



OUR PRESIDENT

PINCHAS GOLDSCHMIDT

Pinchas Goldschmidt (born 21 July 1963) has been the Chief Rabbi of Moscow, Russia since 1993 serving at the Moscow Choral Synagogue. He also founded and heads the Moscow Rabbinical Court of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) since 1989, and since 2011 serves as President of the Conference of European Rabbis (CER) which unites over seven hundred communal rabbis from Dublin to Khabarovsk.

BIOGRAPHY

Goldschmidt, was born in Zurich, Switzerland, to a Jewish Orthodox family of business people and left to Israel alone at an early age to pursue rabbinic studies at the Ponevezh Yeshiva, (1979–1981) He pursued afterwards his studies at the Telshe Yeshiva, Chicago, IL (1981–1982), and continued at the Ner Israel Rabbinical College in Baltimore USA, where he received his MA in Talmudical Jurisprudence. In parallel, he pursued his secular studies at Johns Hopkins University, where he received his Masters in Science in 1985. After a short courtship he married Dara Lynn Brodie from Monsey, NY, a student at Yeshiva University. They married in NY in 1985, and moved to Jerusalem, where Goldschmidt continued his rabbinical studies in the Shevet Umechokek Institute for Rabbinical Judges. In 1987 he was ordained by the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem Rabbi Yitzchak Kolitz, Rabbi Yisrael Grossman and Rabbi Zalman Nechemia Goldberg.

After ordination, the Goldschmidt family left Jerusalem to jump starts an outreach center in the North of Israel, in Upper Nazareth, with a fellow group of rabbinical students. In 1988, Goldschmidt was approached by a coalition of Jewish organization dealing with Soviet Jewry to go and serve as an adviser on Jewish law for the Chief Rabbinate of the Soviet Union.

The young Goldschmidt family moved to Soviet Russia in 1989 with the blessing of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, the World Jewish Congress and an assembly of Jewish organizations and activists, who supported the Jewish underground in the Soviet Union. Goldschmidt set up the first Rabbinical Court in the Soviet Union since the Stalin period and dealt with all acute issues of personal status of Soviet Jews pertaining to Jewish law.

He authored articles on issues of Jewish law regarding post-Soviet Jewry and has published a collection of responses with a compilation of Russian Jewish names “Zikaron Basefer”, (Moscow 1996). In 1990 he created the guidelines in conjunction with the Israeli Ministry of Interior to reconfirm Jews who have hidden their Jewish identity during Soviet times.



In 1991 After the failed putsch and the founding of the new Russian State, Goldschmidt was instrumental in founding and developing communal structures of the newly freed Jewish community, starting with colleges, day schools and kindergartens, soup kitchens and rabbinical schools, and ending with political umbrella structures, such as the Russian Jewish Congress and the Congress of the Jewish Religious Organizations and Associations in Russia (KEROOR).

Goldschmidt represents also the Russian Jewish community politically. He published op-eds in the international press pertaining to the issues of the day. He has also addressed the US Senate, the EU Parliament, The Council of Europe, and The Israeli Knesset, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's "Neeman Commission", Oxford University, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Berlin Conference on anti-Semitism, and Harvard University, discussing the state of the Jewish Community, and the threats of anti-Semitism.

In 2011, the CER established the Lord Jakobovits Prize of European Jewry to award individuals who have shown support to European Jewry, defended their religious rights and combatted anti-Semitism. Since then, the prize has been awarded to Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, in recognition of her steadfast support in the circumcision debate in Germany. Speaking at the award ceremony in the Great Synagogue of Europe, Rabbi Goldschmidt confessed that the decision to award the prize to a German Chancellor was difficult, but correct. Other former recipients of the prize include the Prime Minister of France, Manuel Valls, in appreciation for his role in securing France's Jewish Institutions during the Great Wave of Terror and King Felipe VI of Spain for his role in reviving Jewish life in Spain.

In his role as the President of the CER, Rabbi Goldschmidt has written many articles and addressed multiple audiences. This material is collated into his book 'Communitati Et Orbi', originally published in English and since translated into German and Russian.

Rabbi Goldschmidt has been awarded the Jerusalem Prize by the Speaker of the Knesset, Mr Avram Burg, and in 2002 received Certification to serve as candidate for the Position of Chief Rabbi in Israel by the Council of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. In the spring of 2009, Goldschmidt took a sabbatical as a visiting Scholar at the Davis Center at Harvard University.

On July 27, 2016 Francois Holland the French President, awarded Goldschmidt the title of Chevalier of the National Order of the Legion of Honor for his paramount contribution to the strengthening of relations between Russia and France.

Rabbi Pinchas and his wife Dara have seven children, five who are married and have eight grandchildren.