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Mendy Chitrik

Rabbi **Menachem Mendel Chitrik** (born March 31, 1977), better known as Rabbi **Mendy Chitrik**, is an American, Israeli, and Turkish Rabbi of the Ashkenazi Jewish community of Turkey since 2003. He has also been the chairman of the Alliance of Rabbis in Islamic States since 2019. ^[1] ^[2]

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Biography

Rabbi Chitrik grew up in Safed, to a Chassidic family; his great grandfather was Rabbi Yehuda Chitrik. He studied in the Chabad Yeshiva system, at the Rabbinical College of America (Bachelor of Religious Studies) and in Colel Tzemach Tzedek in Jerusalem. He received his rabbinical ordination from Rabbi Zalman Nechemia Goldberg of Jerusalem and the Chief Rabbi of Israel Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron, as well as from his maternal grandfather Chief Rabbi David Moshe Lieberman, the Chief Rabbi of Antwerp.

Public life

Moved to Istanbul, Turkey in 2001, Rabbi Chitrik has served since 2003 as the Rabbi of the Ashkenazi Jewish community of Turkey, a small and ancient community that has existed for centuries and predates the much larger and more famous Sephardi community whose members settled in Istanbul mostly after the expulsion from Spain.

In 2019, Rabbi Chitrik was elected the Chairman of ARIS (Alliance of Rabbis in Islamic States), an alliance of rabbis living in the Muslim world. He previously served as a permanent member of the Standing Committee of the Conference of European Rabbis (CER) 2014-2020 until his appointment as chairman of the Alliance of Rabbis in Islamic States.^[3] He is a member of the RCA and other rabbinical bodies. Rabbi Chitrik belongs to the Chabad movement,^[4] and has been outspoken^[5] against Chabad Messianism.

Rabbi Chitrik is involved with interfaith^[6]^[7] activities^[8]^[9] focusing on Jewish-Muslim relations.^[10]^[11] He travels extensively and writes about the history of Jews in Anatolia.^[12]^[13] His travels across Anatolia in Summer of 2021 were widely reported ^[14] as well as some antisemitic accusations.^[15]

As part of his responsibilities in the Jewish community of Turkey, Rabbi Chitrik leads the KTR, Turkey's Chief Rabbinate's Kashrut department for exports (Denet Gida).^{[16][17]} He is also responsible for the Kosher standards at the Emirati Agency for Kosher Certification (EAKC).^[18] In addition, he is a field representative for the OU and other major kosher organizations, a shochet, Sofer and a mohel.

Rabbi Chitrik and his wife Chaya^[19] (nee Schochet, married 2000^[20]) have been involved in strengthening the Jewish life and Jewish learning in Istanbul through classes, large scale Jewish holiday events,^[21] one-on-one counseling, daily prayer services. They have brought a new enthusiasm for the Jewish life to Istanbul. With their eight children, they have an open house in Istanbul, where local residents and travelers from all over the world share Shabbat and holiday ^[22]

Some of the activities have been criticized by the more secular elements of the community.^[23] ^[24]

Publications

Rabbi Chitrik has published several books on Jewish life^{[25][26]} in Turkish and is in the midst of publishing a book on Turkish-Sephardic customs. Fluent in six languages, Rabbi Chitrik is likely the last rabbi in the world to deliver a weekly Torah class^[27] in Ladino. He is a sought-after lecturer on the history and customs of Turkish Jews.^[28]

Podcast

In October 2021,^[29] Rabbi Chitrik started a podcast with his cousin Rabbi Eliezer Zalmanov^[30] of Munster, IN, titled "Chatting Rabbis (<https://open.spotify.com/show/oJSm55XA5PnYohuyrSSVfn>)," an unscripted weekly conversation about the many issues facing their families, their communities, and the Jewish world at large.

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External links

Social media

- <https://twitter.com/mchitrik>
- <https://www.facebook.com/AskTheRabbi>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/mendy-chitrik>

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