



THE PR OFFICE ^[PRO]

Conference of European Rabbis

Coverage update

5th June 2020





Publication: The Jewish Weekly (online)

Date: 27.05.2020

1/2



Conference of European Rabbis hosts Torah webinar with globally renowned spiritual leaders



The Conference of European Rabbis held a shiurim webinar series via Zoom for over 250 Rabbis from across the globe ahead of Shavuot tomorrow evening.





Publication: The Jewish Weekly (online)

Date: 27.05.2020

2/2



The 90-minute programme was divided into five separate shiurim sessions during which world and community leaders discussed the spiritual significance of this week's festival, marking the reception of Torah when the Israelites had experienced Revelation.

Sessions were moderated by an impressive variety of high-prolife religious leaders, including **Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt**, President of the Conference of European Rabbis, **Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef**, the Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Israel, **Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**, former Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, **Rabbi Osher Weiss**, the current Rosh Kollel of Machon Minchas Osher L'Torah V'Horaah and **Rabbi David Yosef**, Chief Rabbi of the Har Nof neighborhood in Jerusalem, Head of the Yechaveh Da'at Kollel and a member of the Moetzet Chachmei HaTorah of the Shas party in Israel.

Commenting on the day's event, **CER President Chief Rabbi Goldschmidt** said: "Once again, the power of technology has allowed us to reach people across the world and share words of inspiration before the festival of Shavout. We are reaching a time in the pandemic where webinars and online meetings are no longer innovative; the novelty has worn off. The Rabbis of Europe still need to connect to their congregants and to live inspired themselves. We hope that today's programme has provided that spark that they can carry into the festival and pass on to their congregants."

The Conference of European Rabbis recently held its Spring Standing Committee meeting via Zoom where the organisation discussed the practical issues that many Jewish communities across Europe are facing amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and how they can continue to engage new congregants who have participated for the first time during the lockdown.

<https://thejewishweekly.com/11509-2/>



Publication: The Jerusalem Post (online)
Date: 31.05.2020
1/4

THE JERUSALEM POST

Striving for unity among the Jewish people is a practical undertaking

“Pursuing peace” means practically doing something about it. We pursue peace by reaching out to each other.

By WARREN GOLDSTEIN MAY 31, 2020 03:25



Israeli communities make signs with slogans of unity amid coronavirus lockdown
(photo credit: OHR TORAH STONE)





Publication: The Jerusalem Post (online)
Date: 31.05.2020
2/4

THE JERUSALEM POST

Last week I received a call from Russian Chief Rabbi Berel Lazar suggesting that we issue a joint letter from chief rabbis around the world calling for Jewish unity. I was really drawn to this idea and thought it a timely one given the connection with the festival of Shavuot.

Shavuot, of course, celebrates the Divine revelation at Mount Sinai. "Like one person with one heart" is how our sages describe the sublime moment of Jewish unity as the Jewish people stood at the foot of the mountain ready to receive the Torah. We see that unity was a key element to Shavuot and the giving of the Torah. The question is, why?

The Maharal of Prague, the great 16th century [Torah](#) sage, has an explanation. He cites the famous statement from the Zohar: "The people of Israel, the Torah and God are one."

The deep connection between these three entities has profound implications. The Maharal explains that if the Jewish people are fragmented, this results in the Torah itself being fragmented. If we are divided, it compromises the integrity of the Torah itself. In other words, unity is a prerequisite for receiving the Torah. The Jewish people had to be united so that the Torah could come into the world whole.

That unity is only achieved if we make space for each other. This means transcending our ego, rising above ourselves, and developing the capacity to show understanding, forgiveness and compassion to those around us. This





Publication: The Jerusalem Post (online)
Date: 31.05.2020
3/4

THE JERUSALEM POST

self-transcendence imbues us with holiness and greatness; it makes us Godly and brings us together and unified as one, as a united people ready to receive the Divine gift of the Torah.

These are very lofty ideas. Crucially, though, Jewish unity isn't an abstract idea. It needs to be put into action. As Pirkei Avot teaches: "Be like the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace."

Rabbeinu Yona explains that "loving peace" means subscribing to the concept of [peace](#), aspiring to it as an ideal. "Pursuing peace," on the other hand, means practically doing something about it.

We pursue peace - we actively create the conditions for Jewish unity - by reaching out to each other, dealing sensitively and kindly with one another, building bridges, healing rifts, and settling our differences through concerted action.

This idea that unity is a verb rather than a noun - that it's something we do rather than simply pay lip service to - is the basis of our call to action. In our joint letter as chief rabbis around the world, we are encouraging Jews everywhere to take practical steps to pursue peace and create unity.

Our letter states: "If you are in a situation of conflict or tension or resentment or anger with another, use these days to reach out to that person and peacefully resolve the matter. If you know of people in similar strife, encourage them to do the same."





Publication: The Jerusalem Post (online)
Date: 31.05.2020
4/4

THE JERUSALEM POST

By doing so, we can enter Shavuot and receive the Torah once more "as one people with one heart."

In the merit of our peace-making efforts, may God bless all of us, and the entire world, with health and healing.

The signatories to the letter are: Chief Rabbi of Israel David Lau, Chief Rabbi of Israel Yitzhak Yosef, Chief Rabbi of France Haïm Korsia, Chief Rabbi of Russia Berel Lazar, Chief Rabbi of South Africa Dr. Warren Goldstein, Chief Rabbi of Moscow and President of the Conference of European Rabbis Pinchas Goldschmidt, and Chief Rabbi of Argentina Gabriel Davidovich.

The write is the Chief Rabbi of South Africa.

<https://www.jpost.com/opinion/striving-for-unity-among-the-jewish-people-is-a-practical-undertaking-629786>





Publication: Hamodia
Date: 04.06.2020

World's Chief Rabbis Issue Joint Call for *Achdus* before Shavuos

Seven Chief Rabbis from around the world issued a unique call to *kehillos* across the globe last week, to set aside their differences and unite in honour of Shavuos, and in recognition of the common challenges that have beset communities in the wake of COVID-19.

A letter signed by the Rabbanim encourages people to take "very practical steps" towards healing existing rifts and divisions with others.

"If you are in a situation of conflict, tension, resentment or anger with another," the letter says, "reach out to [that person] to peacefully resolve the matter. If you know of anyone in similar strife – encourage [him or her] to do the same."

Russian Chief Rabbi Berel Lazar explained that the initiative was inspired by the ideal of *k'ish echad b'lev echad*, exemplified by *Klal Yisrael at Mattan Torah*.

"Leading up to Shavuos," he said, "we are calling on Jews everywhere to do everything possible to return to this state of complete unity."

"The COVID-19 crisis has many dimensions – medical and financial, but also social and spiritual," said South African Chief Rabbi Dr. Warren Goldstein. "These are challenges we're all facing, no matter who we are or where we come from, and we saw it as a crucial time for Jews around the world to set aside our differences and overcome conflicts, both communal and personal."

Rabbi Goldstein emphasised that Jewish unity isn't an abstract idea – that it requires concerted action.

"The idea here is that unity is not a noun – it is a verb; it's not something we simply talk about – it's some-



Year 4 talmidim of Yesoiday Hatorah Manchester made a siyum on Mishnayos Sukkah, having continued their learning throughout the lockdown via conference call.

thing we do. If we are to settle our differences and create true harmony with our fellow, we need to love peace – and practically pursue it."

Rabbi Goldstein believed the time is ripe for these peace-making efforts.

"In our respective positions as chief rabbis across the world, we humbly call on Jews everywhere to seize this

unique moment in history to strengthen Jewish unity and togetherness in every way possible."

"In the merit of our joining together," said Rabbi Lazar in conclusion, "may we bring down Heavenly Blessing to each one of us, and to the entire world, for health and healing, and for the ultimate blessing of all – the final redemption of all humankind."

The signatories to the letter are: Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi David Lau Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Yitzchak Yosef Chief Rabbi of France, Rabbi Haim Korsia Chief Rabbi of Russia, Rabbi Berel Lazar Chief Rabbi of Moscow and President of the Conference of European Rabbis, Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt Chief Rabbi of Argentina, Rabbi Gabriel Davidovitch Chief Rabbi of South Africa, Rabbi Dr. Warren Goldstein

