



Publication: Arutz Sheva (online)
Date: 08.06.2020
1/3



Torah class in the United Arab Emirates

Jewish communities of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, hold largest-ever Torah conference in Arab world.

Contact Editor Yoni Kempinski , 08/06/20 12:06



Zoom class

Conference of European Rabbis President





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2/3



The Jewish community of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), founded 20 years ago and operating in a clandestine fashion, participated in a special online Torah program ahead of this past Shabbat (Sabbath).

Approximately 100 members of the Jewish community in Dubai and Abu Dhabi watched Zoom classes given by Conference of European Rabbis President Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, UAE Chief Rabbi Yehuda Sarna, and joined a prayer session led by cantor Yosef Hais.

In recent years, the Conference of European Rabbis has worked with the Jewish community in the UAE. Members of the UAE's Jewish community usually meet in the synagogue, especially on Shabbat and holidays. As a result of the coronavirus outbreak, Rabbi Goldschmidt decided to hold an online Torah session in order to help maintain the connection with the community.

"The People of Israel have a special organizational structure, based on the directions of the Torah," Rabbi Goldschmidt said. "We see the beginning of the structure when the nation is divided into tribes, and in our forefather Jacob's blessing we see the purpose of each and every tribe, the jobs and tasks each tribe has, and how together it forms the nation of Israel."

"From the beginning of the Book of Numbers, we find the number of people in each tribe, and [details] of the camps and the flags until the end of the Torah section of Nasso (the second in Numbers - ed.), where it details in a very unique way the order in which the leaders of the tribes bring sacrifices in their names and in the names of their tribes, from the best and most choice [animals], in order to honor the dedication of the altar. The Torah details each and every tribe, even though to our physical eyes each tribe's leader gives the same exact thing. Meaning, even though we are one nation, each tribe has its own unique importance.





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3/3



"Since the outbreak of this horrible plague, we are all in our homes in isolation, without the ability to join prayers and communities together. We must remember that Divine Providence is trying to teach us about the importance of each and every one of us, when we gather to build the Tabernacle of G-d and do His will. I want to wish each and every one of you that we merit to unite together, while ensuring the importance of each person and the mutual respect which which builds the nation, ends plagues for generations, and will bring the complete redemption."

Participating in the program were Ross Kriel, the president of the Jewish Community of the Emirates; David Harris, Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee (AJC); and public figures who often visit the countries during their business trips from the US and Europe. Gadi Gronich, staff leader for the Conference of European Rabbis, who made the online program a reality, said that as far as he knows, the pre-Shabbat program was the largest ever held by a Jewish community in an Arab country.

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