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Dear friend,

I am writing to invite you to be our honoured guest at a special event to accompany the launch of "My Silk Road", the autobiography of Ram Gidoomal CBE. The event will take place from 5pm on Friday 25th November, in the Oasis Centre, 1A Kennington Rd, London SE1 7QP. It will take the form of a discussion between Mr Gidoomal and Dr Yvonne Thompson CBE DL, exploring their shared challenges and experiences as individuals from Commonwealth countries who came to Britain with very little, achieved prosperity and public recognition, and have since dedicated their lives to public service. The discussion will be moderated by Lord Lee of Trafford, the Liberal Democrat politician. The evening will include refreshments and should provide an excellent networking opportunity. It should conclude by 6.30pm.

As you perhaps know, Mr Gidoomal is a successful businessman, dedicated philanthropist, and Freeman of the City of London. He is Chairman of South Asian Development Partnership and of CottonConnect Ltd, an Honorary Vice President and Trustee of the Leprosy Mission for England and Wales, a Vice President of the Institute of Business Ethics, and a Non-Executive Member of the Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman Board. He served as Chairman of Allia Ltd for 20 years, during which time over one billion pounds of social impact bonds were issued - some of which are quoted on the London Stock Exchange.

Other past roles have included serving as Chairman of Traidcraft plc, the Lausanne Movement International Board, and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education for England and Wales. He was also a Board Member of the Washington-based International Justice Mission, Visiting Professor of Entrepreneurship at Middlesex University, a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists, and Companion of the Chartered Management Institute.

“My Silk Road” tells the inspirational story of his journey from a family background of wealth and privilege in India, to finding refuge in Kenya from the social and political turmoil of Partition, to rebuilding wealth in Kenya but then facing a second loss of everything, to a second new start in the United Kingdom at the age of 17, to eventual business success, and finally, from the age of 37, to a life dedicated to the service of the poor, oppressed and marginalised. “My Silk Road” is his seventh book.

Dr Yvonne Thompson CBE is a British business leader, originally from Guyana, who was a founding member of radio station Choice FM, Music Editor of Root magazine, and Managing Director of PR company ASAP Communications. She was Founder and first President of the European Federation of Black Women Business Owners, and is Chair of the Radio Academy. She is believed to be Britain's first black female self-made millionaire, and is a Deputy Lord-Lieutenant for Greater London. .

At a time when migration to the UK is often portrayed as a problem rather a benefit, the discussion will provide a necessary corrective. It will demonstrate that far from being a drain on public resources, migrants can add immeasurably to the economic, social and philanthropic life of the country. We expect a significant media presence.

It would be helpful if you could confirm your attendance by emailing Warwick Hawkins at warwick@faithinsociety.org.uk .

With best wishes,

Prabhu Gupta

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