

Day 46

Russian Our Father



The **Russian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem** (Russian: Русская духовная миссия в Иерусалиме, 'Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem') was founded in the 19th century to serve as a representation of the Russian Orthodox Church to the Greek Orthodox Church of Jerusalem and to oversee the facilities caring for the thousands of pilgrims then flocking to the Holy Land from the Russian Empire.

The first Russian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem was sent in 1847 under the leadership of Archimandrite (Abbot) but was not recognized by the Ottoman Turkish government that at that time ruled Palestine. This first mission was sent to conduct archaeological research and organize pilgrimages from Russia to the Holy Land. The outbreak of the Crimean War between the Ottoman Empire and Russia, however, led to the return of the Mission's members to Russia.

It wasn't until 1857 that the Mission returned, this time with the official recognition of the Ottoman Turkish government. The Mission resumed its previous work of organizing pilgrimages from Russia to Palestine and also began sponsoring charitable and educational work amongst the Orthodox Christian Arabs forming the majority of the membership of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem...

The start of World War I froze the work of the Mission. As Russia and Ottoman Turkey were on opposite sides of the conflict the beginning of the war saw the expulsion of... all the clergy and staff of the Mission and the closing of its churches, although not of its monasteries and convents. It wasn't until 1919... that the Mission's personnel were able to return from Egypt...

The original Mission's administration, headquartered in the Russian Compound that had been given to the Moscow Patriarchate, was transferred first to Gethsemane and then to the Mount of Olives. Despite the losses to the Moscow Patriarchate, the original Mission was able to purchase the site of the first great monastery in the Holy Land, St. Chariton's



Monastery in Wadi Faran, and establish a skete there under the leadership of Archimandrite (Abbot) Demetrius. Fr. Demetrius together with Archbishop Alexander of Berlin led the Mission in the celebration of its 100th anniversary in 1958...

As church life continues to recover in the former Soviet Union growing numbers of pilgrims from Russia, Ukraine, and other former Soviet republics are flocking to the Holy Land. The two parts of the Russian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Mission share the work of caring for these pilgrims and administering the holy places under Russian Orthodox jurisdiction.

<https://knepublishing.com/index.php/Kne-Social/article/view/2490/5430>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Orthodox_Ecclesiastical_Mission_in_Jerusalem

Cathedral of the Holy Trinity / Russian Compound, Jerusalem

In the 19th century, the Russians were among the earliest settlers outside Jerusalem's Old City. This migration commenced around 1860, with the acquisition of a few acres of land just beyond the city walls. Constructing a self-contained compound, they aimed to accommodate the increasing number of Russian pilgrims visiting the city. Central to this compound was the handsome Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, consecrated in 1864, featuring a distinctive Muscovite architectural style characterized by eight drums topped with green domes.

Adjacent to the cathedral lies Herod's Column, a towering stone pillar measuring 12 meters (40 feet) in height. Historians speculate that it dates back to the Byzantine period or may have been intended for the Second Temple before being abandoned due to a crack.

Today, only the cathedral remains under Russian ownership, as many other buildings within the compound were sold to the Israeli government by the Soviet Union in 1964, in exchange for shipments of Israeli oranges. Notably, the grand building with the crenellated tower, formerly a pilgrims' hostel, now houses the Agriculture Ministry. The street where it stands, Heleni ha-Malka, has evolved into one of the city's nightlife hubs, filled with numerous bars and cafes.

<https://www.gpsmycity.com/attractions/cathedral-of-the-holy-trinity---russian-compound-2039.html>



The Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem:

Contemporary Period The last years of the USSR existence and its subsequent liquidation, were marked by the unhindered departure of Jews from the Soviet republics, which proclaimed their sovereignty.

The immigration of Jews, living practically in all the former Soviet Union republics, to Israel, was so massive that in its early years it reached up the number of about 200,000 people annually, gradually decreasing to several tens of thousands in the early 2000s. The Russian-speaking community has been enriched with millions of immigrants to Israel, having formed a unique phenomenon, when the number of those who speak Russian reached 20% of the total population. Such a ratio does not find examples in other countries, with the exception of the former Soviet republics.

Natives of the USSR were to abandon not only Russian or other citizenship to live according to the conditions of their new homeland, but also to change the language of communication, to move on to new categorical images of the Middle Eastern thinking, and to accept and absorb the existing religious and cultural diversity of Palestinian life. But socialization is practically more difficult, often painful, when Russian-speaking people have to learn the language and get the Middle East mentality, so as A.F. Fedorchenko claims: “the Russians in Israel keep on preserving their identity in many ways – speaking Russian, supporting cultural traditions of the country of origin and adhering to the Soviet mentality”...

Israel is a Jewish state, but Judaism de jure is not a state religion in it, since Israel does not have any constitution, which could fix such a point. In modern Israel, more than three quarters of the country's population (ranking to nine million) are Jews or are attributed to them as a result of repatriation; one-fifth are Arabs, most of whom are Muslims; several hundred thousands refer themselves to numerous ethnic groups. The attitude to religious freedom was declared in 1948, when the Declaration of Independence did not distinguish between Jews, Christians and Muslims, who were citizens of Israel (Svoboda religii v Ierusalime, 2002).

It is the latter that allows religious representations to exist on Israeli territory, where the Christianity is not abolished owing to the power of law. It is obvious that for the local Jewish population the Christian religion in their state is an undesirable rudiment of the period of dispersion. For Islam, Christianity can be an ally in the fight against the expansionist policies of the Jewish government. The dominant influence of Judaism negatively affects the condition of Christian communities, which during the years of the

Jewish state existence were subjected to numerous harassment and violation in territorial rights to their holy places. The absence of an Arab-Israeli confrontation settlement has in some way a positive impact on Christianity in the region. Israel seeks to maintain friendly relations with Christian communities, to which Palestine and its Islamic authorities also gravitate, in order to have an ally in the face of Christians in confronting Israel. Therefore, the existing conflict, to some extent, conceals the degree of antagonism towards Christians who have become an allogenic element in the region...

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