

גדולה תורה שהיא נותנת חיים πασα γγαφη θεοπνευματος تبارك الذي نزل الفرقان



Scriptural Reasoning

Meeting of the Board of Trustees, 18 July 2009

Statement Concerning the Scriptural Reasoning Society and the Interfaith Alliance UK

The Board of Trustees of Scriptural Reasoning (Charity Registration Number: 1130605) ratifies the attached statement below previously issued on 18 February 2009 by the Trustees of the Interfaith Alliance UK.

For and on behalf of the Board of Trustees of Scriptural Reasoning

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INTERFAITH ALLIANCE UK
The Eternal One is our God, the Eternal God is One

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Meeting of the Board of Trustees, 18 February 2009

Statement Concerning the Scriptural Reasoning Society and the Interfaith Alliance UK

In the context of recent disagreements relating to pages on an online encyclopaedic website concerning the *Interfaith Alliance* and *Scriptural Reasoning*, the Board of Trustees of the *Interfaith Alliance UK* and Trustees responsible for oversight of the *Scriptural Reasoning Society* state:

- The *Interfaith Alliance UK* and the *Scriptural Reasoning Society* which it sponsors are reputable organisations and registered as a charity by the Charity Commission of England and Wales. All publications and resources of the registered charity are reliable and respected sources for the information which they contain, and have received acclaim nationally and internationally.
- The *Interfaith Alliance UK* is independent of *The Interfaith Alliance* in the United States, but is founded on similar liberal and progressive principles. An informal and harmonious link exists between each body.
- The *Scriptural Reasoning Society* is by a significant margin the largest Scriptural Reasoning organisation in the United Kingdom, comprising a network of collaborating academic institutions and places of worship which span the country.
- The practice of *Scriptural Reasoning*, namely interdisciplinary-interfaith reading of sacred texts in collegial disagreement by small groups of people both from different scholarly and lay backgrounds, and from different faiths, is clearly not a new practice. Rather it is an activity which pre-dates the label “Scriptural Reasoning” by many centuries. Many groups have in the past, and continue in the present to undertake similar or virtually identical activities of interdisciplinary-interfaith scripture reading to promote understanding of cherished differences of belief, and they have called what they do by other names.
- Therefore, other than the name “Scriptural Reasoning”, the actual practice of SR has not been “invented” by any single person nor any group such as the *Society for Scriptural Reasoning*, and no individual nor group should claim or imply exclusive or primary ownership of this continuously evolving practice, which the *Scriptural*

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Reasoning Society has for its part, developed in its own unique, distinctive and varied ways. Hence, there should be no claim made by anyone on any public forum, publication or online resource, asserting or implying proprietorship of the practice of Scriptural Reasoning, nor any claim made that the *Scriptural Reasoning Society* is any less entitled to use the term “Scriptural Reasoning” than any other group.

- The Trustees have been advised that recent edits on an online encyclopaedic resource have been actioned by individuals who are employed as Consultants by the *Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme* or members of the *Society for Scriptural Reasoning*, these edits downgrading or eliminating entirely the contribution of the *Scriptural Reasoning Society* to the history of Scriptural Reasoning, the Society’s distinctive approaches to SR, critique in academic debates around Scriptural Reasoning practice, and the fine scholarly resources which it has generated.
- The Trustees have also been advised that individuals employed as Consultants by the *Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme* and members of the *Society for Scriptural Reasoning* have made hostile edits deleting material on an online encyclopaedic resource relating to the *Interfaith Alliance*.
- In the light of past conflicts and painful events in Scriptural Reasoning, the Trustees express their commitment to good relations with the *Society for Scriptural Reasoning*, and so consider this recent editing activity damaging to what ought to be collegial respect for differences of approach between different SR groups, of which the *Scriptural Reasoning Society* is one of the largest. The practice of Scriptural Reasoning is a minority activity of only some hundreds of people at most, and so in any online encyclopedia or other resource, fair and equal representation should be given to the *Scriptural Reasoning Society’s* role and contribution within that SR history.
- The Trustees express the further strong request to those persons employed by the *Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme* or members of the *Society for Scriptural Reasoning* responsible for recent edits, that they do not in their comments press upon and provoke the resurfacing of past conflicts, for which regrettable deterioration in relationships only they and their organisations would be responsible.
- The Trustees note for the record that this matter of editorial disagreement elsewhere, was raised with Trustees by external telephone contact from an external organisation of which the *Cambridge Inter Faith Programme* and *St Ethelburga’s Centre* are affiliated members.

We are committed to peace and continued collegiality between different groups in Scriptural Reasoning, and look forward to continued good relations with the *Society for Scriptural Reasoning*, on the basis of proper respect for our differences of academic opinion – particularly given the claim that SR is about “not consensus but friendship”.

For an on behalf of the Trustees of the Interfaith Alliance UK and the Scriptural Reasoning Society