



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with Israel's Chief Rabbi Shlomo Moshe Amar

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On 11 November 2012, in Jerusalem, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church met with the Chief Rabbi of Israel, Shlomo Moshe Amar. Attending the meeting which took place at the Chief Rabbinate were members of the official delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church, as well as Mr. Oded Viner, General Director of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel; Mr. Yacov Livne, Director of the Euro-Asia Division of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs; senior staff members of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Mr. M. Cesar, Director of the Department for Religious Affairs of the Israeli Ministry of the Interior.

In his word of greetings, Chief Rabbi Shlomo Moshe Amar said he was very glad to welcome His Holiness Patriarch Kirill as one of the leaders of the Christian world, saying, "You are a man who knows very well what honour is and how important it is to respect people."

The Chief Rabbi of Israel noted that the Jewish communities in Russia have the same rights and opportunities as other religious organizations and emphasized the importance of the Russian Orthodox Church's work for teaching her faithful to treat everybody, including people of other religions, with love and benevolence.

Patriarch Kirill thanked Rabbi Shlomo Moshe Amar for the greeting and said in response, "Your words have come from your heart and reached our hearts." His Holiness expressed his confidence that nowadays, when many people tend to renounce their religious traditions, all those who still hold these traditions should build a solid system of mutual relations.

The Primate of the Russian Church said that there has always been close cooperation between religions in Russia. "We had lived in peace with Jewish and Muslim communities for over a thousand years, respecting each other and having no religious wars. But at the time when the atheistic ideology dominated in our country, we all experienced the same suffering", Patriarch Kirill said. According to His Holiness, in the situation of religious freedom today, various religious communities are continue the tradition of mutual respect and cooperation, making joint statements on important problems which raise concern in Russian society. Patriarch Kirill is convinced that such common witness is very important for the modern world.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church indicated two factors promoting the development of

Russia–Israel relations. The first factor includes linguistic and cultural aspects based on good will and sympathy. The second factor is the development of pilgrimage which also contributes to the strengthening of relations between people.

Orthodoxy in Russia and Judaism in Israel are majority religions, and people of both religions are facing similar problems. His Holiness Patriarch Kirill noted the high level of interaction between religious communities in Israel and state and society in such spheres as religious education, pastoral care for the military, and preservation of spiritual traditions in the life of society.

In memory of the meeting His Holiness Patriarch Kirill presented Rabbi Shlomo Moshe Amar with the Hebrew version of his book “Freedom and Responsibility”.

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