

**Address by Dr. Richard Benkin
Read at World Hindu Federation
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India
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To my Brothers of the World Hindu Federation, Namaskar.

It is my loss that the invitation came with too little time for me to attend the conference. I would, however, like to participate in a small way through this written message.

The premise of this effort--that success will depend on our own actions--is key to moving forward. This history of my own, Jewish people often was one of depending on one powerful person or another; only to be betrayed in the end when we did not suit the purposes of that power. Now, we take power into our own hands; more than that, take responsibility into our own hands; and we have been more successful as a result. The question before us, however, is what action to take.

There is a saying that goes, "Success has a thousand fathers; failure is an orphan." We do not require the participation of millions; just enough to succeed, which requires that we think strategically. We are not going to change radical Islamists; hatred is their essential stock in trade. We cannot protect the ordinary people from them. We can, however, target the government of Bangladesh which is complicit in the persecution. As my dear Brother and colleague, Rabindra Ghosh will tell you, that complicity consists largely of inaction when Hindus are persecuted, despite the flowery words in the Bangladeshi constitution--of not affording Hindus equal protection under the law and its failure to enforce the rule of law when it threatens the parties' political calculations. So, that is where our actions must target--and the Bangladeshi government has so many vulnerabilities that can be used to get it to do the right thing: an economy inordinately dependent on garment exports, a shrinking land base, dependence on UN peacekeeping receipts that can be stopped, water issues, a colossal need to maintain an image of "moderation," an much more.

I know many in the government and believe they can be brought to do the right thing, however, not because it is the right thing to do. They will do it because we have made it in their interests to do it.

My friends, that is all that matters--saving the victims, stopping the slaughter. All else is patting ourselves on the back while others continue suffer. Hindus in Bangladesh are not free to do all that we can; we must take advantage of the freedom we have to act or we are betraying them. Fear, passivity are no longer options for us. We can do this if we think, plan, and act strategically. There are people in Washington who will help us; I know what to do. In conjunction with giants like Rabindra Ghosh, we can make it happen. So, work with me. I'll even lead missions to Bangladesh and against our enemies. But we must take action. Everyday we do not act, we consign another Bangladeshi Hindu to a horrible fate.

Let us from today dedicate ourselves not just to fighting, but to winning.

Dhanyavaad.