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First of its kind project by Mountain Jews' Association

Opening of center in Sokolniki district (Moscow) was important event for spiritual life of Mountain Jews' community.

Contact Editor Arutz Sheva Staff, 05/01/20 14:27



Mountain Jews light Hanukkah menorah in new community center Mountain Jews' Community

A community center has been opened in Sokolniki district (Moscow), marking an important event for the spiritual life of the Mountain Jews' community.

The center, which should attract youth and become a repository of the rich culture of the community, was opened during a ceremony during which, in the presence of the Chief Rabbi of Russia Berl Lazar, representatives of the Kremlin, the Ministry of Education, the City Hall





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and the Israeli Embassy, the Chairman of the Council of the European Rabbis and the Chief Rabbi of Moscow Pinchas Goldschmidt lit the Hanukkah candles. Along with a synagogue and mikvahs, there are classrooms in the center where Torah classes, children activity and studying Juhuri language are held, as well as a banquet hall.

During the ceremony of lighting Hanukkah candles, Mountain Jews opened their community center in the Sokolniki district, which has no analogues in the world. The center was established by the "Mountain Jews" Association", whose patrons are Mr God Nisanov, Mr Zarakh Iliyev and Mr German Zakharyayev, the president of the STMEGI Foundation, who initiated the Day of Rescue and Liberation. At their request the authorities of Moscow allocated the building for a national and cultural center of Mountain Jews.

Chief Rabbi of Russia Berl Lazar, President of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia Alexander Boroda, Chief Rabbi of Moscow and Chairman of the Council of European Rabbis Pinchas Goldschmidt, Director of the Department of Management of the Ministry of Education of Russia Veronika Kravchuk, Chargé d'Affaires of Israel Yakov Livne, Head of the Department for Interaction with religious organizations of the Domestic Politics Office of the President of the Russian Federation Yevgeny Yerehin were guests of honor.

The honor to open the ceremony and to cut the red ribbon was granted to the trustees of the community: God Nisanov, Zarakh Iliyev and German Zakharyayev. The honor to affix mezuzah was granted to God Nisanov. Then Chief Rabbi of Moscow and Chairman of the Council of European Rabbis Pinchas Goldschmidt lit the Hanukkah candles. He addressed the audience and mentioned that Mountain Jews managed to maintain the Jewish traditions even under the Communist rule: "Even under the boot that oppressed everything Jewish, Mountain Jews continued in Torah and Mitzvah life without assimilation, proudly and fiercely, with deep empowerment and deep faith, dedication and perseverance".

"We are witnessing a great effort that is made by the members of the Caucasian community, by investing the soul and the resources needed to establish a Torah and prayer, holiness and purity that every detail transmits beauty and glory, prestige and glamor, is fitting as a home for G-d and the home of the Mountain Jewish community. Its pillars are silver, its pads are gold and all these are based on love. Love for the Blessed, love for the Torah, love for prayer, love for the community that approaches Jewish traditions".

Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt said: "Lighting the Chanukah candles is the most appropriate opening for the world center of Mountain Jews, hence the message to all diaspora. We, on our part, will help train rabbinic leadership for young people of the community".

The honored guests noted how much effort was put into creating not just a community center,





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but a new format - a multifunctional center, which has no analogues in Russia.

The evening ended with a vivid performance of famous Mountain Jewish performers.

The magnificent center that opens in the 'Jewish' neighborhood of 'Sokolniki' in central Moscow is located near the Sokolniki metro station and it is a huge advantage for Moscow residents who want to come to the community center. This center is one of the projects implemented by the Mountain Jews' Association in all the world, including the Museum of Mountain Jews' history and heritage, which is to be opened soon in Krasnaya Sloboda, Quba, Azerbaijan.

The new center includes a magnificent synagogue and classrooms where the Torah, Halacha and traditions lessons for men and women are taking place, classes for women and educational activities for children. One of the unique learning projects will be the learning of the Juhuri language, apart from learning the language, there will be systematic and important work in preserving and developing the ancient and unique Jewish language. The new community center has a wonderful hall for family events: wedding, bar mitzvah and community events. Mr. German Zakharyayev noted that the center is open to all Jews in Moscow, every Jew may take part in praying and festivals no matter his origin. The center started to work a few months ago and will be completed with the help of God with the establishment of the mikvahs next year.

The director of the Community Center says, "We regret that with moving to major cities the Caucasian community loses contact with their roots. So they find it difficult, without a supportive community, to establish a Jewish home and to educate children in the spirit of tradition. In such a situation, intentional and focused actions are needed to connect and unite the Jews around the community. As the world experience shows: such "focal points" often become large and modern community centers that are key points for a community's life.

This wonderful project required organizational and economic efforts. And here is the place to praise the Association's patrons who have spared no effort to establish this spiritual lighthouse that has become a welcome stone for the Caucasus-born young people and a tremendous storage of the glorious heritage of the community".

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