



THE ELIJAH INTERFAITH INSTITUTE  
FOURTH MEETING OF THE ELIJAH BOARD OF WORLD RELIGIOUS LEADERS

**THE FUTURE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP**





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## THE ELIJAH INTERFAITH INSTITUTE





# PROGRAM & SCHEDULE

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

### Pre-meeting study travel day

#### Visits to institutions training for religious leadership

- 09:30 Visits to Religious Institutions:  
Neo-Catacumenal Seminary (Christian)  
Al-Qasemi Seminary (Muslim)  
Yeshivat Ma'aleh Gilboa (Jewish)
- 17:00 Opening Ceremony on Lake Kinnereth Cruise, with very brief personal introductions
- 19:00 Lakeside Dinner (Decks Restaurant, Lido Beach, Tiberias)

## MONDAY, OCTOBER 19

### Theme for the day: Leadership as an instrument in realizing the goal of religion

- 08:40 Travel to Domus Galilaeae
- 09:00 Introduction of day with Morning Prayer
- 09:30 Small Groups  
Discussion of the purpose and goals (telos) of religions and the role of leadership understood in its light
- 10:45 Break
- 11:15 Plenary on theme of leadership and purpose of religion
- 13:00 Discussion over lunch between leaders and scholars working on behalf of each tradition (seating according to religion)
- 14:00 Visit to Safed
- 17:15 Small group discussions on challenges of contemporary leadership
- 19:00 Prayer by religious traditions
- 19:30 Dinner and Evening hosted by the Druze Community, Nebi Shueib

## TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20

### Theme for the day: The Challenges of Contemporary Religious Leadership

- 08:40 Travel to Domus Galilaeae (with luggage; checking-out of Kibbutz Hukook lodging)
- 09:00 Introduction of day with Morning Prayer  
Plenary: "The Challenges of Contemporary Religious Leadership"
- 11:00 Break
- 11:30 Small groups: "Future Training of Religious Leaders"
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:00 Travel to Haifa
- 15:30 Program at Bahá'í Center:  
Tour of Bahá'í Shrine and Gardens  
Plenary: "Future Training of Religious Leaders"  
Prayer by Religions  
Reception  
Panel: "The Role and Challenges of Religious Leadership: Local and International Perspectives"
- 22:00 Check-in at Nir Ezion Hotel, Kibbutz Nir Ezion

## WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21

- 08:30 Travel to University of Haifa
- 09:00 Introduction of day, Morning Prayer and Testimonials
- 09:30 Small groups: "Forgiveness and the Vocation of the Religious Leader"
- 10:45 Break
- 11:15 Plenary: "Planning Elijah's Ongoing Work"
- 13:00 Travel to Muhraka, Visit and Picnic Lunch
- 15:15 Plenary: "International Survey on Religious Leadership"
- 16:40 Small groups: "Forgiveness and the Purpose of Religion"
- 17:45 Prayer by groups at Eshkol vistas
- 18:00 Dinner, Mizpor Hall
- 19:00 Public forum at the University of Haifa: "The Religious Leader in the Public Eye: Expectations and Challenges (in light of polls)"  
Greetings: Chief Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen, Dean Sophia Menache and Dean Majid Al Haj
- 21:00 Coffee and cake, Personal interaction with students
- 21:30 Return to hotel

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22

08:00 Travel to Jerusalem

10:00 Visit to venue points and holy sites in Jerusalem  
Picnic lunch  
Continuation of visit

18:00 Meeting with Palestinian seminarians and Muslim teachers at Beth Jala Patriarchate Seminary

20:00 Departure and Dinner

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## OUR PARTNERS



Fetzer Institute



University of Haifa  
The Faculty of Education



Bahá'í World Centre



Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs



# **MESSAGES OF WELCOME**

**Dear Participant,**

It is a rare privilege and honour to have the opportunity to individually and jointly (with the Steering Committee co-chairs) welcome you most warmly to the Holy Land.

I must hasten to thank Alon and Julia for the 'pouring of their hearts' to roll the red carpet for us in this unique fashion.

Our proposed deliberations, on 'The Future of Religious Leadership' is both timely and befitting the Hifa venue.

May God bless us all in our endeavours to seek peace for ourselves and others.

With prayer and loads of love.

In Gods Service,



**Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh**



# WELCOMING THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE ELIJAH BOARD OF WORLD RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest religious leaders of modern India, once wrote to his Irish disciple Miss Margeret Noble (Sister Nivedita): "My ideal indeed can be put in a few words and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life. This world is in a chain of superstition. I pity the oppressed, whether man or woman, and I pity more the oppressors. One idea I see clear as daylight is that misery is caused by ignorance and nothing else. Who will give the world light? Sacrifice in the past has been the Law, it will be, alas, for ages to come. The earth's bravest and best will have to sacrifice themselves for the good of the many, for the welfare of all. Buddhas by the hundred are necessary with eternal love and pity. Religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries. What the world wants is character. The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell like a thunderbolt... Bold words and bolder deeds are what we want. Awake, awake, great ones! The world is burning with misery. Can you sleep? Let us call and call till the sleeping gods awake, till the god within answers the call. What more is in life? What greater work? The details come to me as I go. I never make plans. Plans grow and work themselves. I only say, awake, awake!"

These words written more than a hundred years ago are so tellingly true even today. The world continues to be burning

with misery and the one bitter cry of humankind in the modern world is for peace and happiness. The Holy Grail of joy that the present day civilization, with its vaunted claim of globalization and staggering advances in science and technology, is seeking through sophisticated gadgets and machinery, the cup that would quench its thirst, is turning out rather to be the Tantalus Cup. The realization seems to be dawning in human consciousness that there could be no happiness without peace. In this scenario, the greatest tragedy is that religion, the finest flower to have ever blossomed on the tree of human civilization, whose timeless fragrance of joy and peace 'age cannot wither,' whose 'infinite variety' 'nor custom stale', is often becoming the very source of the misery and violence that it was created by God to eliminate. This tragic truth is what Swami Vivekananda lamented in his statement that 'religions of the world are becoming lifeless mockeries'. Religion is therefore being blamed by many an unthinking person for all the misery of humankind. The urgent task before us, particularly the religious leaders, is restore religion to, and present it in, its pristine glory as the supreme saviour that alone could rescue the human soul from misery and gloom by bestowing joy and light. Else, there looms large the dismal prospect of religion itself facing abject indifference at its best and utter elimination at its worst in the modern technological age. And after all, with all the destruction and danger that technology has brought in its wake, this is the very age that needs, more than

any other age, the healing balm of religion, with the peace and joy that it can shower and the 'white radiance of Eternity' with which religion can illumine the black crevices of the human heart. And it is a wonderful truth that in God's magnificent design every one of the world religions has the power and has been created to perform this job of showering peace and joy unto humankind and there is the urgent need for awakening to the realization of this great truth.

Who will perform this task of awakening save the religious leaders? For these leaders to be able to do it, or even to attempt it in their own individual lives and in the collective lives of their followers, they need to be trained themselves. The religious leaders who are charged with the onerous task of educating their followers need themselves to be educated to face the challenges of modern times. Hence the present meet organized by Elijah Interfaith Institute, wherein this education would come naturally and spontaneously through sharing with all, interacting with everyone and learning from one another. This education may not immediately elevate each one of us individually to a very high level of understanding, to perfection and wisdom. But this elevation could be attained by us collectively by 'counteracting, equipoising, adjusting and fulfilling one another' in Swami Vivekananda's words, who called it a 'collective harmony of a number of persons'. In this exercise, the objective is to combine extensity and intensity—to be 'vast as the skies and deep as the ocean', to learn how to be enthusiastic and intense about one's religion without being fanatical, how to be broad and liberal about others' religions without being superficial, how to be achieve conceptual clarity without being impractical in approach, how to combine 'intense idealism and intense practicality'.

Doubtless, the objective is very high. The task is truly gigantic. The time and resources are too small. But then, the urgency is telling. But with a will that is inflexible, a sense of determination that is powerful, great things could be easily achieved by the strength that God imparts and the grace that He bestows. "The world is burning with misery. Can you sleep? Let us call and call till the sleeping gods awake, till the god within answers the call".

Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders and Elijah Interfaith Institute welcomes you, dear participant, warmly and affectionately, to this meet so that all of us could collectively "call and call till the sleeping gods awake, till the god within answers the call". We welcome you to come, to see and be conquered by the power of love, compassion, understanding and wisdom freely shared amongst the participants and learning process that this sharing is sure to set in motion through and through during entire meeting at Haifa, Israel, devoted to the theme 'The Future of Religious Leadership'. May the Lord give us the wisdom and understanding to be united in thought and action, feeling and meditation, wisdom and will, so that we could become conduits to the flow of God's power. May He give us the strength and the wisdom to be able to contribute, however infinitesimally, to bringing joy and peace in the lives of millions of human beings in this strife-torn, panic-stricken, conflict-ridden, suspicion-prone world, through invoking, each in one's own way, the glory and compassion of the Supreme Being who is the Embodiment of Infinite Awareness, Wisdom and Bliss, is the prayer of

**Swami Atmapriyananda**  
**On behalf of the Steering Committee of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders**

# IJCIC - INTERNATIONAL JEWISH COMMITTEE FOR INTERRELIGIOUS CONSULTATIONS

**Dear Colleagues,**

It is my pleasure to extend greetings and welcome on my own behalf and as one of the co-chairs of the Board of World Religious Leaders Steering Committee.

We are gathered to begin our fourth meeting. Those of us who have attended any of the previous meetings have come away informed and enlightened. I daresay that most of us have been moved and transformed by the experiences.

We have come to appreciate the value of our closed-door sessions, the depth of caring and knowledge of our fellow religious leaders, and most important, how we and the communities we lead can be made better by our deliberations.

One of the great opportunities is not simply to learn from valued scholars but to build on their teachings - in dialogue with one another. Those of us returning for our second, third, or fourth gathering anxiously anticipate the experience of the sophistication and compassion which our colleagues bring to the most challenging religious questions of our day.

Participation in the previous meetings has reinforced my own deepest belief that, while we find meaning within the practices and teachings of our own religious traditions, it is only in relation to the other that we can achieve real understanding. Thus, these meetings and the shared wisdom that emanates from them become, for me, not an option but a mandate.

All of us on the Steering Committee look forward to becoming reacquainted, or perhaps meeting one another for the first time. We have arrived as leaders of our respective traditions, from many diverse parts of the world, each occupied with the challenges of our daily lives and communities that cherish our leadership - but we will assuredly depart as brothers and sisters, arm in arm with colleagues who will nourish and support, encourage and enlighten long after our time together draws to a close.

Sincerely,

**Prof. Rabbi Richard A. Marker**  
**Co-chair, Board of World Religious Leaders**  
**Chair, IJCIC**

# CHIEF RABBI OF HAIFA RABBI SHEAR-YASHUV COHEN

I write to welcome the members of The Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders who are convening here in Israel for the fourth bi-annual meeting, to discuss the very important subject -- "The Future of Religious Leadership."

Our meeting here on the Carmel mountain is indeed most symbolic. The name of our institute is Elijah, the prophet of the Carmel. His holy and distinguished example of religious leadership serves as a beacon of light, guiding not only our deliberations and discussions, but also our way of life.

Elijah's courage to face royalty, and deplore the evil of the King Ahab's greedy confiscation of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite still inspires us. His brave struggle with the hundreds of the false prophets of the Ba'al inspires us to stand firm and fight when circumstances demand it. At the same time his pursuit of peace and his mission of "reconciling parents with their children, and children with their parents" is his abiding and overriding legacy to all generations. His many faceted personality is an abiding source of inspiration and a model of religious leadership.

All of us here look forward to the visit of the world religious

leaders here in Haifa. We pray for your safe trip and arrival and for the success of the meetings. May G-d bless us with the ability to further the goal of peace and tranquility in this Holy Land and City, and in the world over. In the words of Isaiah, "And they, (the nations) shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war any more."

With kindest personal regards and esteem.

Sincerely yours,

**Chief Rabbi Shear-Yashuv Cohen**  
**Haifa**

# THE ELIJAH INTERFAITH INSTITUTE

## RABBI DR. ALON GOSHEN-GOTTSTEIN

A hearty welcome and warm SHALOM to members of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders and guests, attending the fourth bi-annual meeting of our forum.

As I sat to compose the present welcome letter, I reread the welcome letter I composed for the third meeting, two years ago in Amritsar. Perhaps the wisdom that we sought to share at that meeting, devoted to “Sharing Wisdom”, has born some fruit in me. That might account for my desire to compose a much shorter welcome message. But there are other reasons. The first is that by now we no longer need to explain, or even inspire, participants to Elijah’s vision. Most participants at our meeting have attended previous meetings, and they share Elijah’s vision of growth and transformation, attained through the sharing of wisdom between different religious traditions. The Amritsar Statement captures that vision beautifully, and it can be found in the enclosed materials. We are ready for another chapter in the continuing story of sharing with the other from the depth of our own tradition.

Another reason for why I may keep my message shorter is that it is no longer the only welcome message. My own message of welcome follows that of the three co-chairs of the steering committee of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders (EBWRL). For the first time, and as a direct consequence of our previous meeting in Amritsar, planning for the meeting and care for the overall vision of the EBWRL have been a sacred responsibility I have

had the privilege of sharing with the Board’s steering committee. As members of the steering committee readily acknowledge, this points to the greater ownership of the EBWRL by its members. It is our hope that such deeper ownership, leading to further collaborative action, will be one of the fruits of our meeting.

The task that is unique to me is that of thanking, and it is with great pleasure, and deep affection, that I think of all the individuals and institutions that have helped with preparations for the present meeting. Having mentioned the steering committee and its co-chairs, I begin by thanking them for working closely with me, since our previous meeting, in thinking through the evolution and future growth of the EBWRL. I don’t think any of them realizes how important it is for me to know that this is a charge I am no longer carrying alone (despite my name, that repeatedly draws puns in this respect).

What makes Elijah unique is the coming together of religious leaders and scholars. Our sharing of wisdom is enabled by the depth of knowledge, critical perspective and reflective powers that our scholars bring to bear on the chosen topic of our discussions. I have already acknowledged each of the scholars and members of the think tank in the introduction to the volume of background papers on “The Future of Religious Leadership”. I would like to add that our scholars have formed a community of their own, characterized by deep friendships, close collaboration and the ability to think together as a group, deeply and harmoniously.

Recently a short movie was produced, by Amanda Tetrault, in which our think tank and its preparation for the present meeting were featured. I am told that this movie has brought many viewers to tears. We may take for granted how closely we work with each other and how easily we can communicate across the differences between our traditions. But the world does not realize how far friendship, collaboration and a process of shared inquiry can go. The work of our scholars can provide a testimony to others. It may even provide a testimony to our religious leaders, especially those who are new to our process. Our think tank has now been working together for several years and the power of continued collaboration and sustained friendships hopefully carries through into the scholarly work and radiates through their personal relations. This meeting seeks to integrate our scholars more deeply into the meeting's proceedings. We hope that our scholars can offer a model and a testimony. Indeed, modeling is emerging as one of the key directions that we hope our entire assembly will take, as it contemplates its future work. The quality of relations and the depth of sharing that are characteristic of our scholars are, in fact, constitutive of all that takes place through the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders. We seek to offer this model to others.

The most important person who has been at my side and at the service of all members of the Elijah family is Julia Mor. This is the third meeting of the EBWRL that she has helped organize. Julia has put in long hours of patient and calm work, thinking through detail after detail, ensuring that everything runs smoothly. This meeting is far more complex than any we previously ran. For the first time we did not have the support of a local partner. We ended up being our own partner. And because the meeting takes place in the Holy Land, we tried to integrate a broad range of visits to holy sites into our program, so that visitors could get as much

of a feel for the land as circumstances permitted. The logistical consequences of these facts can probably only be appreciated by myself, as I watched Julia struggle with it all, and as I myself struggled with her to deal with a seeming mountain of details, concerning every aspect of the program. Needless to say, here too friendship has grown out of collaboration. For all this I give thanks.

Another person has been at my side, since the founding of Elijah in 1996. Sr. Therese Andrevon has been helpful in maintaining the vision and keeping up my spirits. She has been instrumental in making some strategic decisions relating to our meeting. Our gathering is much enhanced by the crucial role she played in designing the program, choosing venues and ensuring the meeting is not only intellectually stimulating but also spiritually inspiring and a fitting way to introduce our guests to the Holy Land. Regrettably, she will not be with us for the duration of the meeting. Her community is at a point of transition, and a crucial meeting, that will determine the future of the community and its individual members, partially overlaps with our own meeting. She will be with us for the first part of the meeting and our prayers for guidance and discernment are extended to her and to the community of the Beatitudes, during this crucial time in their communal life.

Let me move on to our partners, who have made this meeting possible. First and foremost among them is the Fetzer Institute. This will be the third meeting that Fetzer supports. Here too we have made friends, especially Eric Nelson and David Addiss. Eric has become practically part of our team. His loving and doting care, his attention to detail, not to mention his unflinching belief in what Elijah stands for, are invaluable. I extend profound gratitude to the Board and officers of the Fetzer institute who

have continued to believe in our work and to support it. The Amritsar meeting led to a beautiful website, constructed by the Fetzer Institute, featuring interviews with our religious leaders and scholars. One of the planned fruits of our present meeting is a similar website, featuring the voices of our participants, as they reflect upon religious leadership and forgiveness. The enduring testimony that these websites offer are but one of the ways in which we seek to make every meeting more than a one time event. I thank all participants for their collaboration with this project and for making additional resources of wisdom and inspiration available to the public.

Our personal friendship with the von Groeben family and its foundation also deepens as we move from meeting to meeting. The von Groebens have been supporting the work of the EBWRL since the founding meeting in Seville, in 2003. We had hoped to enjoy the company of Friedrich von Groeben at this meeting, but circumstances led to a last minute cancellation. Thilo von Janson will faithfully represent the family. His voice of compassion and personal depth is by now familiar to many participants and friends of Elijah.

As we gather for the fourth in-person meeting, we are taking a step forward, but also closing a circle. The Elijah Interfaith Institute was born in Israel. It drew much of its inspiration from the city that will host us - Haifa, a city that features sites associated with the prophet Elijah, hence the Institute's name. While the Elijah Institute and the EBWRL have become international, some symbolic link still ties us to the Holy Land and in particular to Haifa. For this reason I was grateful to Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen for inviting our forum to Haifa and for agreeing to serve as the meeting's host. Rabbi Cohen has been a personal and a family friend for over thirty years. Working with him over the years at Elijah has

provided me with numerous opportunities to see the beauty of this man and his spiritual vision. I, and participants at Elijah's various activities, have been enriched by his participation, and by his loyalty to our common cause. It may be that the reason I feel particularly close to him is that we share a birthday. Rabbi Cohen recently celebrated his eightieth birthday. Holding our meeting in Haifa is our way of giving thanks and recognition to him, on this occasion, by holding our deliberations in his own town.

Working in Haifa brought with it a series of opportunities and additional partners. Prof. Ofra Mayseless, dean of Education at Haifa University, opened wide university doors to collaboration with Elijah. She went well beyond the call of duty, even considering the plans that we had for collaboration, prior to this meeting. Thanks go to Natalie Rahav, Ela Argaman and Iris Fessler, all of whom were extremely helpful with various aspects related to Haifa University.

Thanks goes to the Bahai World Center and to Albert Lincoln and Jalal Hatami for extending their hospitality to us and for coming on board this project. It has been a pleasure working with them. Their efficiency is complemented by the smile with which they do everything.

The office of the Mayor played an important role in the shaping of our meeting. Thanks go to Neta Wilk who worked so hard on our behalf and who found ways of helping even when all else failed. Thanks are due also to Barry Shrage and to Gil Pruss of the Boston CJP. We have benefited from the partnership between Boston and Haifa and are grateful for their faith in this kind of work.

Father Rino, Fr. Francesco and the team at Domus Galilaeae opened to us what may well be the most beautiful venue in Israel.

Holding a part of our meeting on the Mount of Beatitudes, in the singularly inspiring atmosphere created by their community and its vision, is a privilege I could not have imagined a short time ago. May their center continue to be a meeting place for seekers of peace and collaboration between the religions.

One of the novel elements of our meeting is the survey on religious leadership that we will be releasing. To date, our work has concentrated on historical and theological analysis and reflection. The survey on leadership takes us into new terrain. We could have not executed it without the help of Dr. Nazeer Ahmed and the entire team at Delixus, India, that worked much harder on this survey than they had anticipated. To all of them, my pranams and my thanks.

So many other people have contributed to the success of our meeting. David Rosen has been there with good advice, whenever needed. Maria Reis Habito, together with Ruben, has been a part of it all for years, a source of love and support. Kurt and Nelda Schreiber have given of themselves in more ways than one. Barry Hershey, a new friend whom I would have loved to see with us in Israel, is nevertheless present through his goodwill and support.

And finally, acknowledgment is due to those working behind the scenes, as well as to those you will be meeting. Blanka Gorecka has worked on the survey, as has Ilan Roziner, with his helpful advice and analysis. Natalee Cohen prepared the essays for publication. Ilan Jospe made the text you are presently reading as beautiful as it is. Ori Werdiger continues to help Elijah in any way he finds possible. Several volunteers will be on hand to ensure the meeting runs smoothly. To all of them - Thank you.

One of the conclusions, or suggestions, that emerges from the

background papers, is that in the field of leadership we are very close to one another. One recognizes great commonality in the exercise of religious leadership across traditions. This can bring us much closer together than we may have previously realized. It may allow us to formulate our aspirations, and our prayers, in ways that we can comfortably share. For the first time, our background papers conclude with a prayer, offered in the spirit of the individual paper. I myself suggested a prayer that we might all subscribe to as a kind of conclusion to this project, a "Leaders' Prayer". I express the hope that we can come away from our meeting not only enriched by the encounter but also touched by the commonalities of our spiritual life and our lives of prayers. It has been Elijah's tradition to include some dimension of prayer at our meetings. We come together not simply as people of learning, but also as people with rich spiritual lives. We can share these even while respecting the constraints that some of our religions may place on praying together.

I therefore conclude by offering my prayers for the success of our meeting. May it be a meeting in which we come closer to one another, a meeting from which we emerge more ready to serve our communities and humanity; a meeting that deepens our understanding of our vocation, through the inspiration we draw from the encounter with one another. And may it be a meeting upon which the spirit of Elijah dwells, paving the way to a world of greater unity and peace, in the service of God and humanity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alon Goshen-Gottstein". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Rabbi Dr. Alon Goshen-Gottstein**  
**Director, The Elijah Interfaith Institute**

# STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE ELIJAH BOARD OF WORLD RELIGIOUS LEADERS

As the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders has moved from one meeting to another, since its foundation in 2003, the involvement of the religious leaders has deepened. The bonds of friendship, the depth of exchange and the heights of vision have gradually formed a community of common purpose. An important sign of the deepening involvement and commitment of members of the Board was the formation of the Board's steering committee. This group was formed in Amritsar, following our 2007 meeting and it represents the shared ownership of the Board of World Religious Leaders, with the leaders themselves playing an increasingly visible role in the planning and management of the Board's activities.

All traditions are represented on the steering committee. Its three co-chairs are Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh (Sikh), Swami Atmapriyananda (Hindu) and Rabbi Richard Marker (Jewish). Other members of the steering committee include Bishop Lennart Koskinen (Christian), Khandro Rinpoche (Buddhist) and two leaders who have representatives on the board, Sheikh Hisham Kabbani, who is represented by Dr. Nazeer Ahmed and Dharma Master Hsin Dao, who is represented by Dr. Maria Reis Habito.

The Board first met in Paris, in May 2008. The Paris meeting led to an articulation of the vision of the continuing work of the Board, captured in a series of seven points. These seven points are listed separately. The Paris meeting launched a process of intensive

brainstorming concerning the future work of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders. Following the Paris meeting, a series of monthly conference calls was held. During these calls, the various points, initially raised at the Paris meeting, were elaborated and discussed one by one in detail. The entire process led to the creation of the development plan for the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders. This document is part of the background materials for our meeting, and will be the focus of discussion at our planning meeting, on the morning of October 21st.

The steering committee has also functioned as the first station in formulating statements of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders, as part of its ongoing response process. Elijah scholars have worked with members of the steering committee in formulating the statement on the economic crisis and in formulating the prayer for the Gaza Crisis. The latter has received much acclaim, and has been broadly used by various groups since it was formulated. Following the initial consultation with members of the steering committee, response statements were shared with the entire body of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders for further comments and for final approval.

The steering committee welcomes feedback and continuing engagement with all members of the Board of Religious Leaders. Leaders who might wish to join the steering committee are invited to approach one of the co-chairs.

# STEERING COMMITTEE DECLARATION PARIS, MAY 2008

The following seven points constitute the ethos and vision of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders. They were formulated by the steering committee of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders at its Paris meeting.

These points grow from the experience of the work of the Board, since its creation in 2003, and provide the guidelines for generating future activities of the Board.

1. Activities of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders should be based on the common virtue of humility as a fundamental principle of the spiritual life and an orienting principle of religious leadership. We seek to manifest this attitude in our relationship to other traditions, their wisdom and in our implementation of that wisdom in meeting today's challenges.

2. We acknowledge the importance of membership in the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders and partaking of its activities as a source for personal growth and transformation of individual participants.

3. We affirm a shared sense of need to extend our experience and learning at Elijah to our communities.

4. Ongoing work of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders should accordingly seek to strike a balance between personal

processes of participants and collectively owning our responsibility in relation to the world.

5. In relating to other religions, we recognize and respect differences while seeking to uncover our common spiritual ground

6. We recognize the profundity and complexity of our religious traditions, their multiple manifestations as well as the challenges of the day and see our own efforts at humility-based learning from other traditions as a way of respecting those complexities.

7. Based on the above, we seek to not only share these recognitions with our own communities but also to engage those who are not associated with religion, especially the younger generation, in dialogue with the sense of complexity and wisdom as they are known to us through our own search.

The image features a wood-grain background with several geometric patterns: a grid of thin lines, a series of parallel diagonal lines, and a curved line. Two hands are shown, one at the top left and one at the bottom left, both reaching towards the center. The top hand is slightly curled, while the bottom hand is more open. A white, rounded rectangular shape on the right side contains the title text.

**THE ELIJAH BOARD OF  
WORLD RELIGIOUS  
LEADERS**



## BUDDHIST LEADERS



### **H.H. the Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, India**

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama is the spiritual and political leader of the Tibetan people. As such, he carries on a tradition that stretches unbroken to the 13th century. His Holiness has traveled to more than 52 countries and met with presidents, prime ministers and crowned rulers of major nations. He has held dialogues with the heads of different religions and many well-known scientists. He has waged a peaceful campaign to free Tibet from Chinese rule, a struggle that won him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. As The Dalai Lama lives in Dharamsala, he heads the Tibetan government in exile.



### **Ven. Norman Fischer, USA**

Zoketsu Norman Fischer is a poet, Zen priest and teacher in the Soto Zen lineage of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi. He served as co-abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center, the oldest and largest Zen organization in the Western world, from 1995-2000. He is now founder and teacher of the Everyday Zen Foundation, an organization devoted to sharing Zen teaching and practice widely with the world.



### **Blanche Zenkei Hartman, USA**

Zenkei Blanche Hartman began sitting in 1969 at the Berkeley Zen Center with Sojun Mel Weitsman and in San Francisco with Suzuki-roshi. She was priest ordained in 1977 by Zentatsu Baker-roshi and received dharma transmission with Sojun Mel Weitsman in 1988. Zenkei became abbess of San Francisco Zen Center in February of 1996.



### **Dharma Master Hsin-Tao, Taiwan**

Dharma Master Hsin Tao is the founder of the Museum of World Religions, the President of The Global Family for Love and Peace, and the founder of the Ling Jiou Mountain Wu-Sheng Monastery on Taiwan's northeastern coast, which now houses nearly 100 nuns and monks. Master Hsin Tao also leads the Ling Jiou Mountain Prajna Cultural Education Foundation, the Ling Jiou Mountain Buddhist Foundation, the Social Welfare and Charity Foundation of Taipei County, and related projects in New York, Vancouver, Nepal, Burma, Thailand, Indonesia and Hong Kong.



### **Ven. Bhikkhuni Kusuma, Sri Lanka**

The Ven Bhikkhuni Kusuma pioneered the re-establishment of the female Buddhist order and became the first fully ordained nun in 1996, 1000 years after the Order had died out. She is a member of the executive committee of the International Association of Buddhist Women - Sakyaditha and permanent member of the World Sangha Council. She is building the Ayya Khema International Buddhist Mandir in Sri Lanka, a study and retreat center that will offer studies of Pali and Buddhism.



### **Jan Chozen Bays, USA**

Jan Chozen Bays, MD, has studied and practiced Zen Buddhism since 1973. She is an ordained Soto Zen priest and teaches at the Great Vow Zen Monastery, a residential center for intensive Zen training in Clatskanie, Oregon. She is the author of "Jizo Bodhisattva", "Modern Healing" and "Traditional Buddhist Practice".



### **Ven. Phra Dharmakosajarn, Thailand**

The Ven. Phra Dharmakosajarn is Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU), Regional Ecclesiastical Governor, and Assistant Abbot of Wat Prayoonrawongsawas, Bangkok. He has formerly been Dean of MCU's Graduate School and Chairman of the Organizing Committee for the World Council of Religious Leaders.



### **Ven. Jinwol Lee, Korea**

The Ven. Jinwol Lee is the President of United Religions Initiative of Korea, Dean of Gwangmyeong Buddhist College in Cheongju, Korea, an Executive Council Member of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, and Professor of Buddhist Studies at the Seoul Graduate School of Buddhism. He received his Doctorate in Buddhist Studies from the University of California at Berkeley and is widely published in both English and Korean.



### **Ven. Sayadaw Ashin Nyanissara, Myanmar**

Ven. Ashin Nyanissara is a teacher of Buddhism and a humanitarian. He is the founder of BBM College in Lower Myanmar and was responsible for the construction of a water supply system that now provides clean drinking water to over eight thousand residents of Sagaing Hills, Myanmar as well as a fully modernized hospital in Burma that serves over 250 people a day. He is the founder of the Theravada Dhamma Society of America.



**Ven. Karma Lekshe Tsomo, USA**

Karma Lekshe Tsomo is an Assistant Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of San Diego. She is president of Sakyadhita: International Association of Buddhist Women and director of Jamyang Foundation, an initiative to provide educational opportunities for women in developing countries, especially in the Indian Himalayas and Bangladesh.



**Ven. Khandro Rinpoche**

At the age of two, Venerable Khandro Rinpoche was recognized by His Holiness the 16th Karmapa as the re-incarnation of the Great Dakini of Tsurphu, Khandro Ugyen Tsomo, who was one of the most well known female masters of her time. Rinpoche is a teacher in both the Kagyu and Nyingma traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. She speaks fluent English, Tibetan and Hindi dialects and has completed a western education at St. Joseph's Convent, Wynberg Allen and St. Mary's Convent. Rinpoche has been teaching in Europe, North America and Southeast Asia since 1987.



## CHRISTIAN LEADERS



### **Archbishop Hilarion Alfeyev, Russia**

Archbishop Alfeyev is the Chairman of the Inter-Christian Affairs of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate. He is the author of 250 publications including 30 books in six languages. He holds a doctoral degree in philosophy from Oxford and a doctorate in theology from St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris. Archbishop Alfeyev is an accomplished musician, whose religious oratorios have been performed in Rome, Moscow and other venues. He is the former Bishop of Vienna and Austria, and was elevated to the dignity of Archbishop on 20 April 2009.



### **Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, Turkey**

His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is the 270th successor to the Apostle Andrew and spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide. Since ascending the Ecumenical Throne on November 2nd, 1991, he has tirelessly pursued the vision of his enthronement message: Spiritual revival, orthodox unity, christian reconciliation, interfaith tolerance and coexistence, protection of the environment and a world united in peace, justice, solidarity and love.



### **Prior Isabelle Flye-Sainte Marie, Israel**

Sr. Isabelle Flye Sainte Marie is prioress of the monastic family of Bethlehem, the Assumption of the Virgin and St. Bruno. The monastic family consists of 28 houses in 14 countries. The characteristic of this monastic family consists of a liturgical life, silence, solitude and fraternal communion in deep listening to the gospel.



### **Archbishop Vincentiu Grifoni, Romania**

Archbishop Vincentiu Grifoni is Bishop of the Diocese of Slobozia and Calarasi in Romania. His previous post was Assistant to the Patriarch-Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church. He was formerly abbot of the Romanian Settlement in Jerusalem. In 2000, he was named Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church. He has represented the Romanian Orthodox Church at orthodox, ecumenical and interreligious meetings.



### **Bishop Frank Griswold, USA**

Bishop Griswold was elected to a nine-year term as Presiding Bishop at the 1997 General Convention and invested in January 1998. He was educated at St Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire and earned an AB in English literature from Harvard College. He attended the General Theological Seminary and earned his BA in theology and MA from Oriel College, Oxford University. He serves as Primate and chief pastor of the Episcopal Church, president of the House of Bishops and president and chief executive officer of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society.



### **Bishop Lennart Koskinen, Sweden**

Lennart K. Koskinen is Bishop of Visby and the Church of Sweden overseas. A student of eastern and western philosophy, Sanskrit and Greek, he received his PhD in theology in 1980, and has served as lecturer in philosophy of religion. He has served as Dean of the Cathedral of Stockholm and assistant to the Bishop of Stockholm, where he was responsible for social-ethical questions, contacts with civil society and international dialogue.



### **Cardinal Jorge Maria Mejia, The Vatican**

Jorge Maria Cardinal Mejia has served as Secretary of the College of Cardinals and Archivist and Librarian of the Holy Roman Church. He has taught Sacred Scripture, Biblical Greek, Hebrew and Archeology, as well as serving as the Director of the Catholic Journal *Criterio* for over 20 years. He received the red biretta and the deaconry of S. Girolama della Carita, in 2001. Cardinal Mejia heads the Vatican delegation to the dialogue with the Chief Rabbinate of Israel.



### **Patriarch Mesrob II, Turkey**

Patriarch Mesrob II was elected the 84th Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul & All Turkey in 1998. Before his enthronement he served as Patriarchal Locum Tenens and Chairman of the Patriarchal Synod. He has taught Ecumenical Theology at St. Thomas Aquinas University in Rome and Old Testament Studies at the Armenian Theological Seminary in Jerusalem. Patriarch Mesrob has been seriously ill for the past two years. Nevertheless, he retains the title of Patriarch.



### **Archbishop Boutrous Mouallem, Israel**

His Excellency Archbishop Boutrous Mouallem was ordained as Metropolitane of Sao Paulo and all of Brazil in 1990. He was been appointed by Paul VI and later confirmed by John Paul II as the only Oriental Catholic member in the committee of the Catholic-Orthodox Theological dialogue. Archbishop Muallem has been active in many interfaith initiatives, including participating at the first International Christian-Jewish Conference in 1994. He was appointed Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Galilee in 1998 and has published over 40 books in Arabic and Portuguese.



### **Cardinal Telesphore Placidus Toppo**

Telesphore Placidus Toppo is a Cardinal Priest and Archbishop of Ranchi in the Roman Catholic Church. He is the first Adivasi Indian to be created a Cardinal. Born the 8th of 10 children, Toppo studied at St. Xavier's College, Ranchi and Theology at the Urbanianum, Rome. After a stint at Torpa, as Headmaster of St Joseph's School and Director of the Lievens Vocational Center, Toppo was ordained bishop for the diocese of Dumka and soon transferred to Ranchi as Archbishop. Toppo was made Cardinal by Pope John Paul II on 21 October 2003. He is the former president of CBCI (Catholic Bishops' Conference of India).



### **Abbot Primate Notker Wolf OSB, Italy**

Dr. Notker Wolf OSB is Titular head and first representative of the Benedictine Order, which consists of monasteries throughout the world of 8,500 men and 16,500 women. He is the Abbot of the Primatial Abbey of Sant'Anselmo, Rome and Grand Chancellor of the Pontifical College of Sant'Anselmo, Rome.



## LEADERS OF RELIGIONS OF INDIA



### **Swami Agnivesh, India**

Swami Agnivesh is the president of the World Council of Arya Samaj "Society of Nobles", a Hindu reform movement, founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati in 1875. He is also Chairperson of United Nations Trust Fund, President of World Council of Arya Samaj and Chairperson of Bonded Labour Liberation Front. Among Swami Agnivesh's immense contributions is his championing of dialogue and peace activities, the anti-caste movement, liberation of bonded labour activities, a movement against alcoholism, and equal rights of women (such as their right to education and reading Indian scriptures).



### **H.H. Mata Amritanandamayi, India**

Amma, as she is known all over the world today, has inspired and started innumerable humanitarian services. She has earned international recognition for her outstanding contributions to the world community. She is recognized as an extraordinary spiritual leader by the United Nations and by people all over the world.



### **Swami Atmapriyananda, India**

Swami Atmapriyananda is the Vice Chancellor of Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University. Before becoming a monk, he completed his PhD in the Department of Theoretical Physics, University of Madras, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. Inspired by the ideal of renunciation and service as taught by Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, he joined as a Brahmacharin at Ramakrishna Mission Saradapitha, Belur Math, the Headquarters of the worldwide organization, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission.



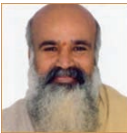
**H. H. Jagadguru Karmayogi Charukeerty Bhattarak Swamiji, India**

H.H. Swamiji is the present pontiff of the world renowned Jain Shrvanabelagola Math. He studied Jain Philosophy in Prakrit, Sanskrit and Kannada and has an M.A. in History (Mysore University) and an M.A. in Philosophy (Bangalore University). H.H. Swamiji became a Jain Monk on December 12th, 1969 and ascended the Dharmacharya Peetha at Shrvanabelagola Math on April 19th, 1970. He moved on to become the Chairman of The Managing Committee of Shrvanabelagola Shrine.



**H.H. Dadi Janki, India**

Dadi Janki is Administrative Head of the Brahma Kumari movement. She has traveled to the Brahma Kumaris centers in all 70 countries. For about four months each year she lives in Mt. Abu at the University's world headquarters and for the other eight months she works out of its International Coordinating Office in London. Even now at the age of 90, Dadi Janki refuses to set limits and boundaries as to what is achievable.



**H.H. Sri Rishi Prabhakarji, India**

Well versed in both Eastern and Western philosophies, Guruji Sri Rishi Prabhakar is a silent meditator with a large number of disciples. His fundamental instruction 'Siddha Samadhi Yoga,' (SSY) is made available to thousands of people around India by teachers trained by him. Rishi Prabhakar is currently involved with development in Karnataka and has been successful in eliminating tobacco and alcohol addiction from several villages.



**H.H. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, India**

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has inspired numerous educational and charitable organizations around the globe. He established the Art of Living Foundation in 1982 to promote self-development and health-related educational programs, many of which feature his Sudarshan Kriya technique. To date, his programs have been enjoyed by more than a million people in more than 100 countries. Sri Sri Ravi Sankar has served on the advisory board of Yale University's School of Divinity and chaired the International Conference of Religions at Kyoto, Japan.



**H.H. Sugunendra Theertha Swamiji, India**

His Holiness Sri Sri Sugunendra Theertha Swamiji is the youngest Swamiji ever to ascend the Paryaya Peetam in Udupi and the author of many books on religion and philosophy. The Swamiji has set up a world-wide Maadhwa Sangha for the propagation of spirituality named Vishwa Maadhwa Sangha. He is dedicated to the eradication of unemployment and has founded "Suyoga," an institution that imparts training in the rudiments of selected vocations.



**Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh, England**

A civil engineer by profession, Mohinder Singh is the chairman of the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha in Birmingham, England. A strong proponent of interreligious dialogue, Singh is a member of the European Council of Religious Leaders and an advisor to the Sikh Heritage Trust.



### **H.H. Chandra Swami, India**

In 1947, Chandra Swami was initiated into the Usadin order by Mahant Girdhari Dassji. At the age of 35, he had the ultimate and integral realization of the Divine. In time he became a well-respected yogi in India and abroad. He wrote various books on Hinduism, such as "The Practical Approach to Divinity." Even while observing complete silence for 13 years, he inspires people all over the world through his visits and written guidance.



### **H.H. Swami Swatantranand**

Swami Swatantranand was born on December 15th, 1950 in Itawa Uttherpradesh (India). He completed his studies at Kanpur University in 1974. He has traveled with J.P. Narayan as a social reformer in North India and was active in establishing peace initiatives in Punjab. Swamiji has established an ashram at Rishikesh named Swatantrananda ashram. He travels all around the world giving discourses on Veda, Bhagawatam and Upanishad.



## **JEWISH LEADERS**



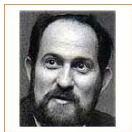
### **Chief Rabbi Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron, Israel**

In 1975, Rabbi Bakshi-Doron was appointed to the position of Chief Rabbi of Haifa, a position in which he served for 18 years, and in 1993, was appointed Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel. He has written dozens of articles dealing with religious issues. His first book (1982) researches halachic questions, and the second (1989) and third (1995) volumes deal with daily halachic issues and include orations given by him on special occasions. He serves as president of the Israeli Sephardic Community Committee, as president of various charity foundations and is a member of the directorate of LIBI.



### **Chief Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen, Israel**

Rabbi Cohen serves as Chief Rabbi of Haifa. He is also the Founder and President of Ariel and President of the Haifa District Rabbinical Courts. Rabbi Cohen has achieved wide recognition for his work in bridging differences and solving internal divisions within Israeli society and the Jewish world.



### **Chief Rabbi Menachem HaCohen, Romania**

Rabbi Menachem HaCohen currently serves as chief Rabbi of Romania. His rich rabbinic and public career includes many years in army chaplaincy, and service as a Rabbi of labor unions as well as of the labor settlements in Israel. A prolific writer and educator, Rabbi HaCohen also served for 14 years as a member of the Israeli parliament.



### **The International Jewish Committee On Interreligious Consultation (IJCIC)**

The International Jewish Committee On Interreligious Consultation represents the major Jewish religious streams and communal agencies, develops and coordinates relations with the Roman Catholic Church, the World Council of Churches, the Orthodox Church and other international central religious bodies. IJCIC provides ongoing consultations, promotes and participates in conferences, forums and dialogues on behalf of world Jewry to promote interfaith cooperation and to develop common agendas among religious communities.



### **Chief Rabbi Berel Lazar, Russia**

Rabbi Berel Lazar was elected Chief Rabbi of Russia in 2000. He currently serves as the Chairman of the Rabbinical Council of the World Congress of Russian Jewry and Chairman of the Rabbinical Alliance of the CIS. Chief Rabbi Berel Lazar opened Russia's first Jewish, post-communist day school and currently oversees 80 educational institutions. He is a leading advocate of religious freedom and human rights in Russia.



### **Rabbi Richard Marker, USA**

Rabbi Richard Marker has been a university chaplain, chief executive of a philanthropic foundation, a professor, a management consultant in the private sector, and an executive in the not-for-profit world. Rabbi Marker is Vice-President of IJCIC.

**Rabbi Michael Melchior, Israel**

Since 1980, Rabbi Michael Melchior has held the position of Chief Rabbi of Norway. He is the International Director of the Elie Wiesel Foundation as well as an administrator of various human rights, immigration and educational organizations. Since 1996, Rabbi Melchior has served as Chairman of Meimad, a Modern-Orthodox political party in Israel. He was elected to the Israeli Parliament in May 1999. Rabbi Melchior has received the Norwegian Nobel Institute's Prize for Tolerance and Bridge-Building.

**Rabbi Mordechai Peron, Israel**

Rabbi Mordechai Peron served in the IDF since its conception in 1948. From 1971-77 he served as the Chief Rabbi of the IDF. Rabbi Peron served for 12 years as the Chief Rabbi of Zurich. He is the author of numerous books and publications on Judaism. Rabbi Peron is a member of the steering committee of the President and Prime Minister's Memorial Council to commemorate former Israeli Prime Ministers and Presidents.

**Rabbi David Rosen, Israel**

Rabbi David Rosen is the Director of the Department for Interreligious Affairs and Director of the Heilbrunn Institute for International Interreligious Understanding of the American Jewish Committee.

Rosen is the former Chief Rabbi of Ireland and served as a Professor of Jewish Studies at the Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies. He serves on the permanent bilateral commission of the State of Israel and the Holy See as well as on the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations.

**Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, England**

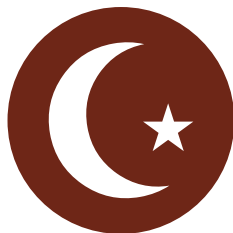
Rabbi Dr. Sacks has been Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth since September 1, 1991. Prior to becoming Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Sacks had been Principal of Jews' College, London, the world's oldest rabbinical seminary, as well as rabbi of the Golders Green and Marble Arch Synagogues in London. He gained rabbinic ordination from Jews' College as well as from London's Yeshiva Etz Chaim.

**Chief Rabbi Rene Sirat, France**

Chief Rabbi Rene Sirat holds a PhD in Hebrew Language and Literature. He has taught at the Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations at the University of Paris and served as Chief Rabbi of France from 1981-87. He is currently Chief Rabbi of the Central Consistory and Vice Chairperson of the Conference of European Rabbis. He is involved in interfaith teaching and research, through a variety of academic institutes of which he is president.

**Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp, The Netherlands**

Sjalom Awraham Soetendorp is Rabbi of the Liberal Jewish Community in The Hague. He presides over the European Region of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, and serves as Earth Charter Commissioner and is a Founding Board Member of the Green Cross International. Since 1993, Soetendorp has been co-chair of the Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders with Sheikh Ahmed Kuftaro, Grand Mufti of Syria. He acts as advisor to the American Jewish World Service and is the Founder and Chair of the Hope Foundation for Children for Universal Education.

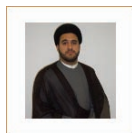


## MUSLIM LEADERS



### **Sheikh Muhammad Nur Abdallah, USA**

Sheikh Mohammed Nur Abdullah, Imam and director for the Islamic Foundation of Greater St. Louis, came to the United States from Sudan in 1978. Sheikh Nur Abdullah is the past chairman of the ISNA Fiqh Council and has been a member of the Fiqh Council of North America since 1982. Sheikh Muhammad Nur Abdullah now lives in St. Louis, Missouri, and is currently the President of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA).



### **Sayyed Jawad al-Khoei, England**

After the first Gulf War, and following the tragic death of his grandfather, Sayyed Jawad was forced to leave Iraq due to the political unrest and the constant dangers that he and his family faced. He has studied Shi'a Islamic theology at Al-Kadhem University in Qum, Iran. At present, Sayyed Jawad dedicates most of his time between the United Kingdom and Iraq carrying on the work of his father and grandfather and fulfilling his responsibilities as Assistant Secretary-General of the Al-Khoei Foundation.



### **Dr. Y. Mossa Basha, USA**

Dr. Basha is the current Chairman of the Muslim American Coalition. He was the former Chairman of the American Muslim Council (AMC), a national non-profit organization with headquarters in Washington, D.C. His accolades also include Board Member of the Board of Governors for the Arab American Institute, President of the Islamic Medical Association- Midwest Region, and former President of the Cultural Association of Franklin, Michigan.

**His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal**

Prince El Hassan bin Talal is the youngest son of King Talal and Queen Zein El Sharaf. Prince Hassan has founded and is actively involved in a number of Jordanian and international institutes and committees, such as The Arab Thought Forum, Higher Council for Science and Technology, and the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies.

**Dr. Mustafa Cerić, Bosnia**

Dr. Mustafa Cerić is the Reis-ul-Ulema - President of the Council of Ulema in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He graduated from Al-Azhar University in Cairo and afterwards accepted the position of Imam at the Islamic Cultural Center in the United States. During his tenure at the Center, he earned a Ph.D. in Islamic Theology at the University of Chicago. In 1987, he returned to his homeland and became a practicing Imam in a learning center in Zabreb.

**Imam Plemon El Amin, USA**

Imam El Amin has served for the past 24 years as the Resident Imam of the Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam. He worked closely as an aide and supporter of Imam W. Deen Mohammed and his Ministry for 33 years and takes his place on the EBWRL following the latter's death in 2008. Imam El Amin holds a PhD from Harvard University. His insightful and hands-on approach to leadership has helped develop the Atlanta Masjid into one of the largest and most progressive Muslim communities in the US.

**Moulana Umer Ahmed Ilyasi, India**

Moulana Umer Ilyasi is the President of the All-India Association of Imams and Mosques, which represents more than half a million Imams and 150 million Muslims, the world's second largest Muslim population. He travels widely, meeting people belonging to all shades of opinion and denominations. His open-minded and flexible approach has earned him goodwill around the world. He is a strong believer in dialogue.

**Sheikh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, USA**

A prominent scholar of traditional Islam, Shaykh Kabbani has spent his life spreading the teachings of peace, tolerance, respect and love that are the message of Islam. He is the Founder and Chairman of the Islamic Supreme Council of America, the Chairman of American Muslim Assistance relief organization, the Founder of Kamilat, an international Muslim women's organization, the Chairman of the As-Sunnah Foundation of America, and the Founder of Muslim Magazine, a top-rated Islamic newsmagazine.

**Dr. Wahiduddin Khan, USA**

Dr. Wahiduddin Khan devotes his life to presenting Islamic teachings in the style and language of the present day. He is the author of some two hundred books in India and abroad. Dr. Wahiduddin Khan is also founder of the Islamic Centre, India's vanguard Urdu Islamic Institution, which has done much to awaken in Muslims a new awareness of their religion and social responsibilities.



**Chief Khadi Ahmed Natour, Israel**

Ahmad Natour is the President of Israel's High Shari'a Court of Appeal (Chief Kadi). He also serves as an adjunct Professor of Law at Haifa University. In addition to earning two law degrees at Tel Aviv University, Kadi Natour is a doctoral candidate at the American University of Washington, D.C. He also has two certifications in "Family Mediation" and "Independent Judiciary and the Rule of Law".



**Dr. Adamou Ndam Njoya, Cameroon**

Dr. Adamou Ndam Njoya currently serves as Minister Plenipotentiary in Cameroon's government and President of the Cameroon Democratic Union (CDU) political party. From 1994 to 1999, he served as President of the World Conference on Religion and Peace and currently holds a position the organization's International Governing Board. He has published several academic books, articles, poems and four novels.



**Dr. Ahmed Taoufiq, Morocco**

Dr. Ahmed Taoufiq is Morocco's Minister of Habous (endowments) and Islamic Affairs. He has served as the Director of both Morocco's Institute of African Studies and the Generale Library. He is a renowned historian, focusing on nineteenth century Moroccan society, as well as a certified archaeologist. Dr. Taoufiq is also a distinguished poet, having published several works in tandem with Jarat Abi Mussa.



**Dr. Abdurrahman Wahid, Indonesia**

Abdurrahman Wahid is the former President of the Republic of Indonesia. He serves on the Board of numerous organizations dedicated to reconciliation of conflict. Some of his current positions include Rector of Darul Ulum Univeristy in East Java and President of the Non Violence Peace Movement. In 2003, Dr. Wahid was awarded the World Peace Prize Award.

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## ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS



### **Dr. Nazeer Ahmed, USA**

Dr. Nazeer Ahmed is currently Director of the American Institute of Islamic History and Culture and a director of the World Organization for Resource Development and Education. Dr. Ahmed holds several degrees, and is a former legislator to the Legislative Assembly in Bangalore. He belongs to the Naqshabandi Sufi Order and has learned tasawwuf from Shaikh Nazim al Haqqani of Cyprus and Shaikh Hisham Kabbani of the US. He has lectured widely in the United States, Canada, India, Malaysia and South Africa on issues related to science, history, religion and spirituality.

Dr. Ahmed represents Sheikh Kabbani at the meeting and is on the steering committee of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders.



### **Swami Amarananda, Switzerland**

Swami Amarananda is the President of the Centre Védantique in Geneva. Shortly after receiving a Civil Engineering degree, he joined the Order of Ramakrishna in 1966. He sat on the Committee of World Faiths Development Dialogue (1998-2000), and the Inter-religious Platform, Geneva since its inception. Swami Amarananda participated in European peace meetings under the auspices of Sant'Egidio and the Third and Fourth Parliaments of World's Religions.

His printed works include Stories from Vedanta, Views from the Vedantic Window (in press), drama texts for use by children, and Biographie de Ramakrishna (co-author).



**Rabbi Joseph Azran, Israel**

Rabbi Joseph Azran is the Chief Rabbi of Rishon Lezion. He is also a member of the Chief Rabbinate's permanent dialogue commission with the Vatican and member of the Paris Beth Din. Rabbi Azran served as a Member of Parliament from the religious party Shas in the Israeli Knesset for two terms, and held the role of Deputy Speaker of the Knesset during one term.



**Archbishop Dr. Elias Chacour, Israel**

Archbishop Dr. Elias Chacour currently serves as Archbishop of Akko, Haifa, Nazareth and all Galilee of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church. He is vice president of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, and the founder of the Mar Elias Educational Institutions in Northern Israel. Archbishop Chacour is the recipient of the prestigious World Methodist Peace Award and the Niwano Peace Prize.



**Bishop Gali Bali, India**

Bishop Bali is the Bishop of Gundur, India. He holds a doctoral degree in Theology. Prior to his Episcopal ordination in 1984, Bishop Bali was a Professor of Sacred Scriptures in St. John's Regional Seminary in Hyderabad. He is a published author on the Church's place in India. The Bishop is presently the Chairman of the CBCI Commission for Inter-Religious Dialogue and Desk for Ecumenism. Bishop Bali represents Cardinal Toppo at the present meeting.



**Br. Thomas Josef Goetz, Germany**

Br. Thomas Josef Goetz OSB is the former Secretary of the German Commission of MID - Monastic Interreligious Dialogue. He has participated in extensive interfaith dialogue with Japanese monks and currently teaches Catholic Theology at the University of Strassborg and is Co-Principle of St. Ottilien High School. Br. Thomas represents Abbot Notker Wolf at the present meeting.



**Rabbi David Bigman, Israel**

Rabbi David Bigman is the head of the Maale Gilboa Yeshiva since 1995. Rabbi Bigman studied in Yeshivat Merkaz Harav and in Yeshivat Netzech Yisrael and received smicha at Mechon Ariel in Haifa. From 1983 until 1988, Rabbi Bigman served as the Rabbi of Kibbutz Maale Gilboa and from 1987 until 1992 he served as Rosh Yeshiva in Yeshivat haKibbutz HaDati Ein Tzurim. He is active in issues pertaining to society and halacha, and in dialogue between secular and religious Israelis as well as between members of different faiths in Israel.



**Jalal Hatami, Israel**

Jalal Hatami was appointed Deputy Secretary-General of the Bahá'í International Community in August 2008. He is resident at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel and his primary focus is the relationship with governmental authorities and civil society in Israel. While living in the United States, Mr. Hatami served on various regional and local Bahá'í institutions there. In 2005, he was invited to serve at the World Centre as Director of the Office of Social and Economic Development, a position he held until his current appointment.



### **Dr. Muzaffar Iqbal, USA**

Dr. Iqbal is the founder-president of Center for Islam and Science, Canada, and editor of Islam & Science, a semi-annual journal of Islamic perspectives on science and civilization. Born in Lahore, Pakistan, he has lived in Canada since 1979. He holds a Ph.D. in chemistry (University of Saskatchewan, Canada, 1983), but most of his published work is related to Islam and various aspects of Islamic civilization, including the Islamic scientific tradition.



### **Rabbi Daniel Kohn, Israel**

Rabbi Kohn is the rabbi of Bat Ayin, an orthodox Hassidic village in the Judean Mountains. Over the past 20 years he has taught hundreds of students, combining the world of Torah learning, Jewish mysticism and deep psychological insight, and has culled and developed effective techniques for personal and spiritual renewal. He is trained as a narrative therapist and life coach and teaches in various yeshivot and rabbinical programs.



### **Albert Lincoln, Israel**

Albert Lincoln serves as the Secretary-General of the Bahá'í International Community in Haifa, Israel. He was appointed to this position by the international governing body, the Universal House of Justice, in October 1994. Mr. Lincoln served for 17 years as chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer of the national governing bodies of the Bahá'í communities where he lived, provided legal advice and representation to many Bahá'í institutions on the continent, and represented the Bahá'í International Community at numerous international conferences and seminars in Africa and Europe.



### **His Eminence Metropolitan Nikitas Lulias, USA**

His Eminence Metropolitan Nikitas (Lulias) of Dardanellia was the inaugural Metropolitan of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia and is now serving as Director of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute. Metropolitan Nikitas Lulias is the permanent representative of Patriarch Bartholomew to the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders.



### **Imam Dr. Abduljalil Sajid, UK**

Imam Sajid is the Chairman of Muslim Council for Religious and Racial Harmony (MCRRH) and one of the founders of the Muslim Council of Britain, the largest umbrella organisation of Muslims in the UK. Imam Sajid also serves as President of the UK Chapter of the World Conference of Religion for Peace, the Deputy President of European World Conference of Religion and Peace, President of the National Association of British Pakistanis and a member of the Central Working Committee of the Muslim Council of Britain.



### **Venerable Bhikkhu Sanghasena, India**

A Buddhist monk, Venerable Sanghasena founded the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre (MIMC) in Ladakh. Since then, he has worked tirelessly to put the Buddha's teachings on loving kindness and compassion into action. He has been awarded the "National Award for the Welfare of People with Disabilities" by the Indian Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.



### **Rabbi Dov Singer, Israel**

Rabbi Singer represents a generation of young Israeli religious leaders, who are forging new paths in religious leadership. For the past 25 years he has been the head of a prestigious Yeshiva high school, that has trained thousands of students. He also heads the Center for Spiritual Renewal, where educators, religious leaders, psychologists and others seek to articulate novel contemporary forms of Jewish identity and spiritual experience, combining halachic aspirations with the changing needs of Israeli society.



### **Ven. Geshe Tashi Tsering, UK**

Ven. Geshe Tashi is a Tibetan Lama who holds the Lharampa Geshse degree from Seramay Monastic University in South India. In 1991, he began a three year appointment at Nalanda Monastery in France to teach advanced level Tibetan Buddhist philosophy to Western students. Since 1994, he has been based at the Jamyang Buddhist Centre in London, where he is renowned for his ability to make philosophical teachings accessible to students. Ven. Geshe Tashi represents His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the present meeting.



### **Father MD Thomas, India**

Father Thomas is the National Director of the Commission for Inter-religious Dialogue in the Catholic Bishop's Conference in India. He has worked in the area of interreligious dialogue for the past 17 years, delivering lectures worldwide. Father Thomas also has a doctorate in Hindi literature. His book, entitled "Kabeer and Christian Thought", was awarded by the Hindi Academy, Delhi. Fr. Thomas represents Cardinal Toppo at the present meeting.



### **Archbishop Fouad Twal, Jerusalem**

Archbishop Twal is the Roman Catholic archbishop and Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. He was ordained a priest in 1966 and was appointed the vicar of Ramallah. In 1972 he entered the Pontifical Lateran University where he studied for a doctorate in canon law. He was appointed the prelate of the territorial prelate of Tunis in May 1992 and was consecrated to the episcopate later that year. In 1995 the territorial prelate was elevated to become the Diocese of Tunis, and he was made an archbishop ad personam. In 2005 he was named the coadjutor Archbishop of Jerusalem and in 2008 he became Patriarch of Jerusalem.



## PAST PARTICIPANTS AND BOARD MEMBERS



### **Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar, Israel**

Sefardi Chief Rabbi, Shlomo Amar was born in Morocco in 1948 and immigrated to Israel in 1962. A close associate of the Shas Party's spiritual leader and former Chief Rabbi Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, Rabbi Amar served as head of the Petah Tikva Rabbinical Court. In March 2002, he was elected chief rabbi of Tel-Aviv, the first sole chief rabbi of the city. Rabbi Amar was sent by then Interior Minister Eli Yishai to Ethiopia to meet with the Falash Mura community there. In 2003, Rabbi Amar was appointed Chief Rabbi of Israel.



### **Dr. Muhammad Zaki Badawi, UK**

Shaikh Mohammed Aboulkhair Zaki Badawi KBE was a prominent Egyptian Islamic scholar, community activist, and promoter of interfaith dialogue. He was the principal of the Muslim College in London, which he founded in 1986. He was a frequent writer and broadcaster on Islamic affairs, and was made an honorary Knight Commander of the British Empire (KBE) in 2004. Badawi was also appointed a Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Order of Francis I in recognition of his interfaith work. Dr. Badawi passed away in 2006.



### **Rabbi Dr. Naftali Brawer, England**

Rabbi Brawer is the rabbi of Northwood United Synagogue and serves on the Chief Rabbi of England's cabinet with responsibility for Jewish-Muslim relations. He is a regular columnist for the Jewish Chronicle and a broadcaster on the BBC. Rabbi Brawer is an honorary research fellow and lecturer at the London School of Jewish Studies where he teaches applied ethics. He holds a PhD in Hebrew and Jewish Studies from University College London.



### **Sister Maureen Goodman, UK**

Sister Maureen is the Programme Coordinator at the Brahma Kumaris (BK) International Coordinating Office in London and the BK NGO representative at the UN in Vienna. She has served on several committees for interreligious dialogue including the International Interfaith Centre Advisory Committee, World Congress of Faiths Executive and the Prince's Trust Forum of Faiths. She is on the UK Committee of Rights and Humanity and travels widely conducting seminars and lectures on personal development.



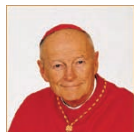
### **Judith Hertz, USA**

Judith Hertz serves on the International Council of Presidents of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, as well as on the Executive Committee for the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East. She is an active member of the Jewish Reform Movement and within the organization, she co-chairs the Commission on Interreligious Affairs, serves on the Commission for Social Action and the Board of Directors of Women of Reform Judaism.



### **H.H. Shri Shrikant Jichkar, India**

Dr. Shrikant Jichkar holds 20 post-graduate University degrees. In 1980, as the youngest member ever, he was elected Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) and subsequently became a powerful Minister with fourteen portfolios. Jichkar has served as a Member of the Indian Parliament (MP) and is President of the Marathi Encyclopedia Production Board. He is one of the great ritualists in India and an Agnihotri, one who continuously maintains the three sacred Vedic fires.



### **Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick, USA**

Cardinal McCarrick is an eminent leader in the Catholic Church and a distinguished human rights advocate. He serves as Chairman of the Domestic Policy Committee for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and is a founding member of the Papal Foundation. In December 2000, he was awarded the Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights by President George W. Bush. In February 2001, Archbishop McCarrick was elevated to the College of Cardinals. Cardinal McCarrick retired from the EBWRL in 2009.



### **W. Dean Mohammad, USA**

Imam W. Dean Mohammad is a tireless laborer for the interests of peace and justice in our world. He has worked for and realized direct and genuine dialogue between people of all races and religions. Outdistancing the purveyors of narrow race concerns, Imam Mohammed's leadership continues to build upon a solid religious foundation with concrete plans for the strengthening of families and communities. W. Dean Mohammad passed away in 2008.



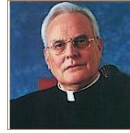
### **Sheikh Mohammed Mohammed Ali, UK**

Sheikh Mohammed Ali is a Shiite scholar of Islamic theology and history and mechanical engineer by training, holding BSc, MA, and Phd degrees. He is a member and leader of the National Consensus Alliance, the Iraqi Reconstruction Group, Forum 2020, and other NGOs. An Iraqi by birth and frequent visitor to Iraq, he is currently a resident of the United Kingdom. He has lectured in conferences around the world and has vast experience within UN agencies in New York and Geneva. Sheikh Ali is a human rights activist.



### **His Eminence Paul Cardinal Shan, Taiwan**

His Eminence Paul Cardinal Shan, the Bishop of Kaohsiung since 1991, has been an active member in religious education and theological councils. He was ordained a priest in 1955 and has served as a religious educator and minister in the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan. In 1998, Shan was appointed Cardinal by His Holiness Pope John Paul II. Cardinal Shan is also Chair of the Board of Trustees at Fu Jen Catholic University.



### **Cardinal Carlos Amigo Vallejo, Spain**

Cardinal Carlos Amigo Vallejo O.F.M. has served as Archbishop of Seville since 1982 and has been an ordained priest since 1960. He presides over the Episcopal Commission of Missions and Cooperation between the Churches in the Spanish Episcopal Conference and was previously President of the Episcopal Commission of Superior Bishops. Cardinal Vallejo is a recipient of the Favorite Son of Andalusia Award.



### **Imam Muhammad Siddeeq, USA**

Imam Muhammad Siddeeq is a long time Muslim American pioneer. Professionally a biologist, medical researcher and teacher, he became Muslim under the leadership of Imam Mohammed's father, the late Hon. Elijah Muhammad. Imam Muhammad Siddeeq has held many positions in the Muslim community of the United States and has been mentor to newly converted and young Muslim men, many who have been released from prison.



### **Bishop Baerbel Wartenberg-Potter, Germany**

Right Reverend Bishop Baerbel Wartenberg-Potter is the Bishop of Holstein-Luebeck, North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany. She has served as the Chairperson of the Joint Working Group of Christian Churches of Germany and the Director of the World Council of Churches' project on Women in Church and Society. Bishop Wartenberg-Potter retired from her office in 2007.



### **Harmoinder Singh**

S. Harmohinder Singh is reader in History at the University of Delhi. He has been teaching since 1975 and is considered an expert in Modern Indian History. Singh has been actively involved in the affairs of the Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee, which manages the historical Gurudwaras of Delhi and runs a large number of public schools, colleges, and hospitals.

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**THINK TANK  
PARTICIPANTS**



**Therese Andrevon, France**

Therese Andrevon has been involved with Elijah since its formation, as part of the Jerusalem consortium. She is a member of the administrative board and a “keeper of the vision”. She is provincial of her religious community, the community of the Beatitudes. Her studies include an M.A in administration and social work and a second MA in ecumenical theology. She is currently working on her PhD in ecumenical theology.



**Timothy Gianotti, USA**

Timothy Gianotti is assistant professor of classical Islamic philosophy, theology and mysticism at University of Virginia. He teaches upper-level seminars that deal with Islamic mystical thought, Islamic political thought, medieval Islamic and Jewish philosophy and the language and imagery of war within the Abrahamic religious traditions. He is currently the Noor Chair in Islamic Studies at York University in Canada.



**Alon Goshen-Gottstein, Israel**

Alon Goshen-Gottstein is the founder and director of the Elijah Interfaith Institute, and lecturer and director of the Center for the Study of Rabbinic Thought, Beit Morasha College, Jerusalem. Ordained a Rabbi in 1977, he holds a Ph.D. from Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the field of Rabbinic Thought. His four score publications are divided between the areas of Interreligious Dialogue, Theology of Religions, Jewish Spirituality and Rabbinic Thought.



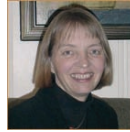
**B. Barry Levy, Canada**

B. Barry Levy has served as teacher, principal, professor of Jewish Education, curriculum writer, and consultant, and as Director of McGill's Jewish Teacher Training Program. Educated at Yeshiva University and at New York University, he held positions at Yeshiva and at Brown University before coming to McGill in 1975. Since then, he has served as Harry Starr Fellow in Judaica at Harvard, the Shier Distinguished Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto, and visiting graduate professor at Yeshiva University. He won the H. Noel Fieldhouse Award for Distinguished Teaching from McGill's Faculty of Arts. The author of five books, his most recent contribution is "Fixing God's Torah: The Accuracy of the Biblical Text in Rabbinic Law" (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).



**Anantanand Rambachan, USA**

Anantanand Rambachan is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Religion at Saint Olaf College, Minnesota, USA, where he has been teaching since 1985. He received his M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in religion from the University of Leeds, in the United Kingdom. Prof. Rambachan is the author of several books, book-chapters and numerous articles and reviews in scholarly journals. Among these are: "Accomplishing the Accomplished: The Vedas as a Source of Valid Knowledge in Shankara", "The Limits of Scripture: Vivekananda's Reinterpretation of the Authority of the Vedas" and "The Advaita Worldview: God, World and Humanity". The British Broadcasting Corporation transmitted a series of 25 lectures by Prof. Rambachan around the world.



**Maria Reis Habito, USA**

Maria Reis Habito is the International Program Director of the Museum of World Religions and the Director of the Elijah Interfaith Institute USA. She studied Chinese Language and Culture at Taiwan Normal University in Taipei, and received her M.A. in Chinese Studies, Japanese Studies and Philosophy at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitaet in Munich. She was a research fellow at Kyoto University and completed her Ph.D. at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitaet. Dr. Reis Habito represents Dharma Master Hsin Tao on the steering committee.



**Vanessa Rebecca Sasson, Canada**

Vanessa Sasson is a professor of Comparative Religion in the Liberal Arts Department of Marianopolis College where she has been teaching since 1999. She is also a Research Fellow in the Department of Biblical and Religious Studies at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa, and Adjunct Professor of Comparative Religion at McGill University. She directs an annual Graduate Interfaith Seminar at McGill and is the Canadian director of the Elijah Educational Network.



**Kurt G. Schreiber, USA**

Kurt Schreiber is the Program Director for the Center for Research on Economic Development and Information Technology (CREDIT). He serves as a member of the Elijah Interfaith Institute's Administrative Board. He received his law degree at the University of Michigan and has a Masters in Theological Studies from Vanderbilt University.



### **Meir Sendor, USA**

Meir Sendor has been the Rabbi of the Young Israel of Sharon, MA for over two decades. He received his ordination from the Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University and his Doctorate in Medieval Jewish History from Harvard University. Rabbi Sendor has served as a visiting professor at Brandeis University, and an instructor for the Me'ah Program of Hebrew College. He lectures on medieval Jewish history, medieval Jewish philosophy and Kabbalah, the philosophy of Jewish law, the history of Jews and medicine and Jewish medical ethics, and serves on Bioethics Advisory Boards. He has written on issues in Jewish spirituality, Halakhah and Jewish history.



### **Balwant Singh Dhillon, India**

Balwant Singh Dhillon is Head of the Department of Guru Nanak Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. He studied History in Rajasthan University, Jaipur, and Religious Studies in Panjabi University, Patiala. He was awarded a Doctoral degree by Guru Nanak Dev University for his thesis on The Sikh Gurus and the Mughal State. He has 25 years of teaching and research experience, and has published three books and numerous articles.



### **Johann Marie Vento, USA**

Johann Marie Vento is a professor in the Department of Religious Studies and Theology at Georgian Court University. Her research interests include theologies of the body, the relationship between feminist theology and political theology, Mysticism and advocacy theologies and theologies of suffering as they relate to violence against women.



### **Miroslav Volf, USA**

Miroslav Volf is currently the Henry B. Wright Professor of Theology at Yale University Divinity School and Director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture. He has been a member in both the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Evangelical Church in Croatia. He is widely known for his works on systematic theology, ethics, conflict resolution, and peace-making. He studied at Evangelical-Theological Faculty, Zagreb (B.A), Fuller Theological Seminary (M.A) in Pasadena, California, and University of Tübingen (Dr. Theol., Dr. Theol. habil.), where he studied under Jürgen Moltmann. His book "Exclusion and Embrace", was selected as among the 100 best religious books of the 20th Century by Christianity Today.



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