Declaration of Mutual Understanding and Cooperation from the First Jewish-Hindu Leadership Summit

The first Hindu-Jewish leadership summit took place in Delhi on 17-18 Shvat, 5767; corresponding to February 5-6, 2007; at which the delegation of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel convened with major religious leaders of Hindu Dharma. It is planned that this historic gathering will lead to ongoing bilateral meetings on shared values and common concerns, many of which were highlighted at this summit.

The participants affirmed that:

1. Their respective traditions teach Faith in One Supreme Being who is the Ultimate Reality, who has created this world in its blessed diversity and who has communicated Divine ways of action for humanity for different peoples in different times and places.
2. The religious identities of both Jewish and Hindu communities are related to components of Faith, Scripture, Peoplehood, Culture, Religious Practices, Land and Language.
3. Hindus and Jews seek to maintain their respective heritage and pass it on to the succeeding generations, while living in respectful relations with other communities.
4. Neither seeks to proselytize, nor undermine or replace in any way the religious identities of other faith communities. They expect other communities to respect their religious identities and commitments, and condemn all activities that go against the sanctity of this mutual respect.
5. Both the Hindu and Jewish Traditions affirm the sanctity of life and aspire for a society in which all live in peace and harmony with one another. Accordingly they condemn all acts of violence in the name of any religion or against any religion.
6. The Jewish and Hindu communities are committed to the ancient traditions of Judaism and Hindu dharma respectively, and have both, in their own ways, gone through the painful experiences of persecution, oppression and destruction. Therefore, they realize the need to educate the present and succeeding generations about their past, in order that they will make right efforts to promote religious harmony.
7. The representatives of the two faith communities recognize the need for understanding one another in terms of lifestyles, philosophy, religious symbols, culture, etc. They also recognize that they have to make themselves understood by other faith communities. They hope that through their bilateral initiatives, these needs would be met.
8. Because both traditions affirm the central importance of social responsibility for their societies and for the collective good of humanity, the participants pledged themselves to work together to help address the challenges of poverty, sickness and inequitable distribution of resources.
9. The representatives of the two faith communities also agree to constitute a Standing Committee on Hindu-Jewish Relations.

(MADHAVA PRIYANANDA)

Hampi

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