

A Celebration  
for Her Majesty The Queen  
and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh  
to mark  
the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty's Accession

## **Sacred Objects**

**displayed by  
representatives of  
Faith Communities in the UK**

Lambeth Palace

Wednesday 15 February 2012

His Grace The Archbishop of Canterbury and Mrs Williams received Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh at the Main Doors of the Blore Building at Lambeth Palace.

The Archbishop accompanied Her Majesty, and Mrs Williams accompanied His Royal Highness, to meet guests first to the State Drawing Room and then to the Pink Dining Room.

During this period the Archbishop and Mrs Williams presented leading representatives of the historic Faith Communities in the United Kingdom to Her Majesty and His Royal Highness.

Each group of faith leaders was gathered around a treasured sacred object selected by them for display at the Celebration as an object of particular significance to the faith or practice of their community, or their life in the United Kingdom.

# Faith Communities

## BAHA'I GUESTS

Mr Patrick O'Mara

Mrs Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi

Mr Liam Stephens

Mrs Nasrin Khosravi O'Kane

*National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the UK*

*Displaying —*

### **The Robe of 'Abdu'l-Bahá**

The Bahá'í community is currently celebrating the centenary of the visit to this country of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Son of Bahá'u'lláh the Founder of our Faith. His life was one of constant service to others, imparting love, wisdom and comfort to all. The “treasure” we wish to show Her Majesty is a simple robe worn by 'Abdu'l-Bahá; sacred because of its association with His Blessed Personage, but also because 'Abdu'l-Bahá was the Perfect Exemplar of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, an example that continues to inspire us to be better people and to play our part in building a better world. Indeed, in His first public talk, delivered at the City Temple in London in September 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá declared one the central principle of the Bahá'í Faith:

*The gift of God to this enlightened age is the knowledge of the oneness of mankind and of the fundamental oneness of religion.*

In this same address, He commented:

*Praise be to God, in this country the standard of justice has been raised; a great effort is being made to give all souls an equal and a true place.*

## BUDDHIST GUESTS

Venerable Bogoda Seelawimala

*Chief Sangha Nayake of Great Britain, London Buddhist Vihara*

Venerable Ajahn Amaro Bhikkhu

*Amaravati Buddhist Monastery*

Dr Desmond Biddulph

*Chairman, The Buddhist Society*

Mr Robert MacPhail

*London Buddhist Vihara*

*Displaying —*

### **A silver Stupa**

Silver reliquary in the shape of a Buddhist Stupa: 18ins / 45cms, including 45 gem stones: Kosala Ratnayaka, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

For Buddhists, the stupa acts as a visible marker for the relics of the Buddha. No matter whether it is just 18ins / 45cms high, like the one made in Sri Lanka for this event, or is 54ft / 16.46m high, like the Great Stupa at Sanchi (Madhya Pradesh, India), the stupa provides a very visible reminder of the life of the Buddha and of his Teachings. In one sense it is indeed just a reliquary, a casket to hold the relics of Buddhism's founder but the whole shape and form of the stupa makes it a very much more complex object of veneration than the term "reliquary" would suggest.

The Stupa can be divided into three main parts. The base represents the idea of "Sila" / Morality in the form of the "Five Precepts" by which all Buddhists undertake to live. The Domed "Chamber" represents "Samadhi" / Concentration by which all Buddhists seek to concentrate and still their minds and their desires. At the very top of the Stupa, we have the pinnacle representing "Panna" / Wisdom. Note that the base of the pinnacle is made up of a square symbolising the "Four Noble Truths" of Buddhism. As the pinnacle rises there are nine circles denoting the nine supreme states of mental / spiritual development. At the top, we have a flame-shaped object, which represents the final goal of all Buddhists, the Supreme Bliss of Nibbana.

## HINDU GUESTS

Ms Bharti Tailor

*Secretary General, Hindu Forum Great Britain*

Dr Narayan Rao

*Chairman, Hindu Council UK*

Dr Girdhari Bahn

*President, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK)*

Dr Raj Pandit Sharma

*Secretary General, National Council of Hindu Temples*

*Displaying —*

### **A floral representation of the 'OM' — ॐ**

The most sacred symbol in Hinduism is ॐ. It stands for Brahman, both as personal and impersonal God.

“The goal which all the Vedas declare, which all austerities aim at, and which men desire when they lead the life of continence, I will tell you briefly: it is OM. This syllable OM is indeed Brahman. This syllable is the Highest. Whosoever knows this syllable obtains all that he desires. This is the best support; this is the highest support. Whosoever knows this support is adored in the world of Brahma.”

*-- Katha Upanishad I, ii, 15-17*

As Hindus we begin our prayers with the ॐ, and end with ॐ Shanti (peace). Alongside the swastika it is the ॐ that is written on front of homes to wish those within and those visiting, auspiciousness and prosperity. ॐ is also a mantra, and indeed just chanting ॐ alone is a prayer and meditation and can lead to Brahman. ॐ is worn as an ornament by many, and adorned in art just as often as the deities and often alongside them.

Om Santi! Shanti! Shanti!

## JAIN GUESTS

Dr Natubhai Shah

*Chair, Jain Network UK*

Mr Tushar J Shah

*President, Oshwal Association of UK*

Dr Harshad Sanghrajka

*Secretary, Institute of Jainology*

Dr Kamal Mehta

*Trustee, Jain Samaj Europe*

*Displaying —*

### **The Kalpasutra (Book of Rituals)**

*with manuscript pages from a 15th/16th-century Kalpasutra*

*With the gracious assistance of the Victoria and Albert Museum*

The Kalpasutra (Book of Rituals) is the most important canonical text in Jain literature for the Svetambaras (white-clad), one of the two sects of Jainism. Jainism is one of the oldest religions to have survived until the present time and its basic teaching is one of non-violence. The Kalpasutra is divided into three sections. The first section deals with the lives of the twenty-four Jinas or Tirthankaras, who were the Jain spiritual teachers or 'ford-makers'. The second part deals with the life of Mahavira, the twenty-fourth Tirthankara. The third part deals with rules for the ascetics and laws during the four months (chaturmas) of the rainy season, when ascetics temporarily abandon their wandering life and settle down amidst the laity. This is the time when the festival of Paryushan is celebrated and the Kalpasutra is traditionally recited.

The folio is labelled 'Raja-Rani'. In it the illustration shows Queen Trishala, who was to become the mother of Mahavira, describing her fourteen dreams to her husband King Siddhartha. She dreamed the fourteen auspicious dreams before the birth of Mahavira. On the reverse there is an illustration in two registers labelled 'the interpreters of dreams'. In the upper register are two Brahmins and below is one Brahmin with another figure, possibly King Siddhartha.

## JEWISH GUESTS

Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks

*Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth*

Mr Vivian Wineman

*President, Board of Deputies of British Jews*

Rabbi Dr Tony Bayfield

*President of the Movement for Reform Judaism*

Mr Maurice Ostro

*Chairman, Ostro Minerals Schweiz AG*

*Displaying —*

### **The Codex Valmadonna I**

*With the gracious assistance of Mr Jack Lunzer,  
Custodian of the Valmadonna Trust*

The Codex Valmadonna I is a Hebrew version of the Five Books of Moses (The Pentateuch), the first five books of the Bible, and was written in England in 1189. This book is the only dated Hebrew text in existence from the first settlement of Jews in medieval England, before their expulsion by King Edward I in 1290. In the year following the manuscript's creation, after the coronation of Richard I, mobs in York attacked the Jewish community, massacring the population and looting their property. Their books and manuscripts were exported and subsequently sold to Jewish communities living abroad. The Codex Valmadonna I is thus thought to have survived this journey, having been displaced from its home in England.

It was subsequently acquired by the great bibliophile, David Sassoon, a member of the Sephardi / Anglo Indian family and returned to this country. It was bought by the Valmadonna Trust from the Sassoon Estate.

The Hebrew text is accompanied by a translation into Aramaic, the Jewish vernacular, together with writings from the Prophets and the 5 Scrolls in the Hagiographa.

It will be displayed at the Song of the Sea (Exodus Chapter 15) recording the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea.

## MUSLIM GUESTS

Maulana Shahid Raza

*Executive Director Imams and Mosques Council UK*

Mr Farooq Murad

*Secretary General Muslim Council of Britain*

Mr Syed Yousif Al-Khoei

*Director The Al-Khoei Foundation*

Ms Sughra Ahmad

*Research Fellow The Islamic Foundation*

*Displaying —*

### **A Holy Piece of Kiswah**

The Kiswah is a black cloth, woven of silk and lined with cotton, which covers the Kaaba. The Kaaba, a large stone structure constituting a single room with a marble floor, lies at the heart of the Holy Mosque (al Masjid al Haram) in the Holy City of Makkah. Rebuilt by Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael, the Kaaba is Islam's holiest building. It now stands some 60 feet high and each side is approximately 60 feet in length. The four walls of the Kaaba are covered with a black curtain, the Kiswah.

Each year, a new Kiswah is prepared at great cost, embroidered in gold thread with the *Shahadah* (the simple, Islamic creed) and verses from the Holy Qur'an. The completed Kiswah is over 45 feet wide and nearly 130 feet in length. The Kiswah is created in a special factory located in Saudi Arabia. Every year at the end of Hajj, a newly woven Kiswah is placed over the Kaaba. The old one is cut into small pieces and given as a special gift to Muslims fortunate enough to receive it.

This piece of Kiswah was gifted to The Leicester Central Mosque by Sheikh Esam Abdullah Al-Kaaki, a member of a respected family of Makkah. It has been framed and is usually on display at the mosque, it measures 182 cm long and 83 cm wide.



## SIKH GUESTS

Lord Dr Indarjit Singh of Wimbledon CBE, DL

*Director Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)*

Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh Ji

*Chairman Guru Nanak Nishkam Sevak Jatha*

Mr Mohan Singh Nayyar

*General Secretary Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha*

Miss Amrit Kaur Lohia

*UK Punjab Heritage Association*

*Displaying —*

### **Painting of Maharaja Ranjit Singh**

*With the gracious assistance of the Victoria and Albert Museum*

Ranjit Singh was the first Sikh maharaja of the Panjab, the region in the far north of the Indian subcontinent whose Persian name refers to the five rivers flowing across the plains. He ruled from 1801 until his death in 1839. This painting shows Ranjit Singh riding through a flower-sprinkled landscape on a white stallion that is bedecked with gold chains and turban jewels. The Maharaja is dressed in saffron-coloured clothes with a brocade short coat, his only jewels being long ropes of pearls and a bazuband, or ornament for the upper arm. He is surrounded by companions, many of whom carry insignia of royalty such as weapons wrapped in cloth. Most important of these is the parasol – the ancient emblem of kings – that shades Ranjit Singh's head.

The painting was given to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1955 by Mrs L M Rivett-Carnac on behalf of the Van Cortlandt family. According to family tradition, this was one of a pair of portraits made for Ranjit Singh by his court artist and presented by him to Mrs Rivett-Carnac's grandfather, Colonel Henry Charles Van Cortlandt, the other copy being kept by the maharaja. Van Cortlandt (1814–1888) entered Ranjit Singh's service in 1832, and after the first Anglo-Sikh War (1845–1846) commanded Sikh detachments under the British.

## ZOROASTRIAN GUESTS

Mr Malcolm Deboo

*President of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe*

Mr Paurushasp B Jila

Mr Rustam Bhedwar

Dr Rashan Writer

*Members of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe*

*Displaying —*

### **Shahnameh (Book of Kings)**

The *Shahnameh* or *Book of Kings* is Iran's national epic. It describes the myths, legends and history of Iran's pre-Islamic past. Written in some 50,000 couplets, it was crafted by the poet Firdowsi and completed around 1010CE, some three and a half centuries after the Arab conquest of Iran. The poet's great achievement was reviving and securing the Persian language as well as Iran's mythological past. Firdowsi's sources would have included the *Xwadāy-Nāmag* (Book of Rules), authored under the Sasanian kings, the Zoroastrian dynasty overthrown by the Arabs in the seventh century CE.

The epic of the *Shahnameh* begins with the Pishdadian dynasty and the mythological first man, Kiyumars (Gayomard in the *Avesta*, the sacred book of the Zoroastrians). He is the ruler who introduces the throne and the crown, the master of the world. The early histories and myths embedded within the narrative range from the reign of Jamshid, perhaps the most famous king of Persian mythology, to Zahak, the serpent-shouldered ruler and from Cyrus the Great, founder of the Achaemenid Empire, through Alexander of Macedon, to the last the Sasanian king, Yazdegerd. The central argument in Zoroastrian theology – the triumph of good over evil – is illustrated through stories which show historical figures entering the world of myths, with legends embroidering the original details of their lives to such an extent that it often becomes difficult to separate fact from fiction.

The *Shahnameh* does not promote a return from the Islamic Empire to a Zoroastrian one; nor indeed, is there any mention of Zoroastrianism. The perennial Iranian dialectic of the struggle between light and darkness is represented by Iran and Turan: the Iranians and the Turks. The significance of Firdowsi's epic is that the nationalistic conceptions in poetic verse continued to be read by the Iranian people and engendered a sense of their distinctiveness. Firdowsi's great achievement was that through his *Shahnameh* he had preserved the "multiple interpretability of the historical process" which, to this day, has enabled Iran to keep alive its past.

## CHRISTIAN GUESTS

*Churches in England —*

The Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu

*Archbishop of York*

The Revd Michael Heaney

*Moderator, Free Churches Group; Churches Together in England co-President*

The Rt Revd Jana Jeruma Grinberga

*Lutheran Church of Great Britain; Churches Together in England  
co-President*

His Eminence Cormac Cardinal Murphy O'Connor

*Representing the Archbishop of Westminster, Churches Together in England  
co-President*

*Churches in Scotland —*

The Rt Revd David Arnott

*Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*

The Most Revd David Chillingworth

*Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church*

The Most Revd Mario Conti

*Archbishop of Glasgow*

The Revd Dr Douglas Galbraith

*Convener, Action of Churches Together in Scotland*

*Churches in Ireland —*

The Most Revd Alan Harper, OBE

*Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland*

The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson

*Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland*

His Eminence Sean Cardinal Brady

*Archbishop of Armagh*

The Revd Dr Ivan Patterson

*Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*

*Churches in Wales —*

The Rt Revd Dominic Walker

*Bishop of Monmouth representing the Archbishop of Wales*

The Most Revd George Stack

*Archbishop of Cardiff*

The Revd Gareth Morgan Jones  
*President Free Church Council of Wales*

*Other churches across the UK*

The Revd Nezlin Sterling  
*New Testament Assembly, former Churches Together in England co-President*

Pastor Agou Irukwa  
*National Leader Redeemed Christian Church of God*

His Eminence Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain  
*Pan-Orthodox Assembly of Bishops in UK and Ireland*

His Grace Bishop Angaelos  
*Council of Oriental Orthodox Churches in UK and Ireland*

His Excellency Archbishop Antonio Mennini  
*The Apostolic Nuncio*

*Displaying —*

### **The Coronation Anointing Objects**

*By gracious consent of Her Majesty The Queen,  
and the assistance of the Royal Collection and HM Tower of London*

After the acclamation and the oath, but before being invested with the regalia, the monarch is anointed. The Archbishop of Canterbury pours holy oil from the Ampulla into the Coronation Spoon and anoints the sovereign, who is seated in King Edward's Chair, on the hands, breast and head, while recalling the anointing of King Solomon in the Old Testament.

### **The Ampulla**

The gold Ampulla (1661; 20.7 x 10.4 cm), which holds the consecrated chrism or holy oil with which the sovereign is anointed during the coronation ceremony, was supplied by Robert Vyner in 1661 for the coronation of Charles II to replace that destroyed in 1649 during the Commonwealth period. The medieval ampulla was supposed to contain the oil given to St Thomas à Becket by the Virgin for the coronation of the kings of England. This phial of oil was mounted in a golden eagle in the

14th century, but it was clearly much smaller than the current Ampulla as Richard II was able to wear it about his neck as a pendant. In the inventory of goods taken to the Tower of London to be sold in 1649, the ampulla appears as 'a Dove of gould sett with stones and pearle'. The new Ampulla by Vyner is also in the form of an eagle: the head screws on to the body and the oil is poured through a hole in the beak. It has been used at almost every coronation since 1661.

### **The Coronation Anointing Spoon**

The silver-gilt Coronation Spoon (1250 to 1300; 26.7cm long) is the only piece of the medieval coronation regalia to survive the seventeenth-century Interregnum. Already considered to be 'of ancient form' in the mid-14th century, the spoon was probably made in the second half of the 12th century and is the only piece of royal goldsmith's work to survive from that century. The bowl of the spoon is engraved with acanthus leaves, while the handle takes the form of a monster's head where it is attached to the bowl. Before the Civil War the spoon was kept among St Edward's regalia at Westminster Abbey. Although its original purpose is unclear, it was certainly designed for ceremonial use, and its presence in St Edward's Regalia indicates it was connected with coronations from an early date. In 1649 it was sold for 16 shillings to Clement Kynnersley, one of Charles I's Wardrobe officials. At the Restoration, a new spoon was made in preparation for Charles II's coronation but before the event took place Kynnersley returned the medieval original. The medieval spoon was then set with four pearls and used at the coronation. Since the Restoration, it has sometimes been known as the 'Anointing Spoon' and the archbishop has poured holy oil into it from the Ampulla for the anointing. However, it may be that the spoon was originally used for mixing water and wine in a chalice.