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Former Nepal Prime Minister, N.P. Rijal

A few weeks before the World Hindu Organization's (WHO) mega-conference in Kathmandu, Nepal, Hinduism Today correspondent, Dr. Hari Jha, spoke with N.P. Rijal, former Prime Minister of Nepal and president of WHO. Sri Rijal is soft in manner and temperament, thoughtful and imminently resourceful.

HT: What are the central achievements of WHO so far?

Rijal: WHO started its secretariat as a result of the accepted resolution for the unity of diversified Hindus. Diversified organizations of Hindus existed but such a federal body of Hindus never existed. This secretariat continued to contact and exchange views with Hindu leaders and spiritual heads globally in a systematic and official way. We got their approval. Getting WHO in this position is certainly a part of the greater achievement for the future. We've achieved only a little, but are in a position to achieve more.

HT: How would you characterize the state of Hinduism in Nepal?

Rijal: Hindus of Nepal are part of Hindus worldwide. Mostly Vedics and Buddhists comprise the populace. Sikhs and Jains are minorities, but all of them worship each other's deities and take part in each other's rituals. The law of the country forbids changing of religions by lure or force. The modern material developments, technologies and quest for well-being is rapidly influencing the lives of Hindus all over the world. Our new generation is diving into the darkness of material well-being. I regard material well-being a dark phenomenon if it is devoid of spiritualism alongside it. If there is no spiritualism, material development leads to hatred and war.

HT: What is the role of the Nepal monarchy in developing Hinduism?

Rijal: Nepal is a Hindu kingdom by state constitution. We have a Hindu king. Her Majesty the Queen is chairing Nepal's cultural, religious and highest social institutions. The WHO is also going to prosper under Her Majesty's broader and protective umbrella. [WHO is also seeking King Bhirendra to serve as an engaged leader in its aspirations to solidify Hinduism into a coordinated body.]

HT: How do you want to assist Hindus in Nepal and globally?

Rijal: Our motto is as put forward in the Rig Veda: "Walk together, speak in concert, the mind to comprehend alike, to unite our efforts with hearts and mind in agreement that we may all be happy." WHO has shouldered this responsibility. Problems will be discussed and solutions identified.

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