



University of
Leicester

Leicester **Faith trail** (2nd Edition)



Supported by



**LEICESTER
COUNCIL
OF FAITHS**



Faiths Together

Welcome to the Leicester Faith Trail

Leicester is one of the most diverse cities in Europe, with a variety of different ethnic and religious communities, each with their own history and heritage. This faith trail aims to introduce you to the history and beliefs of the main faith groups in Leicester.

This walking trail, of just less than 3.5 miles, follows a route around the city providing an appreciation of the historical interest and importance of faith sites and other related buildings of interest. We have highlighted buildings which include historical, modern and adapted architecture illustrating the diversity of the vibrant places of worship in Leicester.

It is not our intention to exclude any religions, sects or branches of faiths; all those included are members of Leicester Council of Faiths. It is important to note that the brief statements in this booklet are merely an introduction to each religion and you may wish to contact the faith organisations directly if you require further information.

To ensure all faiths receive equal attention and the route can be walked within a short space of time, only one site was selected per faith. Sites were selected based on their location and to provide a range of new and old, purpose-built and converted buildings to show how the landscape of religion in Leicester has changed over time. This does mean that some beautiful and important faith sites in Leicester were not included, but information on all former and current faith sites in Leicester can be found at www2.le.ac.uk/departments/archaeology/research/projects/mapping-faith/places

The faith trail has been produced by the University of Leicester with the support of Leicester Council of Faiths.

We hope you will enjoy reading the booklet, following the trail, and celebrating the diversity and variety of Leicester's multicultural communities. Please visit our website for information about all faith sites in Leicester www.le.ac.uk/faithtrail

General Guidelines:

When visiting places of worship please be respectful at all times and comply with the rules of each site.

- Do not disturb people who are worshipping
- Do not smoke
- Do not eat, drink or chew gum
- Respect all images and statues

Acknowledgements

The Leicester Faith Trail has been produced by the University of Leicester, School of Archaeology and Ancient History.

The University of Leicester would like to thank all the religious sites for participating in the creation of this faith trail and for all those who have provided information and support in its development.

The Faith Trail Team of second year undergraduate students compiled the information and created the trail route; they are Bipin Banwatt, Jodie Hannis, Philip Hughes, Kristina King, Amy Marsh, Daljit Rai, Amy Rutland, Paul Sharrock, Alex Stern.

Contact Details (Contact details were correct at time of printing.)

Guru Amar Das Gurdwara

219-227 Clarendon Park Road, Leicester,
LE2 3AN

T: 0116 221 7276

Shree Geeta Bhavan Temple & Hindu Community Centre

70 Clarendon Park Road
Leicester, LE2 3AD

T: 0116 270 7756

Leicester Hebrew Faith Synagogue

Highfield Street, Leicester, LE2 1AD

T: 0116 270 6622

W: www.jewish-leicester.co.uk

E: hefreeman@gmail.com
(please e-mail to arrange visits)

Leicester Central Mosque

4 Conduit Street, Leicester, LE2 0JN

T: 0116 254 4459

W: www.islamiccentre.org

New Walk Museum

53 New Walk, Leicester, LE1 7EA

T: 0116 225 4900

W: www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/leicester-city-museums/museums/nwm-art-gallery

Jain Centre

32 Oxford Street, Leicester, LE1 5XU

T: 0116 254 1150

W: www.jaincentreleicester.com

E: halp@jaincentre.com

St Mary de Castro

15 Castle Street, Leicester, LE1 5WN

T: 0153 022 3383

W: www.stmarydecastro.org.uk

Nagarjuna Kadampa Buddhist Centre

17 Guildhall Lane, Leicester, LE1 5FQ

T: 0116 262 0317

W: www.meditateinleicester.org

Secular Hall

75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester, LE1 1WB

T: 0759 897 1420

W: www.leicestersecularsociety.org.uk

E: contact@leicestersecularsociety.org.uk

The Baha'i Faith

T: 0116 241 5323

W: www.bahai.org

E: jmacdonald@talktalk.net

Leicester Council of Faiths

Leicester Council of Faiths was formed in 1986 to establish, maintain and promote Leicester's reputation as a place where people of different religions and beliefs co-exist peacefully. It promotes trust, understanding and co-operation among the city's faith communities, speaks up for their viewpoints on significant issues and provides reliable information.

10 Bishop Street Town Hall Square
Leicester, LE1 6AF

T: 0116 254 6868

W: www.leicestercounciloffaiths.org.uk

Guru Amar Das Gurdwara, Clarendon Park

Sikhism: an overview

Sikhism is a monotheistic religion founded in Punjab, India in the 15th century based on the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and his ten successive gurus. The eleventh and final guru is the Sikh Holy Scripture called the Guru Granth Sahib, a book that Sikhs consider a living Guru. Sikhs believe there is only one God, without form and gender, who exists everywhere around us. They believe that everyone is equal before God and no one is above others.

The Sikhs who have been baptised or initiated into the Sikh faith are called the Khalsa. Members of the Khalsa adopt five articles of faith, collectively referred to as the 'fives' they serve as their external identity and their commitment to their faith and community. These articles are: *Kesh* (uncut hair); *Kara* (a steel bracelet); *Kanga* (a wooden comb), *Kaccha* (cotton underwear); *Kirpan* (steel sword).

Guru Amar Das Gurdwara

Whilst this Gurdwara is not the oldest place of worship for Sikhs in Leicester, the building, which dominates the skyline in the Clarendon Park area of the city has a long history dating back to 1892, when it initially operated as a Baptist Church. In the early 1990s, the site was acquired by a group of Sikhs whereupon it was converted into a Gurdwara, accommodating the tradition of four entranceways, symbolising Peace, Livelihood, Learning and Grace. Many

Gurdwaras are linked to important events or people in Sikh history and, accordingly, the Guru Amar Das Gurdwara derives its name from Guru Amar Das (1479-1574) an influential figure in promoting the notion of equality for women in Sikh society.



Opening times and Contact Details

The Gurdwara is able to offer guided and self-guided tours to any party size. When in the prayer room, headscarves must be worn and shoes removed. Eating, smoking and mobile phones are prohibited throughout.

Prayer occurs daily between 7-8:30am and 6-7pm.

Guru Amar Das Gurdwara
219- 227 Clarendon Park Road,
Leicester, LE2 3AN

T: 0116 221 7276

Contact: Mrs Gill, chairperson

Shree Geeta Bhavan Temple & Hindu Community Centre, Clarendon Park

Hinduism: an overview:

Hinduism originated in India and is one of the oldest religions still practiced today. It has no single founder and is made up of diverse traditions.

It is not a religion of many gods, but rather a single cosmic energy and one god – Brahman, who is the only constant within the diversity of life, from where everything came and where everything will return. There are an infinite number of ways of expressing Brahman, some of which are interpreted as gods or goddesses.

The aim of the individual soul is to escape the cycle of life, death and rebirth, as dictated by the laws of karma, and gain reunion with Brahman.

There are an estimated 900 million Hindus worldwide.

Hinduism in Leicester:

Large numbers of Hindus came to Leicester from the 1950s onwards, from India, East Africa, Southern Africa and Fiji. The first Hindu temple in Leicester was in Cromford Street, Highfields, in 1969; there are now more than twenty. Shree Jalaram Prarthana Mandal in Narborough Road was the first purpose-built Hindu temple in Europe (in 1995). Leicester

has a world-wide reputation for hosting Hindu festivals, including the largest celebration of Diwali outside India.

The 2001 Census records 41,428 Hindus in Leicester.

The Site:

The site has been used as a temple and community centre since the 1980s, and in 2010, a £500,000 renovation extended the centre and added the beautiful and distinctive columned porch. The site is run by the Hindu Religious and Cultural Society of Leicester.

Contact details

70 Clarendon Park Road,
Leicester,
LE2 3AD

T: 0116 270 7756



Leicester Synagogue, Highfield Street

Judaism: an overview

Judaism, one of the oldest monotheistic religions, is the religion, philosophy, and way of life of the Jewish people. Originating in the Hebrew Bible (also known as the Tenakh or the Torah) and explored in later texts such as the Talmud, it is considered by Jews to be the expression of the covenantal relationship God developed with the Children of Israel. According to traditional Rabbinic Judaism, God revealed his laws and commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai in the form of both the Written and Oral Torah.

Judaism in Leicester

The Leicester Hebrew Congregation was founded in the 19th century, expanded as a result of the immigration of Eastern European Jews before the First World War, and grew considerably as the result of the Second World War.

There are traces of a Jewish community in Leicester during the middle ages but, in more modern times, it is not until 1849 that residents who can be identified as Jews are found. Many were shopkeepers, often associated with various clothing or tailoring manufacturing trades but they were also found in retailing, not least of all in the long-established Leicester market.

It was after the foundation of the partnership between Israel Hart of Canterbury and Joseph Levy of Leicester that the community began to take formal

shape. Israel Hart moved to Leicester and in 1874, the Leicester Hebrew Congregation began to be mentioned in the Jewish Chronicle.

Leicester Synagogue

At the end of the 19th century ten families were sent to Leicester at the invitation of 'a leading tailoring firm' (probably Hart and Levy), bringing the community to some sixty seat holders, and at the same time the rented buildings which had been used as a synagogue became both inadequate and dilapidated. Consequently, a new synagogue was built and formally opened in 1898. Built largely thanks to the generosity of Sir Israel Hart, this prestigious building represents a foundation stone for ongoing cultural and religious activity and has recently become a listed building.



Contact details

Rabbi Shmuli Pink

T: 0116 270 6622.

W: www.jewish-leicester.co.uk

Please book in advance.

The Leicester Central Mosque

Islam: an overview

Islam is the monotheistic religion articulated by the Qur'an, a text considered by its adherents to be the verbatim word of God (Allah), and by the teachings and normative example (called the Sunnah collected in the hadith) of Muhammad, the last Prophet of Islam. The word Islam means 'Submission (to God)', and an adherent of Islam is called a Muslim.

Religious practices include the Five Pillars of Islam, which are five obligatory acts of worship, and following Islamic law, which touches on virtually every aspect of life and society, encompassing everything from banking and welfare, to warfare and the environment.

Muslims belong to two denominations, with the majority practicing Sunni Islam. With approximately 1.57 billion Muslims, comprising about 23% of the world's population, Islam is the second-largest religion.

Islam in Leicester

The first Islamic Centre was established in 1968 by a group of Pakistani Sunni Muslims settled in Leicester. The Centre is still based at 2A Sutherland Street and is one of the oldest Mosques in Leicester. During the 1970s the facilities at this building became limited and the growing population of Muslims required facilities for Islamic activities on a large scale, the

Trustees and Management Council of the Centre embarked upon a historical project of building a purpose-built Mosque in the heart of the city of Leicester.

The Leicester Central Mosque

Located on Conduit Street, near the train station and the city's cultural quarter the foundation of this historical complex was laid in a ceremony attended by eminent Muslim scholars from all over Britain and overseas on Saturday 27th August 1988.

The Mosque provides a main prayer hall providing prayer facilities for 1500 people and a first floor gallery for 300 women; both have associated ablution facilities. There is a reception, offices a school, a community hall, Imams' residence, a mortuary and a guest house. Alhamdulillah, by the grace of Allah.



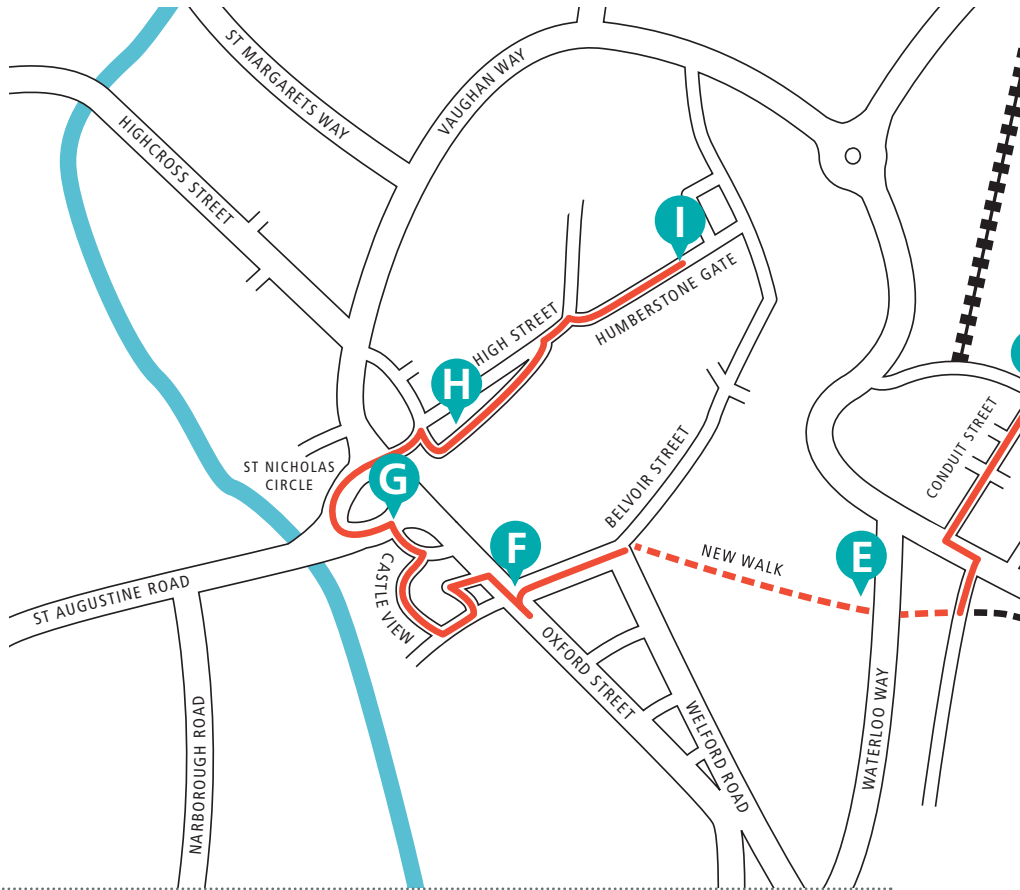
Contact details

Imam's Residence

T: 0116 254 7124

A: 50 St. Peters Road, Leicester

W: www.islamiccentre.org



A	0.3 mi about 7 mins	B	1 mi about 19 mins	C	0.3 mi about 6 mins	D	
D	0.4 mi about 9 mins	E	0.5 mi about 10 mins	F	0.2 mi about 5 mins	G	
G	0.3 mi about 6 mins	H	0.4 mi about 7 mins	I	Walking trail approximately 3 miles		



- A** – Guru Amar Das Gurdwara:
219-227 Clarendon Park Road,
Leicester, LE2 3AN
- B** – Shree Geeta Bhavan Temple & Hindu
Community Centre: 70 Clarendon
Park Road
- C** – Leicester Hebrew Faith Synagogue:
Highfield Street, Leicester, LE2 1AD
- D** – Leicester Central Mosque: 4 Conduit
Street, Leicester, LE2 0JN
- E** – New Walk Museum: 53 New Walk,
Leicester, LE1 7EA
- F** – Jain Centre: 32 Oxford Street,
Leicester, LE1 5XU
- G** – St Mary de Castro: 15 Castle Street,
Leicester, LE1 5WN
- H** – Nagarjuna Kadampa Buddhist Centre:
17 Guildhall Lane, Leicester, LE1 5FQ
- I** – Secular Hall: 75 Humberstone Gate,
Leicester, LE1 1WB

World Arts Gallery at New Walk Museum

The World Arts gallery is a permanent exhibition of objects from all over the world, celebrating creativity and diversity, and covering hundreds of year. The displays are arranged thematically, exploring production methods and materials, meanings and memories. Objects from different times and cultures are placed side by side so comparisons can easily be made. While religion itself is not a separate theme, many objects with religious aspects can be found throughout the gallery, such as Hindu deities and hand-written quotes from the Qur'an whilst the large embroidery called 'Pollution of the Ganges' was made in India by Muslim and Hindu women combining a contemporary theme with techniques handed down over the generations.

The museum is free to enter. It includes art and natural history displays, temporary exhibitions, and an Ancient Egyptian gallery focusing on religion and the Afterlife.



Jain Centre, Oxford Street

Jainism: an overview

Originating in India, Jainism is one of the oldest religions, although its exact origins are unknown. 'Jina' means victory over the self. A *Tirthankara* is one whose soul is freed from karmic bonds, having achieved infinite faith, knowledge, bliss and perfect conduct. There are 14 stages of spiritual development. Jains believe in equality of all living things and so practice pacifism and vegetarianism, care for the environment and are tolerant of other faiths.

Lord Mahavira (early 6th Century BC) was the 24th *Tirthankara*, who revived and expounded the teachings. He divided society into male and female ascetics to follow teachings rigorously and male and female lay people to follow the teachings to the best of their abilities in their lives. Ascetics swear a vow of total non-violence and must walk barefoot, not use vehicles and may not own money.

There are an estimated 12 million followers of Jainism worldwide.

Jainism in Leicester:

The first followers of Jainism in Leicester arrived from India and Kenya, then in greater numbers from Uganda.

The Jain Samaj Europe was established in Leicester in 1973 and there are now an estimated 1,000 followers of Jainism in the city.

The Site:

The Jain Centre in Leicester is the first consecrated Jain Temple in the western world with temples housing the consecrated images; the main image is that of Bhagwan Shantinath, the 16th tirthankara. The Jain Centre includes the Swetambar temple, Digambar temple, Sthanakwasi Upashraya, Guru mandeer, Shrimad Rajchandra jnan mandeer, a museum, library, auditorium, dining hall and other facilities.

NB: Please do not touch any marble or statues or take any photographs. Women who are menstruating are not allowed within the temple. Remove your shoes upon entering.



Contact details

T: 0116 254 1150

E: help@jaincentre.com

W: www.jaincentre.com

St. Mary De Castro Church, Castle View

Christianity: an overview

Christianity has developed over the last 2,000 years from the personal example and divine teachings of Jesus, who spread the word of God. Central to Christian belief is the concept of the Holy Trinity (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) which represents a single God; Christians believe in only one God. Jesus, therefore, is typically worshiped as God incarnate as the Son.

There are many different groups of Christians throughout the world. Typically, Christians believe in life after death, with the notions of Heaven and Hell awaiting those who have lived good or bad lives. One of the most important beliefs in Christianity is Jesus sacrificing his life on the Cross (Crucifixion) and rising from the dead (the Resurrection) in order to save humanity from its sins.

The Bible is Christianity's Holy Book consisting of the Old and New Testaments.

Christianity in Leicester

While Christians may have been present in Leicester in the Roman period, evidence for this is lost, therefore the oldest surviving church is St. Nicholas', dating from before the Norman Conquest. St Martin's Church was hallowed as a Cathedral in 1927. The 2001 census recorded 125,187 Christians in Leicester.

St. Mary de Castro church

The Anglican church of St. Mary De Castro can trace its founding back to the twelfth century when it was built by Robert de Beaumont.

Translated to "St. Mary's by the Castle", the church has undergone significant architectural alterations since its founding, most notably in respect of the appearance of its needle spire, in 1400. The chancel, whilst several hundred years old, was, nevertheless, added later, as was the tower, which was constructed inside the church.

Inside the Church are many interesting features, including two sets of sedilia (seats for clergy) and piscina (basin for washing communion vessels) and a 13th century font. Outside grotesque heads envelope the exterior of the church, whilst the large churchyard is the oldest continuously used open space in the city centre.

Opening times and contact details

Monday – Friday:
12pm to 2pm
Saturday:
2pm to 4pm

T: 07769 976 151 to
arrange special visits
at other times

E: enquiries@
stmarydecastro.org.uk



Nagarjuna Kadampa Buddhist Centre, Guildhall Lane

Buddhism: an overview

Buddhism is a tradition focusing on personal spiritual development, where followers strive for a deep insight into the true nature of life through seeking *dharmā* (insight), *nirvana* (relief from the pain and anxiety of the world) and freedom from *karma* (the cycle of death and rebirth). Buddhists live moderately and follow five precepts of ethical conduct – taking no life, generosity/not stealing, abstention from sexual misconduct, desisting from telling lies and abstention from intoxicants.

Buddhism originated around the 6th century BC in north-eastern Indian with the life and teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, more commonly known as the Buddha, as he strove to free himself from the cycle of suffering and rebirth intrinsic to human life. He achieved nirvana through dedicated meditation and spent the rest of his life teaching others the path of awakening he had discovered.

Buddhism in Leicester

Worldwide, there are around 350 million Buddhists, with about 150,000 followers in Britain. Buddhism came to Britain at some point during the 19th century; the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland was formed in 1907. The Leicester Buddhist Society was established in 1978 and the Buddhist vihara and temple was set up in 1990 housing two monks who care for the spiritual needs of the local community. In

the 2001 census, 638 people in Leicester identified themselves as Buddhist forming a variety of different communities.

Nagarjuna Kadampa Buddhist Centre

The Nagarjuna Kadampa Buddhist Centre, established in 2009, in Guildhall Lane is directly opposite Leicester Cathedral. The centre is constantly being developed, currently housing a meditation room accommodating up to 100 people, ten en-suite bedrooms, the 'World Peace Cafe' and 'Meditation Shop'. Drop-in meditation classes are held daily whilst various courses and events are also available. There are three study programmes offered for those wishing to develop a deeper insight in the Buddha's teachings.

Opening times and contact details:

The Centre is open 11am to 5pm Monday to Saturday and is welcoming to all Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike

T: 0116 262 0317

W: www.meditateinleicester.org



Leicester Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate

Secularism: an overview

Secularism is the belief that religion and religious views should exist separately from political and civil government. The belief allows individuals to be unconnected rather than grouped according to their religious views. Secularists oppose the building of faith schools.

The term Secularism was coined by British writer George Holyoak in 1851, the same year that the Leicester Secular Society was founded.

Secularism in Leicester

Leicester Secular Society advocates and campaigns for an inclusive and plural society free from religious privilege, prejudice and discrimination.

The Society is committed to:

- creating a civil society that is for everyone equally, that promotes respect for individual human rights and encourages trust and co-operation between those sharing these values;
- opposing policies that emphasise religious identity and allow religious discrimination or indoctrination in education and social services;
- opposing religious privilege and the promotion of any religion by the state.

The Secular Hall

The Secular Hall, which opened in 1881 was built for the Leicester Secular Society. Designed by a young innovative architect, W Larnar Sugden, it opened 30 years after the foundation of the Society and is one of the most significant Victorian buildings within the city.

The Secular Hall holds various seminars and talks and is available for hire. More information is available on their website www.leicestersecularsociety.org.uk



Contact details

T: 0759 897 1420

E: contact@leicestersecularsociety.org.uk

The Bahá'í Faith

The Bahá'í Faith: an overview

The Bahá'í Faith is a monotheistic religion (oneness of God, oneness of Religion, oneness of humanity) founded by Bahá'u'lláh in the 19th century in Persia. It emphasises the spiritual unity of all humankind. The faith has unfolded through a series of divine messengers, each of whom established a religion that was suited to the needs of the time and the capacity of the people. These messengers have included sacred figures as Abraham, Krishna, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and most recently the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh.

Bahá'ís believe that humanity is in a process of collective evolution, and the need of the present time is for the gradual establishment of peace, justice and unity on a global scale. The Bahá'í Faith has no clergy or individuals in positions of personal leadership, and is administered by elected bodies at local, national and international levels. It is estimated that there are between five and six million Bahá'ís worldwide.

History of the local religious community

The Bahá'í Faith in the United Kingdom started in 1898 when Mrs. Mary Thornburgh-Cropper (d. 1938), an American by birth, became the first Bahá'í in England, and this year is

therefore regarded as the founding year of the British Bahá'í community. In 2004 Bahá'ís estimated there were about 5000 members in the UK.

A Bahá'í House of Worship, sometimes referred to by its Arabic name of Mashriqu'l-Adhkár ("Dawning-place of the remembrances of God"), is the designation of a place of worship, or temple, of the Bahá'í Faith. The Houses of Worship are open to the public, and are exclusively reserved for worship, where sermons are prohibited and only scriptural texts may be read.

The Bahá'í Faith in Leicester

There has been a Bahá'í presence in Leicester for more than 50 years. The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Leicester was established in 1957 and incorporated in 1963. Nowadays, Leicester's Bahá'ís hold meetings in each others' homes. They strive locally to put into action their belief that they should "Consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship."

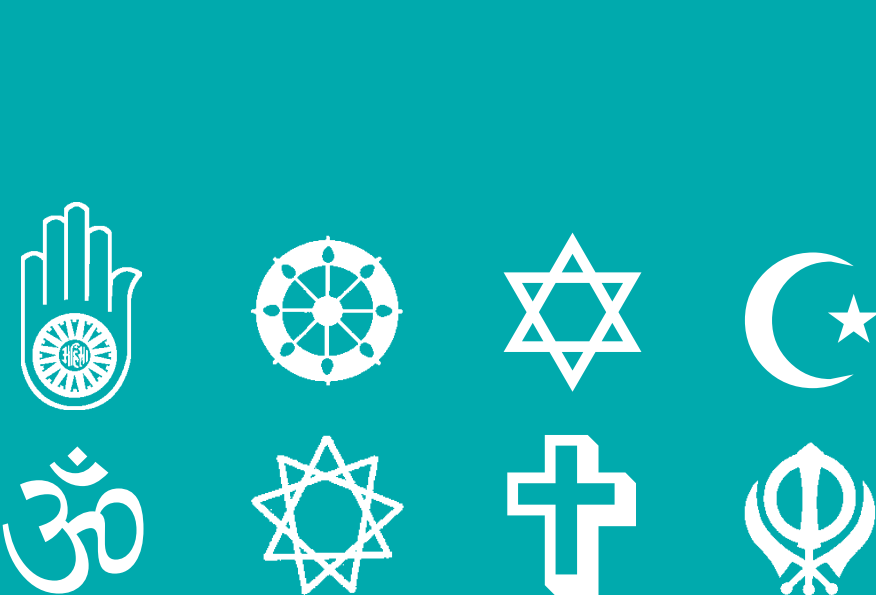
Contact details

Secretary of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Bahá'ís

T: 0116 241 5323

E: jmacdonald@talktalk.net

W: www.bahai.org



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UK

www.le.ac.uk

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