

King David in Jerusalem



8 November 2009 - It all started more than two years ago in a breakfast meeting with Mr. Andrey Bykov, who came to Jerusalem on pilgrimage for Easter of 2007. At the time I already knew Mr. Bykov for some 8 years, since he initiated the "Global Dialogue" movement and "Demiurgus Peace International". Later Mr. Bykov decided to focus his efforts inside Russia and work to restore the connection of its people with their religion. He now sponsors, together with his business partner Mr. Michael Chepel, the St. Nicolas Foundation. Among its various activities, the St. Nicolas Foundation introduces monuments of St. Nicolas in different cities in Russia, so it was only natural for Mr. Bykov to propose a gift to the city of Jerusalem – from the Russian Orthodox Christianity to Judaism and from the Russian people to the Israeli people – in the form a monument of King David.

Following this conversation I wrote a letter to the Mayor of Jerusalem at the time, Mr. Uri Lopoliansky, outlining the proposal. Consequently I met with the Mayor's advisor on Religious Communities Mr. Mordechai Levi and then the Mayor's advisor on Art and Design Mr. David Sussana. The process was long and not easy but finally the monument

was placed and inaugurated six months ago, at the entrance to the compound of King David's Tomb, and is already a natural part of the city and a tourist attraction, as if it was there for centuries. A few weeks ago another stage was completed when the renovation Mr. Bykov sponsored of the entrance to the compound was inaugurated.

The two parts of the project nicely exemplify the potential of interfaith cooperation for the prosperity of Jerusalem and the Holy Land.



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