



## 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.

### Rabbi Yuval Cherlow

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Interfaith dialogue for me is an opportunity to enhance areas of life, on a variety of levels and dimensions. First and foremost, this is a deeply personal experience of opening worlds, with all their richness and diversity, a re-examination of basic assumptions, 'cleansing' my faith from what is unnecessary in it and importing new ideas in other areas in my soul that I did not know before. This itself is an experience of modesty, humility, humanity and striving for inner peace. Furthermore, this is an opportunity to enrich my knowledge areas, the various options that are available for the relationship between man and God, and on to another. In a larger perspective, it is an opportunity for hidden dreams – creating possibilities and skills to make the world, or at least the community in which I function, a better place to live.

I will find expression for interfaith dialogue in various fields. As a religious leader, I will be more open, more tolerant, more humane, more listening and open. Also, I'll try again and again to confront racism, discrimination, arrogance, contempt and disregard of the humane side of existence. On another level, I'm working on 'Ethics' and I will continue to increase the emphasis on the complex relationship between ethics and religion, through collaborating with all the religions. There are two directions where Ethics and Faith can influence simultaneously. One is the significant contribution that religions can make to Ethical issues, using their knowledge and Holy Scriptures in order to evaluate the Ethical aspects of every situation in the world. The second direction is the contribution of Ethics on the practice of religion itself, promoting this phenomenon and making it religion more consistent with Ethics. Religious leaders of all faiths in the world need to review their ethics with a view to enhancing the ethical conduct of religious leaders (I wrote about this in an article in a Hebrew published in a book named: "The Rabbi – a Challenge").



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This gathering will affect the circles around me in two key ways. The first is a result of the nature of the meeting itself, dialogue, listening, silence, self-examination, the right of self-criticism, striving for perfection and the realization that it's far away, richness and diversity. I will try to emulate these qualities in the meetings I create. The other aspect is the constant striving to make this world a better place. I think the religious leaders are seen today as the problem rather than the solution, and I'll try to promote, as a result of this conference, a greater emphasis on brotherhood between people who describe themselves as 'religious leaders'.