



## The Fifth Bi-Annual Meeting of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders, Oxford (UK), March 2012

On the final day of the meeting, leaders were asked to reflect on what had been accomplished. They were asked to consider three questions:

- 1. What does Interreligious Friendship mean to you?*
- 2. How do you practise Interreligious Friendship?*
- 3. What messages and practices of Interreligious Friendship can you take back from this meeting to your community?*

Some chose to respond independently to each question while others integrated their answers.

### Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh

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First and foremost, one should genuinely, and authentically, practice one's own faith, engage in intra-faith friendships, before venturing into interfaith.

Inter-religious friendship or any friendship for that matter, demands courage and sacrifice.

Interfaith friendship should be rooted in the love of God. It enriches one, while it strengthens one's own faith. Loving God as a friend makes one love all God's creation. In the Sikh Dharam, many friendly names are used to address God. He is addressed as *Dost, Yaar, Beli, Meet, Mitter, Sai, Rakha, Takhur, Pitta, mata, Swami*, etc.

As per the Fifth Guru, a Sikh is guided to become a friend of all, having enmity with none. In this context, the Ninth Guru states, "*God lives in the hearts of those, who consider friend and foe alike*"

A friend should never use friendship as an excuse to exploit one's friends. One should always be able to correct one's friend for friendship's sake. A friend should always try to uphold one's friend's dignity and honour.

#### **Commitment:**

One should practise interfaith friendship through engagement within the interfaith movement, locally, nationally, and internationally. One can further this through promoting inter-religious education, through being part of interfaith forums, and through supporting interfaith activities.

One should bring back to one's community much love and goodwill, promoting a culture of peace at the same time. This can further lead to prosperity for all.