



From Israel

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Judaism's Conservative Movement

Rabbi Professor David Golinkin has been appointed president and rector of the Conservative Movement's Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies. Rabbi Golinkin places the Conservative Movement (Masorti) closer to Orthodox Judaism than to the Reform, but acknowledges that there is some confusion on the part of Israelis and the Chief Rabbinate since they do not differentiate between those who are not recognized as Orthodox. Rabbi Golinkin aims to open a dialogue with the religious establishment to encourage pluralistic, open-minded Judaism. He is already a member of the executive of the Joint Institute for Jewish Studies.

From the largest graduating class so far of the Schechter Institute's Rabbinical School, five rabbis have been ordained. One aims to promote Jewish education in the congregation, another is the first Russian Conservative rabbi in Israel, while a third plans to promote interfaith dialogues and establish an interfaith academy in Israel. We wrote to congratulate the new rabbi on his ordination, sending him a copy of *Shabbat Shalom* and advising him that we too were interested in dialogue. We look forward to further correspondence with him.

The rabbi appointed to Gilo has already been serving there for the past two years and has seen a significant increase in his congregation's numbers and the intensity of their prayers since shooting between Palestine gunmen and IDF forces began.

Temple Mount

Controversy continues over sovereignty and authority over the Temple Mount. The Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, had promised that Israel would never agree to giving up its authority over the Temple Mount. However, this did not mean that Israel had actually to be in physical control of the area. The Wakf (Islamic Council) could administer the Temple Mount, while Israel would still maintain sovereignty. The Palestine Authority maintains its claim for all of East Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount and other holy places, to be the capital of a Palestine state.

Israel's Chief Rabbis are concerned about the consequences of proposed sovereignty concessions over the Temple Mount. Continued throwing of stones from the Temple Mount onto Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall is believed likely to continue. The Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi, Yisrael

Meir Yau, denied the right of anyone to make concessions on the Temple Mount's status, as ceding sovereignty over the Temple Mount would deny Israel's Biblical and historical claims to Jerusalem. Since both the First and Second Temples predated Islam, Lau called on Moslem leaders to respect early Moslem leaders' designation of the El-Aksa Mosque as their principle prayer place, not the Dome of the Rock which is believed to be the foundation stone at the heart of the Temple.

Judeo-Christian commonalities

Last October, *The New York Times* reported that almost 170 Jewish scholars and rabbis including 11 Orthodox Jews had released a statement the previous month, asserting that "Jews and Christians worship the same God". This is an acknowledgement that both Judaism and Christianity revere the same God, and share the same Bible and moral principles; that they are not so distinct after all. It is also a response to Christian repentance and self-correction following the Holocaust. Other Jewish scholars however believe that because Judaism and Christianity interpret the Scriptures differently, they cannot be combined.