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Global Leader in Nonviolence Carrying Message of Hope *Nobel Peace Prize Nominee to Address Behavior Scientists in Chicago*

“Here in the United States, we are witnessing a resurgence of political engagement. People realize they have a role in defending the institutions and democratic values that they see as under threat. Albert Einstein said our rights are only secure if every citizen recognizes their duty to do their share.”

So, says Jamila Raqib, executive director of the Boston-based Albert Einstein Institution, a 2017 Nobel Peace Prize nominee and a global voice in advocating for nonviolent approaches to end oppression and defend human rights.

The Afghan native was named the 2019 Presidential Scholar by the Association for Behavior Analysis (ABAII) and will be a featured speaker during the organization’s 45th Annual Convention in Chicago, May 23–27. Her presentation, *Nonviolent Resistance in the Global Struggle to Defend Democracy and Human Rights*, begins at 6 p.m., May 25, in the Grand Ballroom of Chicago’s Hyatt Regency East.

“Growing domestic protest and unrest regarding national policies and actions – or lack of action – in such areas as immigration reform, economic justice, discrimination, environmental protection, women’s empowerment, and attacks on the free press make Raqib’s appearance at the convention particularly timely,” says ABAII chief executive officer, Maria Malott Ph.D.

Although Raqib expresses concern that nonviolent struggles may be “decreasing in effectiveness,” her presentation will be one of hope. Addressing the behavior scientists in the audience, she will cite their increasing attention to social issues and expanding emphasis on cultural-level change and suggest that they could become “valued partners in shaping more effective strategic action” in the field of nonviolent resistance.

The Albert Einstein Institute defines nonviolent action as a “technique for applying power in a conflict by using symbolic protests, noncooperation, and defiance, but not physical violence. Nonviolent action is not passive. It is not inaction. Nonviolent action is action that is nonviolent.”

Among only a few people to study nonviolent social change in-depth, Raqib has worked directly with groups that have applied her knowledge to conflicts globally.

“Because of the growing exploration of nonviolent resistance to address the various political challenges faced by citizens around the world, a top priority now is to expand the capacity of practitioners of nonviolent action to plan and implement wise strategies that can guide their actions and maximize their effectiveness,” says Raqib.

Without effective strategy, nonviolent struggles simply rely on “intuition, chance events, improvisation” and the actions of people “who have not clearly identified their objectives or understand what is required to achieve them,” she states.

Raqib is a disciple of political scientist Gene Sharp, who, until his recent death, was considered the world’s foremost authority on strategic nonviolent action. In 2009, she collaborated with Sharp on development of a curriculum, *Self-Liberation: A Guide to Strategic Planning for Action to End a Dictatorship or Other Oppression*, which offers comprehensive guidance to groups engaged in nonviolent actions on behalf of democracy and human rights.

As an example of strategic nonviolent action, Raqib describes Rosa Parks’ refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus to a Caucasian passenger as being “part of a bigger struggle for civil rights for the black community – a struggle that didn’t start or end with her.”

Parks’ quiet defiance was not a spur-of-the-moment decision, Raqib explains. “She committed her act on the back of a long history of activism and organizing and institution-building, both by her and the black community of Montgomery and beyond. This behind-the-scenes planning is often overlooked by observers and by the media because it’s what the cameras often can’t capture.”

In addition to her work for the nonprofit Albert Einstein Institution, which is devoted to research on nonviolent actions in conflicts, Raqib serves as a Director’s Fellow at the MIT Media Lab where she studies how innovations in technology and education can help make nonviolent activities more effective.

“Jamila’s participation in this convention truly highlights the mission of ABAI – that is to contribute to societal well-being by developing and supporting the science of behavior analysis and fostering diversity in the field,” says Dr. Malott. “She challenges us as behavior scientists and practitioners to expand our interest and involvement in social change, human rights, and sustainability efforts.”

More information about the upcoming ABAI convention, including Raqib’s presentation, is available at www.abainternational.org.