprudence and the law in all its forms.

Neelan was a student. The world, his teacher. He read avidly and continuously. In the pursuit of beauty and knowledge, Neelan read. To expand his views, refine his positions and understand his opponents, Neelan read. To rest, and to enjoy sheer pleasure, Neelan read. It was a joy he sought to instill in his colleagues, students and interns. Books, as the

custodians of knowledge, were to be revered. They were also to be authored and published, if knowledge was to advance. The books, articles and speeches written by Neelan speak to the depth of his commitment to scholarship, ideas and the production of knowledge. Likewise, numerous publications published by the institutions he led, have been inspired by his commitment, encouragement and example.

Neelan was an activist. Profoundly touched by the sufferings of others, Neelan sought to understand and institutionally challenge the social causes and moral implications of such suffering. He manifested this concern not through violent rhetoric, but with the reasoned evenhandedness and logic that came with his legal training. While giving eloquent expression to his concerns in his speeches in Parliament, his interventions extended beyond mere rhetoric. His unwavering belief in the just and moral fueled his efforts as a lawmaker, legal practitioner, and human rights advocate — whether it meant raising his voice in international fora, taking time out of a busy day to gently cajole officials to do justice by the individuals who came seeking solace from their pain, or drafting legislation that would give meaning and force to the concept of equal opportunity. The outcry over Neelan's assassination from activists around the world is a testament to the reach of his activism. Neelan was truly a modern day hero — not merely a hero of a cause or a country, but also a hero of a democratic process that involved the keen participation of civil society.

Neelan was a politician. In context of the competitive and often self-serving nature of Sri Lankan politics, his was an alternative style of politics. He passionately believed in the rights of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka, but he believed in these rights within a context of humanism, freedom, morality and spirituality. The rights of any community must be vindicated within the framework of a pluralist and democratic social order that respects human rights, tolerates dissent and difference, and is non-violent. Neelan's parliamentary speeches convey profound grief and, over time, increasing frustration about the state of the country. Speaking out against the extension of the emergency, for the rights of the internally displaced, for peace and reconciliation, and for a more humane government, Neelan sought to build bridges that others sought to destroy. He sought to negotiate, when others would only turn their backs. He spoke of collective responsibility,

when others apportioned blame. He read, studied and discussed, while others offered only empty platitudes. His were the politics of peace. And for that, he was brutally killed.

Neelan was a cultural being. Whether classical music, eastern dance or western film, what we learned from Neelan was the sheer joy of aesthetic beauty, especially of South Asian culture and art. He loved music, art and architecture and whether it was a Buddhist temple, a Hindu bronze or a Moghul miniature, he would be like a child, absolutely delighted at its beauty and keen that everyone enjoy the same experience. Carnatic music and Bharata Natyam were his passions. His enthusiasm was irrepressible. And for a moment truth would merge with beauty. Inspired by creative processes, Neelan infused his work with the creative. His love of poetry was expressed in his lectures, writings and parliamentary speeches, in which it was not uncommon for Neelan to quote from the poetry of Anna Akhmatova, W.B. Yeats, or Rabindranath Tagore. Neelan's world was a world in which peace, diversity, culture, knowledge and beauty reigned. It is that world, which he helped to create for so many of us, that we seek to commemorate.

Neelan was a rare and precious human being. In death, the profound impact of one life is realised. Our grief has been deep, but it has been comforted by the realisation that our grief is not ours alone. Far and wide, this grief is shared. In organising the Commemoration, we have come to understand the depth of respect and love felt for Neelan. We have been consistently inspired by the acceptances and statements of good will that we have received from invitees in Sri Lanka, South Asia and the world. While Neelan would be, without question, uncomfortable about being thrust unwillingly into the spotlight, it is time for Neelan to take his rightful place. And it is time for us at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Law and Society Trust and Tiruchelvam Associates to say thank you. Embarrassed as he might be, we would like to think that Neelan would also be proud to have inspired such an impressive gathering. It is perhaps the greatest tribute we could pay him.

- International Centre for Ethnic Studies
Law and Society Trust
Tiruchelvam Associates

All has been taken away: strength and love
My body, cast into an unloved city...

And only conscience, more terribly each day
rages, demanding vast tribute.

For answer I hide my face in my hands...
but I have run out of tears and excuses.

- Anna Akhmatova
As quoted by Neelan Tiruchelvam in
Parliament November 16th 1998

If suddenly you do not exist,
if suddenly you are not living,
I shall go on living.

I do not dare,
I do not dare to write it,
if you die.

I shall go on living.

Because where a man has no voice,
there, my voice.

Where blacks are beaten,
I can not be dead.
When my brothers go to jail
I shall go with them.
When victory,
not my victory
but the great victory
arrives,
even though I am mute I must speak:
I shall see it come even though I am blind.

I shall with cold and fire and death and snow,
my feet will want to march towards where you sleep,
but
I shall go on living,
because you wanted me to be, above all things,
untamable,
and, love, because you know that I am not just one
man
but all men

-PABLO NERUDA

The Neelan Tiruchelvam Commemoration Programme
Grand Ballroom, Galle Face Hotel.
January 30th 2000, 5.30 pm

Inauguration

Invocation

Pradeep Ratnayake - Sitar

Opening remarks by Chairperson
Justice P.N. Bhagwati

Former Chief Justice, Supreme Court of India
Representative of Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Welcome Address

Professor K.M. De Silva

Chairman, International Centre for Ethnic Studies

Inaugural Addresses

Hon. I.K. Gujral

Former Prime-Minister of India

Justice Navanethem Pillay

President, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

Justice Albie Sachs

Judge, Constitutional Court of South Africa

Introduction to the Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust
Arjuna Mahendran - Trustee

Screening of A Tribute to Neelan

Vote of Thanks

Radhika Coomaraswamy

Reception Thereafter

The sanctity of human life is the most basic of all human values and is the bedrock on which all other civil and political rights are grounded

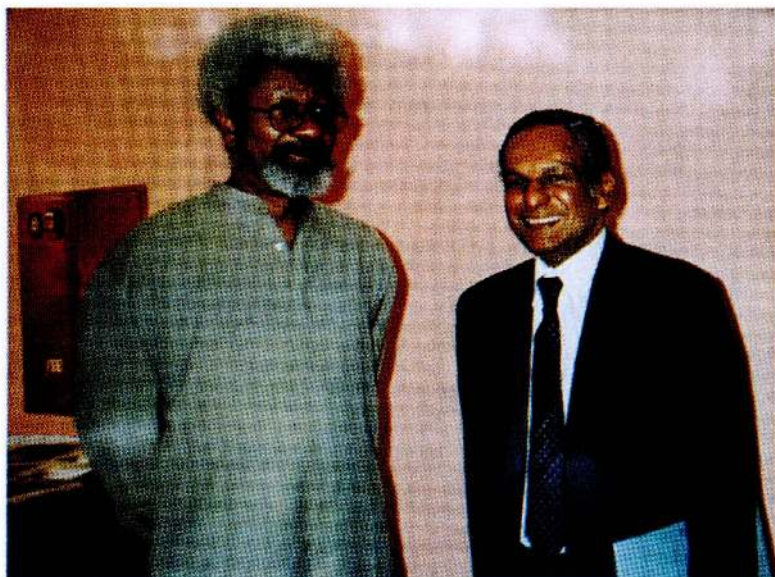
-Neelan Tiruchelvam, June 12, 1998



A peace mural painted on the road by members of the public at the top of the Kynsey Road/ Rosmead Place junction where the assassination took place

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by
narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the
dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening
thought and action -
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country
awake.

-Rabindranath Tagore



To abandon one's goals is such a negation of existence that one can only view it as worse than physical annihilation. The man dies in all who keep silent in the face of tyranny.

- Wole Soyinka

Message from Wole Soyinka, Nobel Laureate December 12, 1999

The extinction of any flame that is lit to relieve the darkness of our world, in any corner of human habitation, is always a setback for the humanistic endeavour everywhere. The assassination of Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam in July 1999, was however a singular eclipse, such was the stature and dynamic commitment of this scholar and humanist in the cause of peace, the harmonisation of races, and the defence of human dignity. Still, it is clear that, for Sri Lanka especially, there is a powerful resolve that such an eclipse will prove merely partial, and that Neelan Tiruchelvam's legacy will endure, which however makes me particularly also sad that I cannot be present at the commemoration of his passage among us, and pay tribute to the example that his life has been.

The travails of Sri Lanka are very much part of the season of unreason in to which our world is plunged from one edge of the globe to the other. I add my hopes and prayers to those of all who struggle to nurture and fulfil a vision of a global society from which has been banished, permanently, the spectre of violence and dehumanisation, a vision that will move to realisation on the foundations of a true humane community.

EXHIBITION FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION



To commemorate Neelan Tiruchelvam's contribution to the arts, an exhibition that brings together leading Sri Lankan artists dedicated to issues of peace, ethnic harmony and reconciliation will be held at the Gallery 706 from the 29th January - 1st February 2000. This exhibition highlights Neelan's vision of and commitment to a vibrant civil society in which the arts play a prominent role in the quest for peace and reconciliation.

Works by Anoli Perera, Chandraguptha Thenuwara, Muhanned Cader, Jagath Weerasinghe, Kingsley Gunatillake, Pradeep Chandrasiri, Sarath Kumarasiri, G. R. Constantine, T. Shanthan, Kosala Priyam Kumara, Kusal Nandana Gunasekara and Geethanjana Kudaligama will be featured.

There can be no other task
more sacred and critical to the well-being of
persons of all communities
than to bring about a
peaceful and enduring solution to this conflict.

Neelan Tiruchelvam
February 24, 1999

PURA HANDA KALUWARA ***(Death On A Full Moon Day)***

Joe Abeywickrema, Priyanka Samaraweera, Linton Semage. 75 minutes. Subtitles.
(1997 Sri Lanka-Japan)

Vithanage's new film is rooted in the context of a land stricken by conflict. The plot revolves around a blind father, Wannihami who awaits news of his soldier son. One full moon day, the state returns the son in a sealed casket. The romanticism with which the film opens, the serene setting of the stupa and tank at Anuradhapura, is broken by the reality of death — wasted youth. The father refuses to believe his son is dead despite compensation offers. Vithanage uses the face of Wannihami to represent the soul of a nation suffering from twenty years of armed conflict. The style he has chosen — a highly realist cinematography, invites the viewer to join Wannihami in his lament. The film raises questions about the politics of heroism - as well as more personal themes of expectation and loss.

BOOK EXHIBITION & SALE

To commemorate Neelan Tiruchelvam's dedication to the world of ideas a book exhibition and sale will be held at the Hotel Oberoi from the 30th January - 1st February 2000. Books from Oxford University Press (India), Kali for Women, Sage, ICES, and other Sri Lankan publishers will be displayed.

To commemorate Neelān Tiruchelvam's
love of dance and music



Bharatanatyam Dance

Alarmel Valli, the foremost exponent of the Pandanallur tradition in Bharatanatyam will perform at the Bishops' College Auditorium on the 31st January 2000, 7pm. She has been acclaimed not only for the exquisite perfection of her dance, but also as a creative artist who brings depth, intensity and naturalness to her art. She has won numerous awards and performed in numerous countries including the Boshoi Theatre, Moscow; Theatre De La Ville Festivals in Paris; the Vienna International Dance Festivals; the New York International Festival of Arts; the Min-On Association Festival of Japan, and the Cultural Festival at the Royal Albert Hall for the joint celebrations of the 50th year of Independence of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Carnatic Music

Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna is a legendary figure in today's Carnatic music. He will perform at the BMICH on the 1st February 2000, 7 pm. He has composed 400 musical pieces including varnams, kritis, javalis, devotional songs and thillanas. He is the founder trustee of the MBK Trust which was established to develop art and culture and engage in extensive research in music therapy. He has won numerous awards including the National Award in Classical Music; the Mahatma Gandhi Medal from UNESCO; and the National Integration Award from the Governor of Maharashtra. He has performed world-wide including in the USA, Germany, Switzerland, France, Italy, and Russia.



*why is the age worse than earlier ages ?
 In a stupor of grief and dread
 have we not fingered the foulest wounds
 and left them unhealed by our hands?*
 —Anna Akhmatova

NEELAN TIRUCHELVAM TRUST

In addition to providing us with an opportunity to meet and celebrate Neelan Tiruchelvam's life in a way that he would want -- through a gathering of his close friends and colleagues, rigorous intellectual exchange, art, music and film -- the Neelan Tiruchelvam Commemoration Programme provides us with an important opportunity to launch the Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust.

The Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust is being established to ensure that Neelan's work, memory and vision continue to thrive and inspire. Specifically, the Trust will be devoted to carrying out work on the issues that were closest to Neelan's heart. The Trust envisions the compilation of a comprehensive library, academic exchanges between Sri Lanka and the world and the funding of projects that further Neelan's dreams of a just and gentle world. In particular, the trust will focus on five substantive areas: (1) national reconciliation; (2) minority rights and pluralism; (3) peace-making; (4) internships and fellowships; and (5) other general research in the areas of human rights, diversity and pluralism, constitutionalism, civil society and international civil society.

The Trust will have an international advisory board that will include one member of the Tiruchelvam family. It will be constituted as a charitable trust under Sri Lankan law and thus will have tax-exempt status. We have opened a bank account for the Trust and are presently accepting contributions. We would very much welcome any support you may be able to provide. Contributions may be sent directly to the ANZ Gindlays Bank, 37 York Street, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka, account number 1352281, in the name of the Neelan Tiruchelvam Memorial Fund, c/o Tiruchelvam Associates, 8 Kynsey Terrace, Colombo 8, Sri Lanka.

The project, we know, is an ambitious one. We are encouraged in our endeavour by the desire and commitment to participate in such a project that many of you have expressed. We feel that just as Neelan dreamed impossible dreams and made them reality, so now must we.

This moment in history must be grasped. We can bring an end to bloodshed and human suffering. We can transcend the bitter legacy of distrust and destitution and form a future that is positive and ennobling. The journey will be a difficult one, and there would be inevitable setbacks. But if one's resolve is firm, we can ensure that "the spirit of man can transcend the flaws of human nature."

—Neelan Tiruchelvam, September 6, 1994

Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust. c/o 8, Kynsey Terrace, Colombo 8, Sri Lanka. Tel: (94 1) 694664 698110; 684889. Fax: (94 1) 696618. E-mail: ta_law@slc.lk

Rage Against the Night

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green
bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding
sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray,
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

- Dylan Thomas

Neelan Tiruchelvam Commemoration Programme
Ballroom Hotel Lanka Oberoi
31 January 2000

9 am - 12.30 pm

Asma Jehangir
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

HUMAN RIGHTS

DIVERSITY & PLURALISM

CHAIR

R. K. W. Goonesekere

CHAIR

Neloufer de Mel

PANELISTS

Navinethem Pillay
Ian Martin
Clarence Dias
Deepika Udagama
Shirin Cabraal

PANELISTS

Asbjorn Eide
Alan Phillips
Amita Shastri
Pradeep Jeganathan
Jonathan Spencer

1.30 pm - 5.00 pm

Gananath Obeyesekere
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

HUMAN RIGHTS

DIVERSITY & PLURALISM

CHAIR

R. K. W. Goonesekere

CHAIR

Prof. S. T. Hettige

PANELISTS

P.N. Bhagwati
David Petresek
Laurie Wiseberg
Yasmin Thambiah
Radhika Coomaraswamy

PANELISTS

Stanley J. Tambiah
Chandra Muzaffar
E. Valentine Daniel
Veena Das
Michael Roberts

by invitation only

1 February 2000

9 am - 12.30 pm

Mahmood Mamdani
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

CONSTITUTIONALISM

CHAIR

G. L. Peiris

PANELIST

Albie Sachs

Upendra Baxi

Jayadeva Uyangoda

Patricia Hyndman

Nivedita Menon

CIVIL SOCIETY

CHAIR

Godfrey Gunatilleke

PANELISTS

Fareeda Shaheed

R. Sudharshan

Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu

Jehan Perera

Darini Rajasingham-

Senanayake

Sitralaga Maunaguru

(tentative)

1.30 pm - 5.30 pm

Ashis Nandy
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

CONSTITUTIONALISM

CHAIR

Shibly Aziz

PANELISTS

Yash Ghai

Kamal Hossain

Rohan Edrisinha

Vasuki Nesiah

**INTERNATIONAL
CIVIL SOCIETY**

CHAIR

Sunila Abeysekera

PANELISTS

Jibrin Ibrahim

Dharam Ghai

Bishnu Mohapatra

Malathi De Alwis

Vijaya Samaraweera

by invitation only

My study and experience of non-violence have proved to me that it is the greatest force in the world. It is the surest method of discovering the truth and it is the quickest because there is no other. It works silently, almost imperceptibly, but none the less surely. It is the one constructive process of Nature in the midst of incessant destruction going on about us.

-Mahatma Gandhi



"THE ODD THING ABOUT ASSASSINS, DR. KING, IS
THAT THEY THINK THEY'VE KILLED YOU"



