

# THREE FAITHS FORUM



Founders:  
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PRESS RELEASE

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## **THREE FAITHS FORUM MEETS MOROCCAN THEOLOGIANS**

Sir Anthony Figgis, HM Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps, welcomed a delegation from the Council of Theologians of the Muslim Faith of the Kingdom of Morocco, and its Secretary General, Mr. Mohammed Yessf at St. James's Palace. The occasion was a seminar organised on the initiative of the Moroccan Ambassador in London. Chairing the meeting, Sir Sigmund Sternberg, co-founder of the Three of Faiths Forum, welcomed HH Princess Lalla Joumala Alaoui, together with Ambassador of Morocco, HE Mohammed Belmahi, and the Moroccan Ambassador to Germany. Mr Yessf then gave the key note speech on Religion and Youth. He spoke of the importance of the Moroccan theologians' council and particularly referred to the large number of Muslim female scholars who took an active role in the decisions made by the Council. Those present in London were undergraduate and postgraduate students of both sexes. He added that the newly introduced Moroccan national curriculum now included learning about other faiths than Islam. Both Morocco and the UK were traditional countries, which protected their traditions, but in which tolerance also plays a significant role.

The president of the Moroccan Jewish community spoke of the welcome given by the Moroccans in 1492 to Jews fleeing from the Inquisition in Spain. He noted that there were one million Moroccan Jews spread around the world.

Rabbi Dr Abraham Levy, spiritual head of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish community in Britain, said how pleased he was to have welcomed the delegation that day to his synagogue, Bevis Marks.

Mr. Karsten van Sander and Ms. Nazli Ali, Education Officers of the Three Faiths Forum, presented the *Scriptural Reasoning* and *Tools 4 Dialogue*, two programmes that engage Muslim, Christian and Jewish students in both schools and universities. Themes of these Abrahamic reading workshops include 'Rebellion', 'Equality', 'Freedom of Choice' and 'Modesty'. Given the success of these two programmes in the UK, both expressed the hope that their work could be used as a model in Morocco and elsewhere.

Mr. Clive Lawton, Executive Director of Limmud, described how he founded Limmud, a charitable organisation promoting Jewish education through conferences, discussion groups and events throughout the year. The main conference brought together 2000 people at a five-day conference with 900 sessions and 350 volunteer presenters.

Mr. Yahya Birt, Director of City Circle, which was set up in 1999 to bring young British Muslim professionals together on a regular basis, said they sought to assist the process of community cohesion and integration by building bilateral strategic alliances between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Working closely with the Three Faiths Forum, he hoped that young British Muslims would learn to further respect their traditions but also to believe in being open minded to the world. City Circle has a database of 2000 volunteers, all with a different range of opinions but all open to discussion and dialogue.

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HE Cardinal Francis Arinze  
Baroness Boothroyd of Sandwell  
HRH Dom Duarte Duke of Bragança  
Lord Carey of Clifton  
Lord Hameed of Hampstead CBE DL  
The Rt Hon Baroness Hayman

Rabbi Professor Jonathan Magonet  
George Mallinckrodt KBE  
The Rt Hon Michael Martin  
Prof. Dr Klaus Schwab KCMG  
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Alderman John Stuttard  
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Honorary Consultant:  
The Rt Hon John Battle PC, MP  
  
Advisor  
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***widening horizons · confronting prejudice · encouraging harmony***

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In the ensuing discussion chaired by Yahya Birt, the Revd. Dr Marcus Braybrooke, a co-founder of the Three Faiths Forum, said how important it was for him to lecture to Muslim students at the Muslim College on Christianity. Several Moroccan students spoke of the importance of presenting the true image of Islam and true faith. Mr. John Pickering of the Three Faiths Forum said how encouraged he was by the discussion and presentations and said that a major problem in the western world was not Islam, Judaism or Christianity, but the decline of faith.

Sidney Shipton, Co-ordinator of the Three Faiths Forum, in closing the meeting said that the Three Faiths Forum would follow up with the invitation to Morocco and gave his thanks to all.

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