THE JEWISH–MUSLIM DECLARATION OF

FRATERNITY IN FAITH

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אמנת האחווה באמונה היהודית־מוסלמית

ميثاق الأخوّة في الإيمان بين اليهود والمسلمين

Presented at the G20 Interfaith Forum

Salt Lake City, Utah
October 15, 2026

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PRESENTED BY

Imam Talib Shareef

Rabbi Yakov Nagen

Preface

The *Jewish–Muslim Declaration of Fraternity in Faith* is the fruit of a journey undertaken over many years by Imam Talib Shareef, Rabbi Dr. Yakov Nagen, and their respective organizations: the International Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation and the Jerusalem Interfaith Center. Through dialogue, partnership, and joint study circles known as *Scholars for Peace*, religious leaders and scholars have explored how the sacred teachings of Judaism and Islam can make religious identity a source of connection and blessing rather than conflict.

This journey has been enriched by encounters with religious leaders from around the world. At the 2025 G20 Interfaith Forum in Cape Town, Jewish and Muslim leaders issued a call to action: to develop a new narrative of Jewish–Muslim fraternity, rooted in our shared humanity, our common Abrahamic heritage, and our responsibility before God.

One year later, we present the first fruits of that call: a declaration grounded deeply in our sacred traditions and dedicated not merely to coexistence, but to fraternity, shared responsibility, and what we call *co-elevation* helping one another rise through the encounter between our faiths.

Following the Declaration, this pamphlet includes the original Cape Town Call to Action and the speeches that launched this shared endeavor. We offer these words in the hope that they may help heal our wounded world, transform relationships between communities, and bring blessing to the human family.

We invite you to join us in carrying this vision forward.

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October 15, 2026 • ٤• جمادى الأولى ١٤٤٨ هـ ד׳ בחשוון תשפ״ז

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In the Name of G-d, the Merciful Benefactor, the Merciful Compassionate

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

בשם האל, הרחום והחנון

OUR SHARED CALLING

We, representatives and partners from Jewish and Muslim communities, affirm our shared commitment to the One G-d, to the sanctity and dignity of every human being, and to the moral responsibility entrusted to us as people of faith.

At a time when our world is wounded by war, hatred, injustice, and the dehumanization of peoples, we believe that faith must summon humanity toward its highest possibilities. Our religious identities must not become barriers separating us from one another, but sources of moral courage through which we encounter, serve, protect, and elevate one another.

1. ONE G-D AND ONE HUMAN FAMILY

At the heart of Judaism and Islam stands the affirmation of the One G-d, Creator and Sustainer of heaven and earth. Our traditions are distinct, yet both call us to worship the One Creator and to live in accountability before G-d. This shared belief in the One G-d can and must be transformative. It must not remain only in our minds or on our lips, but be planted deeply in our hearts, our souls, and our deeds.

Our sacred texts teach that humanity shares a common origin and an inherent dignity bestowed by G-d. The Torah declares that the human being was created in the image of G-d; the Qur'an teaches that humanity was created from a single soul and that G-d has honored the children of Adam. Human dignity is not bestowed by race, nation, religion, wealth, power, or government. It comes from G-d and must be honored in every person.

2. ACKNOWLEDGING THE OTHER'S FAITH

We affirm that Judaism and Islam each stand within the Abrahamic tradition, grounded in G-d's revelation, and that both communities are called to worship the One G-d faithfully.

We do not ask one another to become the same, nor to diminish the integrity of our respective faiths.

3. BEYOND TOLERANCE TO FRATERNITY AND CO-ELEVATION

Inspired by our shared Abrahamic spiritual heritage, and called by our traditions to encounter religious difference with faithfulness, wisdom, and responsibility, we declare that our relationship must move beyond mutual tolerance toward genuine fraternity, and beyond coexistence toward co-elevation. This fraternity is expressed through deep connection, mutual responsibility, shared hope, and mutual growth.

We are partners in the great story of Creation, jointly entrusted by G-d to sanctify life and advance justice, compassion, and faith. Our fraternity carries a sacred responsibility: rooted in shared accountability before G-d and a common calling to work together for our communities, our children, and the future of humanity.

We acknowledge and proclaim that the world is more blessed because of the presence of the other and because of the gifts of faith that each tradition brings to humanity. Our shared future is not diminished by our differences but enriched by them. Unity does not require uniformity.

4. CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM, BEARERS OF BLESSING

Abraham stands at the heart of our relationship. Both scriptures call him the friend of G-d and a source of blessing. The Torah testifies to G-d's blessing upon Ishmael, and the Qur'an to G-d's blessing upon Isaac. We are called to recognize not only the blessing upon our own branch of Abraham's family, but also G-d's blessing upon the other.

A family may experience rivalry, estrangement, and pain, but family also carries the possibility and responsibility of reconciliation. The children of Abraham must make Abraham a bridge, not a boundary.

5. RELIGION MUST SERVE LIFE

Grounded in fidelity to our sacred texts, we affirm that the deepest teachings of our traditions direct us toward justice, mercy, peace, and the protection of life. Difficult passages must be interpreted with integrity and responsibility according to our respective scholarly traditions.

We stand together against those who invoke G-d's name to divide, dehumanize, oppress, or destroy. The weaponization of religion betrays our sacred responsibility. Religion must be a source of guidance, healing, and life, not an instrument of hatred and death.

6. FRATERNITY AMID CONFLICT AND SUFFERING

Our fraternity neither erases nor ignores the suffering of any people. Jews and Muslims carry different histories, wounds, fears, and narratives. Genuine fraternity requires us to listen across them, to grieve innocent life without first asking the victim's nationality or religion, and to reject collective blame.

We oppose antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, and every form of religious or ethnic hatred. We affirm the sanctity of sacred places and the right of communities to worship in safety. We seek justice without surrendering compassion, peace without abandoning truth, and reconciliation without erasing legitimate difference.

A COVENANT FOR THE FUTURE

The challenge before us is not to abandon our differences, but to sanctify them; not to weaken our religious identities, but to allow them to become sources of blessing for one another. Therefore, we pledge together:

- To defend the sanctity of every human life.
- To reject antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, xenophobia, and every form of religious or ethnic hatred and dehumanization.
- To protect houses of worship.
- To educate future generations in mutual respect and truthful understanding.
- To cooperate in works of justice, compassion, service, and peace.
- To stand together whenever religion is manipulated to justify violence or oppression.
- To encourage our communities to know one another, serve one another, and work together for the common good.
- To reject collective blame and the dehumanization of any people, especially in times of conflict.

We undertake these commitments not because Judaism and Islam are the same, but because fidelity to the One G-d calls us to recognize the dignity and blessing G-d has bestowed upon one another. We draw inspiration from the Constitution of Medina, which demonstrated that Jews and Muslims, while remaining faithful to their distinct religious commitments, could form a community of mutual responsibility and shared concern. We do not abandon our differences; we refuse to weaponize them. We do not weaken our religious identities; we seek to make them sources of blessing for one another and for all humanity.

May the G-d of Abraham, the Creator and Sustainer of us all, guide our hearts toward truth, our hands toward service, and our communities toward peace. May our fraternity become a blessing—not for Jews and Muslims alone, but for all the families of the earth.

SIGNATORIES

Imam Talib Shareef

President, Masjid Muhammad, The Nation's Mosque
President, International Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation

Rabbi Yakov Nagen

President
Jerusalem Interfaith Center

PART II

The Scriptural and Theological Foundations of Jewish–Muslim Fraternity

A companion to The Jewish–Muslim Declaration of Fraternity in Faith

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Jewish and Muslim religious sources for a shared vision
of fraternity, responsibility, and peace

The following sections set forth the foundations of the vision of Jewish–Muslim fraternity: principles grounded in the shared spiritual heritage of our two communities and intended to guide their relationship in the years ahead. While many of these principles resonate across faiths, our focus here is on the distinctive relationship between Jews and Muslims. This focus is not meant to exclude other faiths, but to affirm that each interreligious encounter possesses its own blessings, responsibilities, and challenges, and must therefore be approached in light of its particular theological and historical context. Generic models of interfaith engagement, while valuable, can only go so far. Deeper and more transformative relationships emerge when the unique character of each encounter is acknowledged and embraced.

In this spirit, our work draws inspiration from the historic Nostra Aetate declaration of 1965, in which the Church addressed different religious communities in distinct ways and thereby helped open a new chapter in Christian–Jewish relations. Similarly, we seek to articulate a Jewish–Muslim path of encounter, one rooted in our shared Abrahamic heritage, ethical responsibility, and the call to moral fraternity. Yet our horizon remains universal, echoing the vision of the Prophet Zephaniah that all peoples shall "call upon the name of G-d and serve G-d shoulder to shoulder."

1 Our Shared Commitment to G-d

We affirm, in accordance with our respective traditions, that we worship the One Creator of heaven and earth, the G-d of Abraham, whose mercy encompasses all things.

This truth is stated unequivocally in the Quran regarding the Jews: “Our G-d and your G-d is One, and to Him we submit.” (Quran 29:46) It is echoed by Maimonides with regard to Muslims, who, he writes, “unify G-d in a true and proper unification, a unity that is unblemished.” (Responsa 448).

The belief in, and declaration of, the oneness of G-d stands at the very heart of both the *Shema*, the central affirmation of Jewish faith, and the *Shahada*, the Muslim declaration of faith. This shared belief in the One G-d can and must be transformative. It must not remain only in our minds or on our lips, but be planted deeply in our hearts, our souls, and our deeds.

It is there that we are called to live and embody the truth that our two faith communities serve the One G-d whose mercy extends to all humanity and who calls all people toward righteousness. From this truth flow the roots of our relationship, our responsibility, and our partnership.

2 The Dignity of Every Human Being

Religion is not only about G-d; it is also about humanity. Here, too, our traditions share profound and foundational convictions regarding the sacredness and unity of human life. Both the Torah and the Quran affirm that all humanity descends from a single origin, grounding human diversity in an underlying human unity (Genesis 1:27, Quran 4:1).

The implications of this belief are articulated in the ancient Mishnah, which teaches that humanity began with a single individual “for the sake of peace among people, so that no one can say, ‘My father is greater than yours’” (Sanhedrin 4:5). This foundational insight undergirds values of equality and coexistence, rejects all forms of racism and ethnic superiority, and affirms that we are, quite literally, one human family. It is this conviction that forms the moral basis of human fraternity.

Another profound implication of humanity’s common origin is the inherent and immeasurable value of every human life. Few examples illustrate this shared vision more strikingly than the parallel teachings of

the Mishnah and the Quran concerning the value of a single human life. The Mishnah teaches that a single person was created in the world to demonstrate that "whoever destroys a single life is regarded by Scripture as though he destroyed an entire world, and whoever saves a single life is regarded as though he saved an entire world" (Sanhedrin 4:5, all manuscripts). In parallel, the Quran proclaims: "We prescribed for the Children of Israel that whosoever slays a soul…it is as though he slew mankind altogether, and whosoever saves the life of one, it is as though he saved the life of mankind altogether" (Quran 5:32).

Furthermore, both the Torah and the Quran affirm the unique status of human beings within creation. While their theological expressions differ, both traditions arrive at a powerful affirmation of human dignity, value, and responsibility. The Torah grounds the sanctity of human life in the belief that every human being is created in the image of G-d: "And G-d created the human being in His image, in the image of G-d He created him" (Genesis 1:27). It is this divine image that renders murder such a profound violation, as Scripture declares: "Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall his blood be shed, for in the image of G-d He made the human" (Genesis 9:6).

The Qur'anic vision of humanity as khalifah, stewards and trustees, upon the earth places upon us a shared responsibility to protect creation, uphold justice, preserve peace, and honor the dignity of every human being. As the Qur'an declares: "Indeed, We have honored the children of Adam" (17:70) and "We have certainly created all humans in the most excellent form" (Quran 95:4).

3 The Moral Responsibility Entrusted to Us by G-d as People of Faith

The deep interconnection between devotion to G-d and responsibility toward humanity is a foundational teaching of our religious traditions.

This principle is articulated by Rabbi Akiva, a central figure of Talmudic Judaism, who proclaimed: "Beloved is the human being, having been created in the divine image" (Mishnah Avot 3:14). Recognition of the divine image in every person forms the basis of Judaism's ethical vision. It is in this light that Rabbi Akiva identified the commandment "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" as the fundamental principle of the Torah (Jerusalem Talmud, Nedarim 9:4).

A similar connection lies at the heart of Islam. Among its central pillars are both prayer and charity, and throughout the Quran these two acts are repeatedly linked. The significance of this association is made explicit in Sūrat al-Māʿūn (107):

> *"Have you seen the one who denies religion? That is the one who repulses the orphan and does not encourage the feeding of the poor. So woe to those who pray, yet are heedless of their prayer, those who seek to be seen, yet withhold even small acts of kindness."*

Here, ritual devotion severed from ethical responsibility is unequivocally condemned. Genuine worship of G-d must find expression in care for others.

This same message echoes throughout the Abrahamic traditions. When Jesus was asked which commandment is the greatest (Mark 12:28–31), he answered by joining two biblical verses: "You shall love the Lord your G-d with all your heart" (Deuteronomy 6:5) and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). Love of G-d and love of neighbor are thus presented as inseparable dimensions of a single religious calling.

The Torah expresses this principle with particular depth in its account of Abraham's election:

> *"Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed through him. For I have known him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice" (Genesis 18:18–19).*

The sequence is striking. Abraham is destined to become a source of blessing for all humanity, and he is chosen because he will teach those under his influence to "keep the way of the Lord" through the practice of "righteousness and justice." At first glance, the emphasis appears primarily ethical rather than theological. Yet the verse reveals a profound unity: righteousness and justice are enacted on the human plane, yet they constitute nothing less than "the way of the Lord." The path of G-d is inseparable from the way we treat our fellow human beings, and care for humanity becomes an expression of devotion to the Divine.

4 Distinct Paths, Shared Accountability Before G-d

The Qur'an recognizes the Torah as revelation containing guidance and light and acknowledges that religious communities have been entrusted with a law and a way. It therefore directs us not toward erasing difference, but toward competing in good works:

> *"Truly We sent down the Torah, wherein is a guidance and a light, by which the prophets who submitted [unto G-d] judged those who are Jews, as did the sages and the rabbis, in accordance with such of G-d's Book as they were bidden to preserve and to which they were witnesses… For each among you We have appointed a law and a way. And had G-d willed, He would have made you one community, but [He willed otherwise], that He might try you in that which He has given you. So vie with one another in good deeds. Unto G-d shall be your return all together, and He will inform you of that wherein you differ. And judge between them in accordance with what G-d has sent down" (Quran 5:44–49).*

This passage explicitly teaches that Jews and Muslims have each been given their own divinely ordained law and path. Rather than calling for the erasure of religious difference, it presents diversity as part of G-d's will and directs communities to compete not in claims of superiority but in good deeds. Respect for Judaism is further reflected in the Quran's designation of the Jewish people as Ahl al-Kitāb, "People of the Book."

This recognition is illustrated in a well-known Hadith recounting that when Jews came to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) seeking judgment, he did not immediately render his own ruling. Instead, he requested that the Torah be brought before him and declared:

> *"Bring the Torah." It was then brought. He withdrew the cushion from beneath him and placed the Torah upon it, saying, "I believe in you and in Him who revealed you." He then said, "Bring me one who is learned among you." (Sunan Abi Dawud 4449).*

The Quran states: "Truly those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabeans—whosoever believes in G-d and the Last Day and works righteousness shall have their reward with their Lord. No fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve" (Quran 5:69).

While the Quran explicitly addresses Judaism, the foundational Jewish texts, the Bible and the Talmud, predate both the Quran and the emergence of Islam and therefore do not refer to it directly. Nevertheless, these texts, together with later rabbinic literature, articulate principles from which a Jewish understanding of other religions, and of Islam in particular, can be developed.

Judaism is not a proselytizing religion. This is not due to indifference toward humanity, but rather to the conviction that a relationship with G-d, divine service, and ultimate salvation do not require one to become Jewish. The Tosefta affirms that "the righteous of the nations have a portion in the world to come" (Sanhedrin 13:2). Similarly, the midrash Tanna Devei Eliyahu declares:

> *"I call heaven and earth as witnesses that whether Jew or Gentile, man or woman, slave or maidservant, it is according to their deeds that the Holy Spirit rests upon them" (Chapter 9).*

Alongside universal spiritual dignity, Judaism also affirms universal moral responsibility. The Talmud teaches that all humanity is bound by seven fundamental commandments, stating: "The descendants of Noah were commanded seven commandments: to establish courts of justice; and prohibitions against blasphemy, idolatry, sexual immorality, murder, theft, and eating a limb from a living animal" (Sanhedrin 56a).

Within Jewish tradition, important authorities have recognized that righteousness, relationship with G-d, and participation in the world to come are not restricted to Jews. Jewish thinkers across the centuries have also recognized Islam's uncompromising monotheism and its role in directing humanity toward worship of the One G-d and moral responsibility.

5 Our Shared Abrahamic Spiritual Heritage

Judaism and Islam both look to Abraham as a foundational father figure who revealed the path of G-d to the world. In both traditions, he is not merely the ancestor of a particular people but a universal exemplar of faith, devotion, and obedience to G-d. Significantly, both traditions accord him the unique status of intimate friendship with the Divine. The prophet Isaiah refers to Abraham as "My friend" (Isaiah 41:8), while the Quran declares: "And G-d took Abraham as a friend" (Quran 4:125).

The Quran portrays Abraham as a guide for all humanity: "And [remember] when his Lord tested Abraham with certain words and he fulfilled them. He said, 'I am making you an imam for mankind'" (Quran 2:124). Similarly, Maimonides, in his Epistle to Yemen, describes Abraham as the "pillar of the world," who taught humanity the truth of the One G-d and illuminated the path of divine service.

While both of our religions affirm the common ancestry of all humanity, the bond between Jews and Muslims is even more intimate. Abraham stands as our shared patriarch, whether understood biologically, spiritually, or both, and the brothers Isaac and Ishmael are our respective ancestors. A family, by its very nature, cannot remain indifferent to itself. Such closeness carries the risk of rivalry and misunderstanding, yet it also holds the promise of fraternity, mutual care, and love. It is our responsibility, to G-d, to our common patriarch, and to one another, to ensure that the latter prevails.

Both of our traditions remember Abraham's supreme test of faith and obedience. Though they preserve distinctive understandings of that sacred event, both affirm the mercy of G-d and His blessing upon Abraham's family, including Isaac and Ishmael.

In the same section of the Torah that recounts the Binding of Isaac, we also find the story of Hagar and Ishmael wandering in the wilderness, facing mortal danger as Hagar fears that her son will die of thirst (Genesis 21). In both narratives, divine intervention arrives at the final moment: the son is spared, and G-d's promise of blessing is reaffirmed. Likewise, after recounting Abraham's sacrifice, the Quran continues with glad tidings concerning Isaac: "And We gave him glad tidings of Isaac, a prophet among the righteous. And We blessed him and Isaac" (Quran 37:112–113).

Thus, both the Torah and the Quran affirm that Isaac and Ishmael are blessed by G-d. The theological message is profound: both scriptures testify to G-d's blessing upon the two branches of Abraham's family Jews and Muslims are therefore called not only to honor their own lineage but also to recognize the blessing bestowed upon the other. Significantly, each of the five daily Muslim prayers includes the Ṣalāt al-Ibrāhīmiyyah, invoking G-d's blessings upon Abraham and his descendants.

This sense of kinship is further reflected in the Quran's designation of the Jewish people as Ahl al-Kitāb, "People of the Book." Beyond its literal meaning, the term Ahl also carries connotations of family, household, and belonging, suggesting a relationship that is closer and more intimate than that of strangers. This language offers a meaningful basis upon which Jews and Muslims may deepen their sense of spiritual kinship and belonging.

In a letter written in 1908, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook acknowledged the conflicts and failures that had long marked relations between religious communities. Yet he expressed a profound hope for the future, envisioning a time when "the fraternal love between Esau and Jacob, between Isaac and Ishmael, transcends all those troubles."

6 Our Shared Future Is Not Diminished by Our Differences but Enriched by Them

Our friendship and fraternity do not exist despite the differences that arise from our deep religious identities; they are enriched and blessed by them.

The same Mishnah cited earlier, which teaches that all humanity descends from a common ancestor and thereby affirms our shared human dignity, also celebrates the sanctity of human diversity: "The Holy One, blessed be He, stamped every human with the seal of the first human, yet not one of them is like another. Therefore, each person must say, 'For my sake the world was created.'"

The unity of humanity is thus not uniformity. On the contrary, the richness of creation is revealed through the uniqueness of each person and each people. The enduring challenge is to discover a form of unity that does not require the erasure of difference—a unity that does not demand the abandonment of our individual, national, cultural, or religious identities.

Rabbi Yehuda Leon Ashkenazi offered a powerful metaphor for this vision. He taught that each nation is like a different flower. The full beauty of humanity emerges only when these diverse flowers are gathered into a single bouquet. Each flower retains its distinct color, fragrance, and beauty, yet together they create something even more magnificent—a unity enriched rather than diminished by diversity.

From the Muslim perspective, this blessing of diversity is likewise rooted in the will of the Creator. The Quran teaches:

> *"Truly We created you from a male and a female, and We made you peoples and tribes that you may come to know one another" (Quran 49:13).*

Human diversity is therefore not a problem to be overcome but a divine invitation to encounter, learning, and mutual enrichment.

As we have already seen in Sūrat al-Mā'idah, the diversity of religious communities is likewise understood as part of G-d's providential design:

> *"For each among you We have appointed a law and a way. Had G-d willed, He would have made you one community but [He willed otherwise], that He might try you in that which He has given you. So vie with one another in good deeds.*

This passage recognizes that religious communities have been entrusted with a law and a way. Rather than directing us toward the erasure of difference, it directs us toward accountability before G-d and toward competing with one another in good deeds

Tolerance alone is insufficient; our traditions call us toward knowledge of one another, mutual good, and shared responsibility.

The vision that emerges from our traditions is therefore not one of uniformity, but of harmony. Just as a bouquet derives its beauty from the distinctiveness of each flower, humanity is enriched when its diverse peoples, cultures, and religions contribute their unique gifts to the common good. Unity is not achieved by becoming the same, but by learning how to live together in a manner that honors both our common humanity and our particular identities. In this way, diversity itself becomes a blessing, and our differences become pathways through which we come to know one another, serve one another, and together draw closer to G-d.

7 Standing Together Against Those Who Invoke G-d's Name to Divide, Dehumanize, and Destroy

The Talmud warns of the danger posed by those who turn the Torah into what it calls "a potion of death" rather than "a potion of life" (Yoma 72b). This sobering insight applies to the sacred writings of all. Religion is among the most powerful forces in human life. It has inspired extraordinary acts of compassion, self-sacrifice, and moral transformation, yet it has also been invoked to justify division, oppression, and violence. Like all great sources of power, religion can heal the world but it can also wound it.

Whether religion becomes a force for violence or for reconciliation often depends upon how its sacred texts and teachings are understood. Does this mean that everything is subjective, and that religious scriptures contain no clear truths or guiding principles? Certainly not. Religious traditions possess enduring foundations and core values. Within every tradition there are central teachings that express its deepest aspirations and moral vision, alongside passages arising from particular historical, legal, or conflict contexts.

The great tragedy occurs when those texts are detached from their proper context and elevated into governing principles. Grievances, fear, ideology, or the pursuit of power can lead individuals and communities to transform exceptions into norms, giving rise to distorted and destructive interpretations. Such readings do not merely misrepresent particular passages; they obscure the broader moral and spiritual message of the tradition itself.

Sacred texts must not be weaponized; difficult passages must not be detached from their contexts; authentic interpretation must proceed through the established interpretive disciplines of the respective traditions. Passages that appear to conflict with these principles must be interpreted according to the established principles of our respective scholarly traditions, taking into account language, context, legal methodology, and the overarching objectives of divine wisdom and guidance.

This is not a departure from tradition but a return to it. It is an effort to recover the deepest intentions of our faiths and to ensure that religion remains what it is meant to be: not a potion of death, but a source of life, blessing, and healing for all humanity.

Afterword: G-d's Blessing as the Basis of Fraternity

The Qur'an offers a powerful image of fraternity as a divine blessing, recalling how those who had once been enemies were brought together and their hearts joined:

> *"And hold fast to the rope of G-d, all together, and be not divided. Remember the Blessing of G-d upon you, when you were enemies and He joined your hearts, such that you became brothers by His Blessing. You were on the brink of a pit of fire and He delivered you from it" (Quran 3:103).*

Though revealed in its particular context, this transformation offers a profound principle for our work: estrangement need not have the final word. Hearts once divided by conflict and suspicion can be brought together through the recognition of a higher purpose and a shared devotion to the Divine.

In a similar spirit, the Zohar, the central work of Jewish spirituality, describes the transformation of conflict into brotherhood blessed by G-d:

> *"At first they appear as men waging war, seeking to kill one another. Afterward, they appear in love, in brotherhood…. The blessed Holy One delights with you and proclaims peace upon you תand for your sake peace will prevail in the world, as it is written, 'For my brethren and companions' sake, I will now say, "Peace be within you"'" (Zohar, Aḥarei Mot 59b).*

Both texts point toward the same profound truth: peace begins not with the erasure of difference but with the transformation of relationships. Those who once regarded one another as adversaries can come to recognize one another as brothers and sisters, united not by sameness but by a shared source and a shared destiny.

Jews and Muslims are children of Abraham. We trace our heritage, whether biologically or spiritually, to the brothers Isaac and Ishmael. Ours is a family story, one that has known both estrangement and closeness, rivalry and love. Yet the very bonds that have sometimes given rise to tension also hold within them the possibility of reconciliation and fraternity.

Though this declaration arises from the particular relationship between Jews and Muslims, we offer its hope to the whole human family. If communities bearing histories of both kinship and conflict can transform estrangement into fraternity, religion can become an even greater force for peace, healing, reconciliation, and human solidarity throughout the world.

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G20 INTERFAITH FORUM

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

August 13, 2025

CALL TO ACTION 2025

Jewish-Muslim Religious Fraternity

Reproduced in its original form, this Call to Action marked the beginning of the journey that led to the present Declaration.

The Jewish-Muslim Religious Fraternity Project

As part of a long-term effort to promote Jewish-Muslim reconciliation, a delegation of Jewish and Muslim faith leaders convened in Cape Town, South Africa, at the G20 Interfaith Forum Summit, to issue the following declaration:

With a shared commitment to fostering genuine understanding and respectful dialogue between our Jewish and Muslim communities, we acknowledge the deep-rooted historical complexities that have shaped their relations.

Rooted in our shared humanity as descendants of Adam, we view the deepening of religious fraternity between Jews and Muslims not merely as a means to ease tensions but as a revival of our common Abrahamic heritage and **a fulfillment of God's will**. This delegation is part of a long-term process of dialogue, joint study, and cooperation. Its purpose is to make our religious identities **a source of connection rather than conflict**.

We draw inspiration from the al-Madina Constitution of the 7th century, which brought our communities together, **as well as from the historic *Nostra Aetate* declaration of 1965**, which marked a pivotal shift in Jewish-Christian relations. As we commemorate its 60th anniversary in 2025, we seek to build upon its legacy by embarking on a parallel journey for Jewish-Muslim relations.

This endeavor will critically examine both the convergences and distinctions between our traditions, with the overarching aim of equipping our communities with the wisdom and perspective necessary to address illnesses in the world that plague our ability to coexist in lasting peace.

The road ahead is long and fraught with complexities. Our efforts will require strategic planning, scholarly engagement, participation in global forums, dedicated women-led interfaith dialogue, and the dissemination of our shared vision through educational and media channels, and more.

We do not presume to predict the timeline or ultimate success of this undertaking. However, we recognize that it holds the potential to be **one of the most significant interfaith initiatives of our time**. We, the undersigned, guided by hope and faith, commit to taking the first step on this journey.

We invite all of you to join this endeavor.

G20 Interfaith Forum

Imam Talib Shareef

To my distinguished guests, colleagues, honored and esteemed religious leaders, and brothers and sisters in our shared humanity: We greet you all with the greetings of peace. *As-salamu alaykum. Shalom aleichem.*

It is a great honor to stand before this esteemed assembly and to speak on the core of our collaborative work, a matter that touches the heart of our sacred traditions and our common future: Muslim–Jewish relations.

I speak as a student in the spirit of the late Muslim American leader Imam W. Deen Mohammed, a visionary, bridge-builder, and reformer who saw in our sacred texts and histories the potential for peace, not division; for dignity, not degradation. He taught that the Qur'an came to confirm the truth that preceded it, and that Islam honors the faith of Jews and Christians, not despite our differences, but because of our shared origin.

The Qur'an states:

"Say, 'We believe in Allah and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes…'"
—Qur'an 2:136

This reminds us that we are not enemies of one another. We are branches of the same sacred Abrahamic tree, which has many branches. Muslims and Jews alike are children of Abrahamic faith, keepers of prophetic wisdom, and inheritors of the original human identity as children of Adam.

Thus, we are not to inherit the hatreds of history. We are to inherit the intelligence and mercy of Scripture. Our scars should not divide us; they should make us healers. That is our charge today, and it is the basis of our partnership and our presentation here.

We have a shared moral responsibility. The Qur'an and the Torah both speak to the sacredness of life, the sanctity of justice, and the moral duty to uphold the rights of others. We, as religious leaders, are to meet others not on the battlefield of past grievances, but on the common ground of our moral teachings. For interfaith engagement is not simply about tolerance; it is about cooperative human excellence.

As one who comes from the African diaspora, and as an African American Muslim leader, I am no stranger to struggle, having experienced racism, oppression, and the need to overcome inherited pain not by perpetuating blame, but by rising in dignity. The future is not built by looking back in anger, but by walking forward in understanding.

This forum is not merely a conference. It is a global call to conscience. It is imperative that all of us, Muslims, Jews, Christians, and people of all faiths, rise above political entanglements and partisan fears and return to the moral clarity of our Scriptures.

We are here to urge Muslim and Jewish leaders to cooperate in serving humanity, not in silos, but shoulder to shoulder: to fight hunger, educate the poor, protect the environment and our planet, and build peace, not as a favor, but as a fulfillment of divine responsibility.

In our collaboration, we have learned not to underestimate the power of dialogue. One sincere conversation between a rabbi and an imam can ripple through generations. One act of mutual respect, or one shared project, can break a chain of centuries-old suspicion and transform it into solidarity.

In conclusion, we are not here to fight each other's religion. We are here to bear witness to what God wants for human beings. And what God wants, we believe, is justice, mercy, and mutual respect.

We are to value God's mercy, His creation, and His ways, mindful that God does not want us to be cruel to one another, nor to become victims of cruelty, but to treat every human being as a sacred creation of Him, the Almighty Creator.

Today, let that be our aim: not merely to coexist, but to **co-elevate**.

In preparation for next year's G20 in my country, America, we invite you to join us in this sacred responsibility: embracing our shared identity as human beings and valuing our intrinsic capacity to live together intelligently.

Let our efforts here at this G20 Interfaith Forum be a beacon for others, and may the spirit of justice, mercy, and unity guide us in all that we do.

Thank you. *As-salamu alaykum.*

WE HAVE A DREAM
Rabbi Dr. Yakov Nagen

B'shem Ha-El, Rachum veChanun.

Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim.

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

We have a dream.

That our deep religious identities will not be a source of conflict, but of connection.

That our friendships and sense of brotherhood will exist not *despite* our differences, but will be *deepened* and *blessed* by them.

I began with "In the name of God" because this dream begins with a shared belief: that this is the will of our Creator, and that it is the authentic truth that emerges from our sacred texts.

We stand together against those who weaponize religion—those who use God's name to divide and destroy. This is a betrayal not only of one another, but of the very books and the very God they claim to serve.

The Torah tells of tensions between brothers:

Isaac and Ishmael.
Jacob and Esau.
Joseph and his brothers.

These stories reflect the profound emotional complexity of family. Yet, again and again, the Bible teaches us that brotherly love can ultimately prevail.

So it is today with the relationship between Jews and Muslims.

Let me be clear: our focus today on Jews and Muslims is not meant to exclude our brothers and sisters of other faiths. It is to recognize that, just as every relationship is unique, so too are the particular blessing, and the particular challenge, of each relationship. Ultimately, our guiding vision is the one we proclaim at the conclusion of every Jewish prayer service in **Aleinu**: a world in which all humanity calls together upon God's name.

In the words of the prophet Zephaniah(3:9) :

"Then I will purify the lips of the peoples,
that all of them may call on the name of the Lord
and serve Him shoulder to shoulder."

This vision became deeply personal for me exactly three years ago.

After suffering a major brain hemorrhage, I found myself hovering between life and death. But the prayers of brothers and sisters from many faiths called me back to life.

For me, this was a fulfillment of the first part of that prophetic verse:

"That all of them may call on the name of the Lord."

The second part:

"And serve Him shoulder to shoulder"

I came to understand in a new way shortly afterward, when I met my dear brother, Imam Talib Shareef.

He embraced me with an enormous hug. Face to face, heart to heart, our shoulders touched and we became one.

When we forge the vertical bond with God and the horizontal bond with one another, when we stand face to face, heart to heart, and shoulder to shoulder, that is when faith and religion can heal our broken world.

Imam Dr. Talib M. Shareef is President and Imam of historic Masjid Muhammad, The Nation's Mosque in Washington, DC, and President of the International Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation (I-CPR). A student of the late Imam W. Deen Mohammed and retired U.S. Air Force veteran with more than 30 years of service, he has devoted decades to advancing interfaith cooperation, peacebuilding, religious freedom, and human dignity. He holds a doctorate from Global Oved Dei Seminary University, where he serves as Professor of Islamic Studies and Director of the Interfaith Council, and studied Arabic and Middle Eastern studies at Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University and the Defense Foreign Language Center. Imam Shareef has been recognized by four U.S. Presidents and received Morocco's highest Royal Medal from King Mohammed VI for outstanding interfaith leadership. His international work has included major peace and interfaith initiatives across Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

Rabbi Dr. Yakov Nagen is President of the Jerusalem Interfaith Center and Co-Chair of the Interreligious Council of the Abrahamic Movement. He received rabbinic ordination from RIETS and holds a PhD in Jewish Philosophy from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

For more than two decades, Rabbi Nagen has been a leading voice in interfaith dialogue, particularly Jewish–Muslim relations. He advances a vision of religion as a force for connection, reconciliation, and peace. Bridging religious scholarship and practical peacebuilding, he brings together religious leaders, policymakers, educators, and civil-society organizations to develop new models of interfaith cooperation and shared responsibility.

Rabbi Nagen is the author of ten books and numerous articles on Jewish spirituality, Talmud, and interfaith relations. *Tablet* magazine named him one of the ten "Israeli Rabbis You Should Know." For 30 years, he served as a senior educator at Yeshivat Otniel.

FROM COEXISTENCE TO CO-ELEVATION

"Our shared future is not diminished by our differences,
but enriched by them."