

INTERFAITH NEWS



A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF BRIGHTON AND HOVE INTERFAITH CONTACT GROUP

Spring 2012



Beverley Minster

‘Trouble Making’ Book Launched

Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah launched Trouble-Making Judaism her recently published book at the Brighton Quaker Meeting House



At its heart, Judaism is about – is supposed to be about – trouble-making.’

Elli Tikvah Sarah, the first ordained lesbian rabbi to lead a mainstream synagogue in Britain, has been making trouble for as long as she can remember. She reveals her struggles over many years to be accepted as a radical pioneer and the challenges that remain to make Judaism inclusive and responsive in a changing world.

Now the leader of a successful thriving Liberal synagogue and a noted innovator of new rituals and practices Rabbi Sarah shows how it is possible to revitalise communities by enabling and supporting those on the margins such as lesbian and gay people, converts, patrilineal Jews, and families not wanting to circumcise their sons. Taking her inspiration from trouble-making prophets, the early rabbis who re-invented Jewish life and from women pioneers whose voices are rarely heard she explains how Jewish teaching: can help individuals on their journeys, be a key to cross-cultural understanding and could be the basis for a just peace in the Israel Palestine conflict.



David Paul Books £9.99

The Annual General Meeting of the Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group

A report from Charlotte Gravestock
Retiring Secretary of Brighton and Hove IFCG

The Annual General Meeting of the Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group took place during March at the Friends' Meeting House. It was attended by the Mayor, Councillor Anne Meadows, the Vice Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Sara Stonor, and numerous representatives of different faiths.



Sara Stonor.....

spoke of the importance of the organisation in helping to develop understanding between people from different backgrounds and to foster good community relations".

Anne Meadows.....

conveyed thanks, on behalf of the city of Brighton & Hove, for the work of the IFCG and of the faith communities in our city generally, acknowledging the many ways in which they seek to meet the needs of the local community. She was proud of the Council's record on 'diversity' and she hoped for a continued strong partnership with the IFCG and other faith-based groups.



This year our guest speaker was from the Hindu tradition, Mr Jay Lakhani, an educationalist who is Director of the Hindu Academy and involved in the religious education curriculum through the RE Council of England and Wales. We were particularly pleased to welcome members of the local Gujarati Cultural Society to the IFCG for this occasion.



Jay Lakhani

there are many paths to truth

Mr Lakhani's theme was 'Ancient Wisdom for the Modern World'. He said that the Hindu tradition had taught him the value of pluralism, which acknowledges that there are many paths to truth. In a gripping and wide-ranging presentation, Mr Lakhani said that human beings, through the ages, had tried to 'picture' 'God' or the universal spirit in many different ways, using inadequate human expression, and that what had driven the great sages of the past to attempt to communicate these ideas, using language, the only tool they had at their disposal, was their deep love for humanity.

As a physicist by academic background, Mr Lakhani was fully aware of the often acrimonious 'religion versus science' debate. In his opinion, science, including quantum physics, did not, and never could, negate the idea of 'spirit', which is found 'bubbling up' through everything.



Our Interfaith Choir high up in the Meeting House gallery gave opportunities for spiritual reflection through music at different points during the meeting

Those present expressed many appreciative comments. In a message following the event, Mr Lakhani said, ' I felt I was with my own... thanks to the genuine warmth I sensed. Special thanks to Mokshini and the rest of the Interfaith group in Brighton and Hove. I am hoping our paths will cross in the future.'

We would like to thank our Quaker friends for their kind hospitality in offering us their premises for the occasion of our AGM and for their hard work in organising and serving the refreshments.



Outgoing Secretary
Charlotte Gravestock

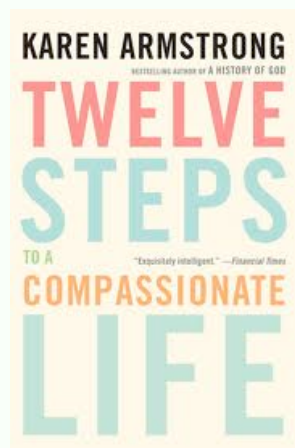
Charter for Compassion

Harvey Gilman on behalf of Brighton Quaker Meeting along with the Interfaith Group is preparing for an event in June 2012 on 'Spirituality and Compassion'

In preparation for the June event, the IFCG has organised some interfaith reading and discussion groups that have focused on Karen Armstrong's latest book, 'Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life'.

At our last planning meeting we shared lots of ideas for the evening and we now have a provisional programme for the event.

Introduction – spirituality and compassion
Reflections from groups on the book.
Individual musical items
Readings on compassion, all to contribute
Silence
Meditation stories of compassion
Groups – what stops us from being compassionate?
Karen Armstrong video
What this means in terms of a compassionate society



For further information contact: Harvey Gillman at zvi@gotadsl.co.uk

There is a rich source of information on the internet
Please pass on this information to anyone you feel may wish to join in.

The Spirit of Compassion

“All faiths insist that compassion is the test of true spirituality and that it brings us into relation with the transcendence we call God, Brahman, Nirvana or Dao. Each has formulated its own version of what is sometimes called the Golden Rule: ‘Do not treat others as you would not like them to treat you’...Further, they insist that you cannot confine your benevolence to your own group: you must have concern for everybody – enemies!...it is hard to think of a time when the compassionate voice of religion has been so sorely needed.

Our world is dangerously polarised..... if our religious and ethical traditions fail to address this challenge, they will fail the test of our time.”

Karen Armstrong: Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life

Inspired by Karen Armstrong’s thinking and her Charter for Compassion, a group of concerned members of local religious groups concerned with the relationship between spirituality and compassion invite you to an evening of open exploration of these themes. We have no particular religious agenda.

We simply want to challenge the city into a deeper awareness of the issues involved.

Everyone is welcome

We encourage people if possible to read Karen Armstrong’s book. We also hope to include videos from her Charter of Compassion website

For further information contact:
Harvey Gillman at zvi@gotadsl.co.uk



7.30pm Saturday, June 9
Friends Meeting House
Ship Street, Brighton

IFCG Link Officers Report 2011

Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid has sent us his annual report on his work during the past year.

The full report with the wide and very busy schedule of conferences and meetings that he has represented us at during 2011 is available to download from our website.

Already this year he has represented us at the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders in Oxfordshire. The Elijah Interfaith Institute is a multinational, UNESCO-sponsored not-for-profit organization dedicated to fostering peace between the world's diverse faith communities through interfaith dialogue, education, research and dissemination. The Board is made up of leading figures from Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and the Religions of India.

We have also received some news from Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid of a forthcoming conference he will be attending in Ukraine. He will be speaking at the Kiev Interfaith Forum in April this year. Leaders from the worlds of religion, politics and academia will gather in Kiev, Ukraine for a historic international conference entitled *Global Winds of Change: Religion's Role in Today's World; The Challenges in Democracies and Secular Society*. This event, which serves as a follow-up to last year's very successful conference as part of the Kyiv Interfaith Forum, will allow us to address the all important issues surrounding what place faith plays in modern society and how secularization will impact upon the global tomorrow.

"I am very grateful to the IFCG Executive and its members who have put their trust in me to represent IFCG at National and International gatherings. If any one needs any further details of any of the issues raised in this report, please contact with me directly"

Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid

Link Officer Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group

Charitable Giving

People who are religious donate over twice as much money to charity as those without a faith, according to figures from the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF)'s 2011 Market Tracker Report.

These results not only show that those of faith are more generous to charity in general, but that their giving is not uniquely focused on their own religious activities. If anything, people of faith broadly give in line with the rest of the general public, to a variety of different appeals. The culture of giving within religious circles that is demonstrated by our survey is an admirable one, and a phenomenon that clearly enriches our society.



The Phoenix
Open Faith
Community

Open Prayer Group

The Phoenix Open Faith Community has begun a twice monthly gathering for Open Prayer and Music at the Friends' Meeting House in Brighton.

If you are a person of belief, but can't find the place for your individual expression of faith, we may resonate with you. The Phoenix Open Faith Community holds prayer, meditation and sacred music sessions on the first and third Wednesday of every month in the Quiet Room from 10am up to 12 midday.

You can find us and follow us in a number of ways – we hold regular prayer and meditation groups.

You are warmly welcome to attend our gatherings, which are unique - they are creative, compassionate and inspired, using beautiful music, ideas and texts from a wide base of faith groups.

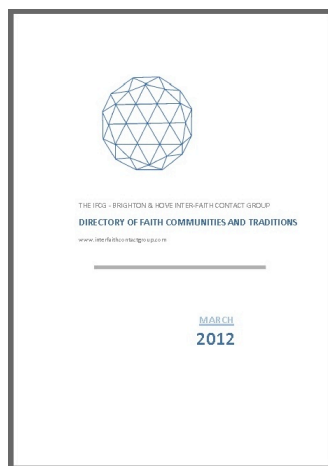
Directory of Faith Communities and Traditions

The IFCG's Directory of Faith Communities and Traditions in Brighton & Hove (first published in 1996) is now available online as a PDF

The current edition lists more than forty faith communities and traditions alongside a number of black & white photographs reproduced from the *Faith 2000* project. The directory will be regularly revised, and in June a printer friendly edition (without the photos and with fewer pages) will be published.

This file can be freely downloaded from

www.interfaithcontactgroup.com/directory



The Brighton & Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group (IFCG) exists as a resource for contact and dialogue between the many faith communities & traditions in the Brighton & Hove area. It is our aim to help build and maintain good relations, and greater understanding between us.

IFCG Chair - Mokshini Grant
chair@interfaithcontactgroup.com

IFCG Secretary - Rev Deacon Judith Greenfield
admin@interfaithcontactgroup.com

Please contact the IFCG Secretary with any requests, offers or ideas for additional inter-faith related meetings.

This Newsletter is edited by Tony Tree and all contributions are welcome..

.....if you have attended anything of an interfaith nature, spiritual thoughts or reflections or you can publicise your own faith community's events if you wish.

Next Newsletter is July 2012 and all contributions before 20 June to:
tonytree@btinternet.com

Have you Considered Membership?

Individual IFCG Membership is currently £10 per year from AGM 2012 to AGM 2012
Members must reside, work and/or attend a faith/tradition in the Brighton & Hove area; and must agree with the Constitution of the IFCG

Please send your cheque payable to IFCG together with your name, address, phone number, email address and the name & address of your faith/tradition to:

B & H Interfaith Contact Group
c/o Community Base
113 Queens Road
Brighton
BN1 3XG



www.interfaithcontactgroup.com