



FAITH MATTERS
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Our Faiths and Our Shared Futures





What is 'Our Faiths and Our Shared Futures' about?

The purpose of this booklet is to show the connections between the different communities of Barnet, Enfield and Haringey. We want to tell the story that will challenge the messages of hate and extremism that some people in our communities want you to hear. The Our Faiths and Our Shared Futures programme celebrates the fact that faith is a positive thing that can bring the young people of Barnet, Enfield and Haringey together.

In this booklet you can read the words within our religious texts that speak against the message of hate. Islam, Judaism and Christianity are based on social justice and tell us that the messages of extremism are wrong. We will analyse the words from the Qur'an, the Torah and the Bible which tell a different story to the one that extremists tell. These religious books all talk about acceptance, tolerance and mutual understanding.

The words from these religious texts which we analyse were selected by a 'Faith Narratives Committee' made up of people from Barnet, Enfield and Haringey who represent the Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities here. These knowledgeable people from your community have met to discuss the things that the three faiths have in common:

The importance of valuing life as described within the Quran, Torah and Bible

How these texts instruct us to avoid violence - both towards people of our own faith and to people of other faiths, or to those without a faith at all

Respecting your community and the differences in what people believe, their way of life and their opinions

Understanding the values of human rights that are at the heart of the Qur'an, Torah and Bible and respecting the values of the community in which you live



Why you should read this booklet

Do you want people to tell you what to think? Or do you want to think for yourself?

Does it make you angry when you see yourself described as a 'hoody' or your beliefs labelled as 'extremist'?

What do you think about the other people who live in your community? Do they deserve your respect? And in return, do you deserve theirs?

Do people who live in different parts of the UK, people who have a different faith or different coloured skin to you, deserve to be judged by you? And beyond our own borders – do the people of other nations deserve to be listened to, or to be ignored because they are 'foreign'?

London has been home to people from other countries and faiths for a long time. Should judgement be reserved until you know what lies in the heart of a person? Is it even a man or a woman's place to judge another person?



This booklet is for you if you believe that as Muslims, Christians, Jews or non-believers, there are more things that unite us than divide us.

These three religions all come from the same place. People of these faiths are all known as 'the children of Abraham' and their God is the same God.

In this booklet we ask you: do you have a faith? Do you know your own faith? Do you understand the faith of your neighbours? Do you respect the way of life of others?

We challenge you to keep reading – to find out for yourself what the Qur'an, the Bible, the Torah and the Talmud have to say about the sanctity of life, the rights of other people, and the respect that all people deserve to receive from us.

Don't rely on other people to tell you about these things. Find out for yourself and then think for yourself.

Valuing life Our right to life

'Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.'

ARTICLE 3, DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Our right to life is protected by international law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948 just after the Second World War. Humanity was trying to find a way to protect the rights of all. It still stands as international law today.

A close look at the Bible, the Qur'an and the Torah shows that this is also a value at the heart of Christianity, Islam and Judaism.



What does the Torah say about the value of life?

The story of Cain and Abel is the first tale of murder in the Torah. It is a difficult story where Cain kills Abel, his younger brother, because he is jealous of him.

'And Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" And he said, "I know not; Am I my brother's keeper?" And He said, "What have you done? the voice of your brother's bloods are screaming at me from the ground".'

GENESIS, 4:8-10

In approximately 150CE the Jewish Sages created the Mishnah as a commentary and elucidation of the Torah. This is what that text says about the meaning of the story of Cain and Abel.

'We are told when Cain killed his brother that "the bloods of your brother are screaming" (Genesis 4:10). It doesn't say "the blood of your brother" but rather "the bloods of your brother" because it refers to his blood (ie. Abel's blood) as well as the blood of all his future children.

Alternatively, the phrase "the bloods of your brother" teaches us that his blood was splattered on the trees and stones. It is from here that we understand why God began the world with a single person, in order to teach us that whoever destroys (ie. kills) another person is considered as if they have destroyed the whole world; and whoever sustains another person is considered as if they have sustained the whole world.'

MISHNAH SANHEDRIN 4:5



What does the Bible say about the value of life

Of course, the Bible's Old Testament is fundamentally the same scripture as the Torah, and Christians like Jews believe that one of the 10 commandments is 'thou shalt not kill'.

Matthew's gospel in the the New Testament tells the story of when Jesus gathered his disciples to talk about the law in relation to the commandment.



On the mountain, Jesus gathered his disciples around him and taught them, saying: "You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgement.' But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgement; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire. So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift".
Matthew 5: 21-24

The description of Jesus being 'on the mountain' reminds readers of Moses on a mountain receiving the 10 commandments. Jesus explains that the commandment not to kill isn't just about avoiding violence. In fact we must positively strive not to argue with our neighbours, and if we do disagree, to find a way to end the disagreement and leave peacefully together. In fact, until we have made peace with our neighbours, we cannot be in a right relationship with God.

❁ What does the Qur'an say about the value of life?

The Qur'an sees humankind not only as the most privileged amongst all God's creations, but also considers us to be God's representative on earth. This means that the value of life is the most important of its teachings. The Qur'an considers murder as the greatest sin. For instance, it tells Muslims that killing one single person is like killing all humankind. It also teaches Muslims that protecting the life of even one person is like helping to protect the life of all humankind.

This is a very powerful message. The Qur'an is informing Muslims that our survival depends on everyone respecting and protecting each other.

The Qur'an teaches us that as inhabitants of this planet we depend on each other, and that our survival and prosperity relies on how much we value each other's life.

'Whoever kills a soul unless it is (in punishment) for a murder or for spreading mischief on earth shall be as if he had slain humankind entirely. And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved humankind entirely. And our messengers had certainly come to them with clear proofs.'

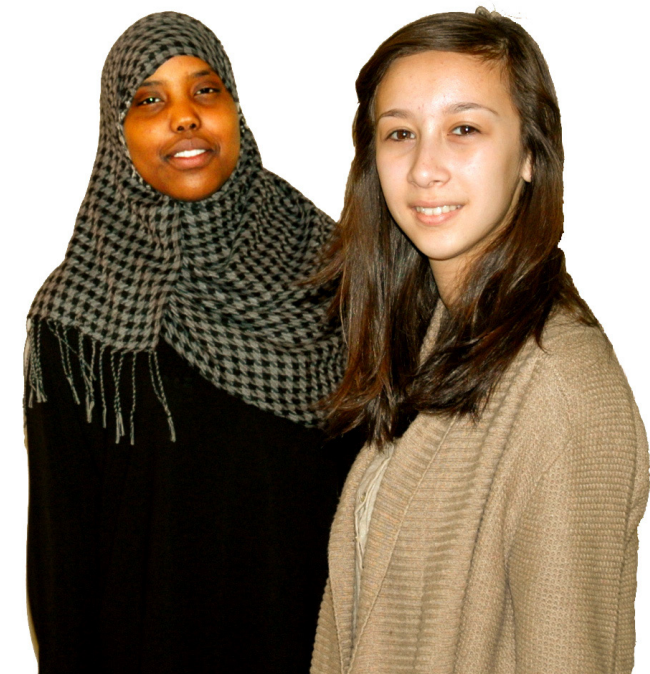
QUR'AN 5:32

'And when thy Lord said to the angels, "I am setting in the earth a viceroy". They said, "What, wilt Thou set therein one who will do corruption there, and shed blood, while We proclaim Thy praise and call Thee Holy?" He said, "Assuredly I know that you know not".'

QUR'AN 2:30

NOTE:

It is important to note that in the Qur'an God uses 'I' to refer to Himself and sometimes He uses 'We'.





✿ Why violence has no place in our community

Our right to a life free from violence

'No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.'

ARTICLE 5, UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

International law doesn't just protect our right to life, it also protects us from violence at the hands of others. No one has the right to mistreat us physically. In the same way, Islam, Judaism and Christianity all have non-violent beliefs at their heart. And they also teach that it is wrong to use violence against people who have different beliefs to our own.

What does the Torah teach about non-violence?

In the Torah war and violence play a big part for the history of the Jewish people. At one point, the Jews are enslaved to a miserable existence where they are treated with violence and unfairness. In other parts, God condones war. So why is that? The following excerpt is taken from the final book of the Torah, Deuteronomy, where Moses explains the rules of engagement in times of war.

'When you come near a city to fight against it, first proclaim peace to it. And it shall be, if it gives you answer of peace, and opens to you, then it shall be, that all the people that are found in it shall be tributaries to you, and they shall serve you. And if it will make no peace with you, but will make war against you, then you shall besiege it.'

DEUTERONOMY 20:10-18

Religion is often considered to be the root of war and hatred between communities. And sometimes these stories are indeed full of bloodshed and xenophobia. But, because these stories can be re-encountered by ongoing interpretation and commentary, they become open to new meanings and moralities. To the Jewish sages credit, this difficult text in the Torah became not a call to violence, but a reminder of the great need for peace .

This was confirmed by scholarly rabbis nearly 2,000 years ago when they discussed the matter in the Midrash.

'Thus expounded R' Tanchumah bar Abba:

"When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it (then proclaim peace unto it)" (DEUTERONOMY 20:10) – See how great is the power of peace, that the Holy One, blessed be He, says that we should make peaceful overtures even to enemies. Thus did our rabbis teach: we greet (members of) the nations with "peace" due to the (fostering of the) ways of peace.'

MIDRASH TANCHUMAH,
PARASHAT SHOFTIM, 18

What does the Bible say about non-violence?

Christians understand from the Old Testament that war is at times necessary, although it should be proportionate. The same applies to violence used in self-defence.

Jesus' teaching forbids hostility towards enemies and commands us to love them.

The New Testament teaches that to be a good person you must subject yourself to the authority of government, which has its authority from God. At the same time, it asserts that the state has the right to do violence against those who don't bow to God's authority. This can be interpreted as justification for a 'just war' on behalf of God.

'Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God,

and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgement. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience.'

ROMANS 13:1-5

St Thomas Aquinas developed this idea in the 13th Century, using the writings of St Paul. He argued that war is a necessary act to maintain the authority of law, assuming that those who make the law have their authority from God. However, before war can be made legitimate, there must be a just cause. Those who would do violence must have the right intention. And

the actions taken must be in proportion to the wrong doing.

What does the Qur'an teach us about non-violence?

The Qur'an condemns violence, but it allows retaliation and the use of force in some cases. But this should not be interpreted as permission to use violence against people with whom we disagree. This is a complete misunderstanding of what the Qur'an teaches.

War itself is prohibited in Islam unless it is for self-defence. Aggressive wars are forbidden.

Setting the record straight: what is the meaning of 'Jihad'?

In the same way, 'Jihad' is one of the most misunderstood concepts in Islam.

'Jihad' is wrongly defined as holy war against non-Muslims or the unfaithful. Literally explained, the word means "an effort directed towards a determined objective", or a struggle to achieve something. The word is derived from the word 'jahada' which means struggle, strive, endeavour, attempt or effort.

So Jihad has less to do with war and more to do with continuous struggle to do good and defeat evil. The biggest 'Jihad' however, is our inner struggle to make ourselves a better person. Muhammad told

his companions when they returned from a war in which they defeated their enemies that:

"We came from the lesser Jihad and are about to start the bigger Jihad and that is struggling against inner self."

'The retribution for an evil act is an evil one like it, but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation - his reward is [due] from God. Indeed, He [God] does not like wrongdoers.'

QUR'AN 42:40

'Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men;- for God loves those who do good.' QUR'AN 3: 134

These verses from the Qur'an provide clear instructions on how a Muslim ought to react when someone does them a wrong. Although the person has a right to retaliate, the Qur'an is advising that it would be better to forgive. The reward to the person who forgives is due from God.



✿ Our obligation to respect the beliefs and opinions of other people in the community

Our right to believe what we want to believe

'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion, or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.'

ARTICLE 18 OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The right to choose the faith we follow, or to choose no faith at all, has been enshrined in international law. It means that every person has the right to follow their own conscience without interference from anyone else.

But did you know that Judaism, Islam and Christianity also teach the same tolerance?

What does the Torah say about respecting the beliefs of others?

2,000 years ago, Rabbi Hillel and Rabbi Shammai and their followers, argued over many points of Jewish law. They often disagreed with each other. Yet it was accepted amongst Jewish people that both groups were inspired by God, and that both groups were equally correct. How could this be? In Hebrew the word for debate is 'machloket'. The root word of 'machloket' is 'chelek', meaning 'a portion' or 'piece'. It means that arguments should never be seen as a debate between 'right' and 'wrong', 'yes' and 'no', but a shared conversation where every side of the argument contains only one 'piece' of a greater whole. The goal of an argument is not for one

side or another to win, but for each side to understand how the other's opinion - when added to your own - creates a more complete and knowledgeable view of this world.

'For three years, the schools of Shammai and Hillel contended, each insisting that its opinion constituted the halakhah (the Jewish law). Thereupon, a heavenly voice [Bat Kol] proclaimed: "Both of them are the words of the living God, but the halakhah is according to Bet Hillel." Why, then, should the Hillelites have been granted the decision? Because they were pleasant and humble, teaching the opinion of both sides, and always stated Bet Shammai's view before their own.'

TALMUD BAVLI, ERUVIN 13B



What does the Bible say about respecting the beliefs of others?

'For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ; There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.'

-GALATIANS 3:26-28

It is likely that St Paul wrote this passage of the Bible. It is one of many letters that he wrote to the Christian communities that he founded after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Here he states clearly that once someone becomes a believer in Jesus Christ then this must mean that they see all humans as one. For the Christian this transformation

begins in the waters of their baptism.

The distinctions that we make between one human and another have no place in the Christian community for 'all are one in Christ Jesus'.

What does the Qur'an say about respecting the beliefs of others?

For Muslims, diversity and differences are part of God's will and the Qur'an emphasises this often. Because of this, a Muslim should refrain from attempting to convert other people. Similarly, a Muslim should not think that people who have different faiths are somehow on 'the wrong path'.

The conversion to Islam is in God's power only. He says in the Qur'an stated that He could make all humankind believe in one single message and also be

one single nation, but He has willed it to be otherwise. God wants humans to be different. Muslims are taught to see this difference and diversity as being part of the moral teaching of the Qur'an.

'O humankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you into diverse nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you.'

QUR'AN 49:13

'And if your Lord had willed, He could have made humankind one community; but they will not cease to differ. ... And for this God created them [humankind].'

QUR'AN 11: 118-119

'And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed all of them entirely. Then, [O Muhammad], would you compel the people in order that they become believers?'

QUR'AN 10:99

'There is no compulsion in religion.'

QUR'AN 2:256

It is impossible to read these extracts from the Qur'an and conclude that to be a faithful Muslim we must put our religion above those of others. Throughout the history of Islam Muhammad never forced or fought any war with the aim of converting people into Islam. Muhammad repeatedly said that his duty was to convey the message of God and that it was up to the person to accept it or not to accept. Conversion is God's responsibility.





Respecting the human rights of the people who live in our communities

The universal rights that we all have to be treated equally

'Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.'

ARTICLE 2 OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

One of the key aspects of international law is that no nationality or race can say that it is above the law or that it is better than another nationality or race. All humans are to be regarded as equals.

What does the Torah say about protecting the rights of others?

The following excerpt is from one of the most fiery of Jewish prophets, Isaiah, who shared his vision of justice with the people of Israel in approximately 700 BCE. It is significant because it calls on the Jewish faithful to move beyond ritual, to make their actions mean something real rather than just reciting words. When the Rabbis later set out the way that Yom Kippur should be observed, this passage was used to describe how to behave.

Instead of praising the religious actions of fasting and prayer, which are the two main activities Jews engage in on Yom Kippur, Isaiah describes the fast as nearly worthless. What he means is that even on a day when you are observing religious celebrations you

must not ignore the needs of the people around you. It's better to help those who are hungry, to free those who are oppressed than to make 'empty gestures' like fasting and observing rituals. Religion without justice is an empty habit.

'Behold, in the day of your fast you pursue your business, and exact all your payments. Behold, you fast for strife and debate, and to strike with the fist of wickedness; you shall not fast as you do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is such the fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this rather the fast that I have chosen? To loose the chains of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring the poor, who are cast out, to your house? When you see the naked, that you cover him; and

that you hide not yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the morning, and your health shall spring forth speedily; and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.'

ISAIAH CHAPTER 58: 3-8

What does the Bible say about protecting the rights of others?

'So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all." For the Son of Man came not to be served but to

serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

MARK 10: 42- 45

Service to others is a value at the heart of Christianity. It is this value that is at the heart of the life and work of Jesus. According to the account of his life in the gospel of John, Jesus shows this by washing his disciples feet before they celebrate the Passover meal on the evening before he is crucified. He does this to show the importance of serving others, as well as a sign of his love for his disciples. He commands that they are to do this for one another in the future. The idea of self sacrifice is a core value. The Christian tradition has many examples of Martyrs, men and women who are prepared to lose their life for the sake of their faith. Christians draw inspiration from the example of self sacrifice in the death of Jesus on a cross.

¹ YOM KIPPUR IS THE JEWISH DAY OF ATONEMENT, WHICH INVOLVES A 25 HOUR FAST, SELF-REFLECTION AND COMMUNAL PRAYER.



What does the Qur'an say about protecting the rights of others?

The Qur'an promotes many noble values but its portrayal of the importance of the value of justice is particularly important in an age when many people in the world experience injustice. The concept of justice is paramount in the teachings of the Qur'an. God commands Muslims to be just and practice justice wherever they are and however difficult the situation might be.

This command of practicing justice and acting religiously is not only for the benefit of Muslims. Justice towards non-Muslims is just as important according to the Qur'an. The idea that a Muslim can only be just with Muslims and that it is acceptable to be unjust with non-Muslims is wholly against the teaching of the Qur'an.

'O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, be he rich or poor, God is a Better Protector to both (than you). So follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you may avoid justice, and if you distort your witness or refuse to give it, verily, God is Ever Well Acquainted with what you do.'

QUR'AN 4: 135

'O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for God, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear God; indeed, God is Acquainted with what you do.'

QUR'AN 5:8



 **There is more
that unites us
than divides us**

'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.'

ARTICLE 1 OF THE DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

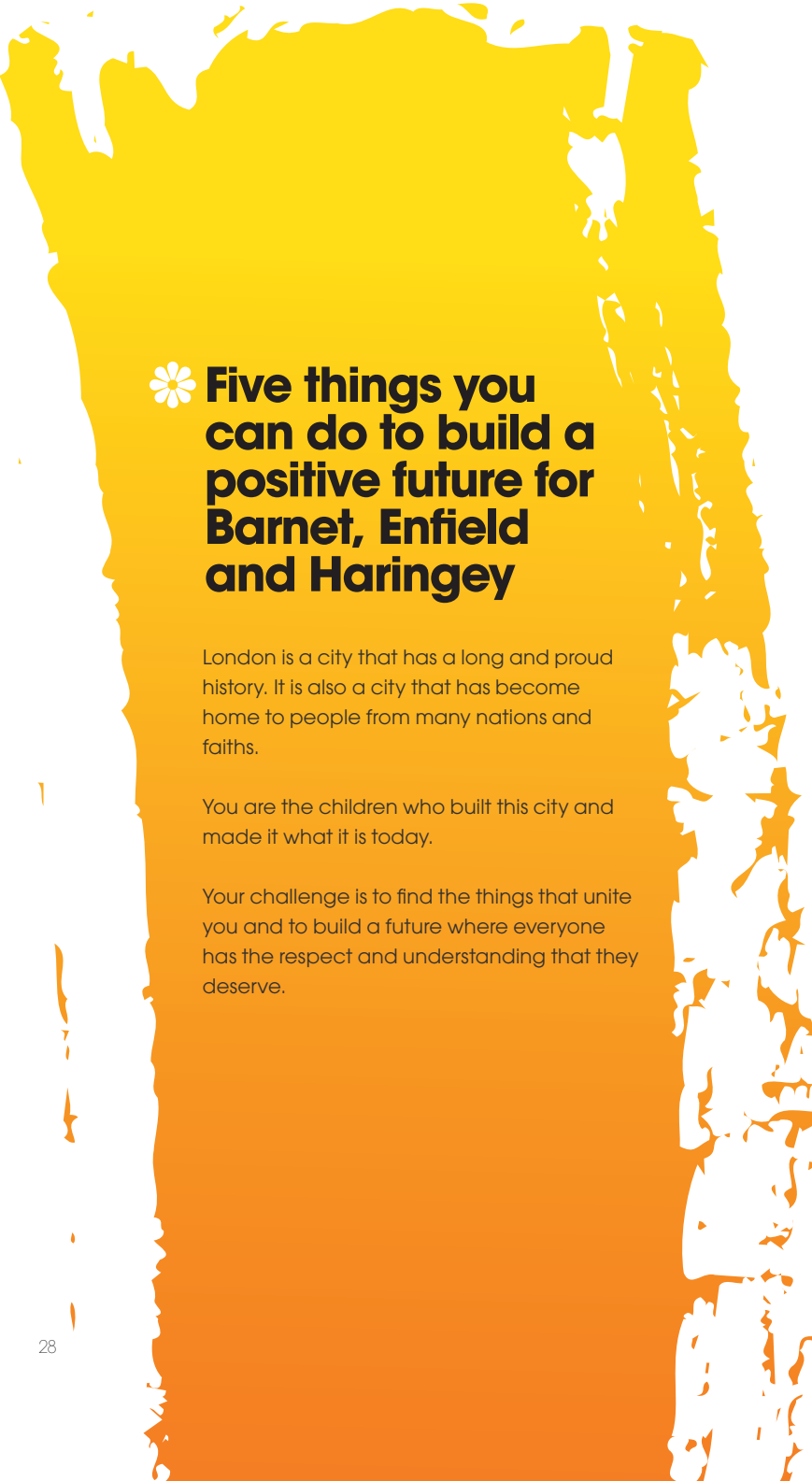
Our lives and our beliefs have been given the protection of international law. The same law declares that we should treat each other as brothers. You have seen in this booklet, by a close reading of the Torah, the Qur'an and the Bible, that our faiths declare this too.


If you want to find out more about the religion of other people in your community, find a rabbi, imam or priest to talk to. Here are some questions you might like to ask them:



Where does the historical connection between the three faiths of Islam, Judaism and Christianity come from? Why do some seek to focus on the differences between these religions?

How can the three faiths work together to share a more positive future? What else can we learn from close study of the religious texts of our faiths?



 **Five things you can do to build a positive future for Barnet, Enfield and Haringey**

London is a city that has a long and proud history. It is also a city that has become home to people from many nations and faiths.

You are the children who built this city and made it what it is today.

Your challenge is to find the things that unite you and to build a future where everyone has the respect and understanding that they deserve.

1

If you have a faith, find out more about your religion by talking to the people who know the most: an imam, priest or rabbi

2

Understand that those who call people to violence are breaking with their faiths – they are not real believers

3

Get involved with your community – find out more about the people in it and what they believe

4

Be proud of what London stands for: people of all faiths, of no faith, people from the UK, people from around the world all living together in unity

5

Take a personal stand against hate, extremism, intolerance, injustice or fear in your community

Peace. Shalom. Salaam.





Want to know more about the religious texts, events and people in this booklet?

For people who aren't familiar with the scriptures and religious figures of Islam, Christianity and Judaism, or some of the other texts that we've used in this booklet, we've put together this list of words and explanations. We hope you find it useful.

Abraham / Ibrahim

Abraham or Ibrahim appears in the religious scriptures of Muslims, Christians and Jews. (These religions are sometimes known as the Abrahamic religions.) He was part of the 20th generation of people after Adam. Abraham entered into an agreement with God: in exchange for faithfulness, Abraham would be blessed with a great many children and descendants and the land would belong to them. God promised Abraham that through his offspring all the nations of the world would come to be blessed. His first son, Ishmael, is considered to be the father of Arab nations. His second son, Isaac, is considered to be the father of the Jewish nation.

Adam

According the first book of the Bible, Genesis, Adam is the first human man, created by God from dust. Eve, the first woman, was created using one of Adam's ribs.

Allah

This is the Arabic word for "God". Muslims use this name universally, as do Arabs, Christians and Jews.

Bible

The religious scripture of Christians. It is made up of two parts – the Old Testament (which is also a religious scripture for Jews) and the New Testament.

Cain and Abel

Cain and Abel are the sons of Adam and Eve. In the Torah (also known as the Old Testament), Cain commits the first murder by killing his brother Abel, after God accepts Abel's sacrifice over Cain's

Children of Israel

The descendants of Jacob / Israel. Broadly speaking, this name was originally used to describe the Jewish people who lived in the lands of Israel and Palestine. It is now often used to refer to Jewish people no matter what part of the world they live in.

Day of Resurrection

The Day of Resurrection (Yawm al-Qiyamah) is the day when Allah makes his final judgement on humanity. On this day, all living creatures will die, then all humans will be resurrected, and each one will stand before Allah for His Judgement.

Genesis

The first book of the Old Testament in the Bible. This book describes the creation of the universe, our planet, all life within it, and the first humans, Adam and Eve.

Gospel of St John

A book in the New Testament, the second part of the Bible. St John was one of Jesus's disciples, and in this book he describes the life and death of Jesus. It is the fourth of the gospels, the others being written by Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Gospel of St Mark

A book in the New Testament, the second part of the Bible. St Mark was one of Jesus's disciples, and in this book he describes the life and death of Jesus. It is the second of the gospels, the others being written by Matthew, Luke and John.

Isaiah

Was a prophet in the 8th-century BCE Kingdom of Judah. Jews and Christians consider the Book of Isaiah a part of their Biblical canon.

Ishmael / Isma'il

The first son of Abraham. His story is told in the Old Testament in the Bible. Muslims believe that he is the father of the Arabic nations and one of the line of prophets that began with Adam and ended with Muhammad. His brother, Isaac, is believed to be the father of the Jewish nation.

Jesus Christ

Christians believe that Jesus was the son of God and the Messiah. His story is told in the New Testament in the Bible. Muslims believe that Jesus was a prophet, but that his teachings are superseded by the Prophet Muhammad who came after him.

Kings of Israel

The Kings of Israel established a kingdom in the land of Israel around 1000 BCE. Their stories are told in the Old Testament. The third and most famous king, David, made Jerusalem his capital city and led many military campaigns against neighbouring people. His son, Solomon, was the last king of a united biblical Israel. On his death, the kingdom divided into two.

Land of Canaan

Canaan is an ancient name for a region which includes what is known today as Israel, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories and adjoining coastal lands. It also includes parts of Jordan, Syria and some of the north east of Egypt.

Medina

This city in what is now Saudi Arabia was originally called Yathrib. Muhammad arrived here in 622 CE and successfully transformed the city into a peaceful community, ending a long history of warring between the tribes that lived here. Most significantly, an agreement was signed between Jews and Muslims to live peacefully together. Medina was also the site of the first Muslim mosque.

Midrash

The word 'Midrash' is based on a Hebrew word meaning 'search' or 'study'. It refers to the collected body of stories and parables that are not expressly written in the Torah, but give background or deeper insights into the Biblical characters and events. The midrash was written over many years and by many different authors.

Moses

A Hebrew raised in the palace of the Egyptian Pharaoh. Moses led the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery and through the Sinai desert. Moses ascended Mount Sinai to receive the Torah from God and teach it to the Israelites. He is revered as a prophet in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The Prophet Muhammad

Muhammad was the founder of the Islamic religion and is believed to be the messenger and prophet of Allah. Muslims consider him the greatest prophet in a line of prophets that began with Adam and includes Abraham and Jesus.

New Testament

This is the second part of the Bible and contains the main elements of Christian scripture as they differ from both the Jewish and Islamic faiths. It consists of 27 books including the four gospels which describe the life and teachings of Jesus, and a description of his future return and the final judgement of humanity in the Book of Revelation.

Old Testament

This is the first part of the Bible and contains the history of the creation of humanity and the creation of the nation of Israel. The teachings within it are held to be sacred by both Christians and Jews alike. However the order of books vary. The Jewish version of the Old Testament ends with the Book of Chronicles and the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem. The Christian Old Testament ends with the Book of Malachi and a prophecy that the new Messiah will be born.

Qu'ran

The Qu'ran is the religious text of Islam. Muslims believe it is the literal word of Allah, revealed to Muhammad by an angel. These words were dictated by Muhammad to his followers who memorised them and then wrote them down. The text of the Qur'an consists of 114 chapters of varying lengths, each known as a sura.

Rabbis of the Mishnah

Rabbinic sages whose views are recorded in a collected book of law and ethics based on the Torah, from approximately 70-200 CE.

St Thomas Aquinas

St Thomas Aquinas was a priest of the Dominican order, born in 1225. He was ordained a priest in 1250, and became Papal advisor in 1259. He is most famous as a philosopher, and a leading Catholic theologian.

In the Summa Theologicae, Aquinas presents the general outline of what becomes the traditional Just War Theory. He discusses not only the justification of war but also the kinds of activities that are permissible in war from a Christian perspective. Aquinas' thoughts became the model for later scholastics and jurists to expand and to gradually to universalise beyond Christendom.

Salaam

The Arabic word for 'peace'. Often used as a greeting.

Shalom

The Hebrew word for 'peace'. Often used as a greeting.

Hillel and Shammai

Hillel and Shammai were two leading rabbis of the early 1st century BCE who founded opposing schools of Jewish thought, known as the House of Hillel and House of Shammai. The debate between these schools on matters of ritual practice, ethics, and theology was critical for the shaping of the Oral Law and Judaism as it is today.

Sunnah

An Arabic word that means 'usual practice'. Muslims use it to describe the sayings and living habits of Muhammad – including his specific words, actions and practices. These have been recorded and handed down through generations. Sunnah is used to define the ways that we should live with each other and our relationships with government.

Talmud

The Talmud is the recorded teachings and interpretations of Jewish law by generations of Rabbis. It is the basis of day to day living for Jewish people, in the same way that the Sunnah is for Islamic people.

The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments is a list of religious and moral imperatives that, according to the Hebrew Bible, were given by God to the people of Israel from the mountain referred to as Mount Sinai. The Ten Commandments are recognised as a moral foundation in Judaism and Christianity.

Torah

The Torah is the Five Books of Moses and the founding legal and ethical religious texts of Judaism. It is the first of three parts of the Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible, the founding religious document of Judaism. It is divided into five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. According to Jewish teachings the Torah was created 974 generations (2,000 years) before the world was created, and is the blueprint that God used to create the world. Jews believe that everything created in this world is for the purpose of carrying out the word of the Torah.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was agreed by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948 at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris. The Declaration has been translated into at least 375 languages and dialects. The Declaration arose directly from the experience of the Second World War and represents the first global expression of rights to which all human beings are entitled. It consists of 30 articles which have been developed and implemented in a number of international treaties, national constitutions and laws since 1948.

Yom Kippur

Also known as the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur is one of the holiest days of the year for the Jewish people. Its central themes are atonement and repentance. It's a day to reflect on the past year and ask God's forgiveness for any sins. Jews traditionally observe this holy day with a 25-hour period of fasting and intensive prayer.



Authors **Father John Hawkins**



The Rev'd John Hawkins is the parish priest for St John the Evangelist West Hendon and St Matthias the Apostle Colindale.

He was born in Zambia and spent some of his childhood in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Upon graduation from Kings College London with a BD in theology he began his ministry in Birmingham and for the last 20 years has ministered in London.

The Rev'd John Hawkins is married with two stepdaughters and has lived in West Hendon for 10 years. He can be contacted directly at jeih.stj@tiscali.co.uk



Rabbi Natan Levy

Rabbi Natan Levy is the Head of the London School of Jewish Studies' Responsibility Unit.

He grew up in Berkeley, CA, earned a BA in Comparative Religion at Pomona College, and received rabbinical ordination under Rabbi Riskin and Rabbi Brovender at Yeshivat Hamivtar in Efrat.

Rabbi Levy served as the Jewish Campus Chaplain for the Southwest of England and Wales from 2005-2008. In 2009, Rabbi Levy was appointed as the Environmental Liaison to the Chief Rabbi's Office. Rabbi Levy lives with his wife, Ariella, and their three young children in the village of Shenley. He can be contacted directly at nzlevy@gmail.com



Imam Mamadou Bocoum

Dr Mamadou Bocoum is presently head of the Library and a lecturer at the Muslim College, London and a Chaplain at Ford Prison, Sussex.

He has a BA in Arabic Language and travelled extensively throughout the Muslim world, which has expanded his understanding of traditional Islamic scholarship. In 1998, Mamadou moved to the United Kingdom to cultivate his appreciation of Islam as it is understood in the West.

Having obtained his MA in Islamic Studies in 2003 he went on to pursue a certificate in Imamship in 2004 and a PhD in Islamic Studies, which he was awarded in 2009. He is committed to interfaith work and has participated in various interfaith activities, lecturing on both the development and maintenance of relations between the Abrahamic faiths.

Notes

Peace
Shalom
Salaam



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