

Jerusalem Interfaith Forum Offers Prayers for Good Health and Strength for All

Nurit Hirschfeld
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Jerusalem, Israel -- During this season of high Holy Days celebrated by Israel's four main religions, the Jerusalem Interfaith Forum for Understanding and Cooperation among Religions held an online prayer for good health and strength for all humanity in these days of the pandemic.

Two religious leaders from each of the four major religions -- Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Druze religion -- offered their thoughts and prayers at the April 26, 2020 meeting, which was led by the UPF-Israel team.

Mr. Hod Ben Zvi, the chair of UPF-Israel, opened the meeting with words of UPF founder Dr. Sun Myung Moon emphasizing the core values of religions -- living for the sake of others.

The religious leaders called for self-reflection under the circumstances of the coronavirus pandemic. This is the time to get closer to God and to repent for being far from Him and for not loving human beings that He created, they said. They pointed out that the virus attacks human beings regardless of their color or religion -- thus teaching us that we are all of equal value and need to unite our efforts. Through unity we can defeat the virus, they said.

Some of them, who work closely with their community, emphasized the loneliness of elder people and called for humanitarian support for those in need.

The meeting concluded with four prayers offered by the representatives of each religion. Prayers were offered in Hebrew and Arabic, and verses from the Quran, the Bible, and from the Druze traditional prayers were read aloud.

The speakers were Bishop Munib Younan, Lutheran Church, Jordan, and the Holy Land; Sheik Dr. Saliman Hatib, educator and school principal, Yanuch; Rabbi Dr. Edgar Nof, Netan-ya Community and Bridges of Hope; and Sheik Samir Aasi, educator, Acre.

Prayers were offered by Father Yacobous Abu-Aqel, Arabic Orthodox Community, Jdaide-Maker; Sheik Qadi Akhsan Halabi, Druze Religious Court, Dalyet El-Carmel; Rabbi Yaakov Luft, European Communities, Mevaseret Zion; and Sheik Saleh Ryan, head of the Local Council, Kabul.

The prayer meeting was led by the UPF-Israel team: Dr. Nurit Hirschfeld, president; Mrs. Adi Sasaki, vice president; and Mr. Luke Weiler Hill, secretary general.