

Haïm Korsia

Chief Rabbi of France



Chief Rabbi Haïm Korsia was born in Lyon on September 27, 1963. Aged 17, after he had completed his secondary education, he joined the Jewish Seminary of France. He met there the man who became his mentor and model, Chief Rabbi Emmanuel Chouchena.

While pursuing his studies at the Seminary, Korsia insured functions at Le Mans (1983-1987) and officiated at the synagogue rue Montevideo in Paris XVI (1982-1987). This congregational experience inspired his rabbinical thesis he presented in June 1985: "The rabbinic function seen by the congregational Presidents". In this essay, he did highlight the importance for a rabbi to serve his community. This is a fundamental principle he put into practice as soon as 1988, when he became Rabbi of the Jewish Congregation of Reims and its region. He travelled the Marne, the Ardennes and the Aisne to listen to Jewish communities and families to whom he transmitted the authentic message of the Torah.

The Chief Rabbi of France at the time, Joseph Sitruk, noticed the dynamism of the young Rabbi and made him one of his closest associates (1993-2004). A couple years later, his colleagues elected him General Secretary of the Association of French Rabbis (1999-2010) chaired by the Chief Rabbi of France.

Along with his duties, Haïm Korsia pursued a university course of study and research, combining military and geostrategic issues with ethics and management. In 1993, he was appointed vice-chair of the study group on sects, from the Institute for Higher Studies on Homeland Security (IHESI) of the Ministry of Interior. In 1994, he enrolled at the Center for Higher Studies on Modern Africa and Asia. In 2002, he participated in the 38th session of the Centre for Advanced Studies of Armament. From 2005 to 2009, he was a member of the National Consultative Ethics Committee.

To complete his education, he graduated from the Sorbonne and obtained a MBA (Reims Management School, 1998-1999). With these solid academic credentials, he presented a PhD thesis in Contemporary History (University of Poitiers) devoted to "the life of Chief Rabbi Jacob Kaplan," tutelary figure of French Judaism. He stressed the commitment of Jacob Kaplan "to reconcile the two identities to be Jewish and French without denying the faith of our fathers."

His appointment in 2000 to the direction of the General Chaplain of the Air Force came simply by his knowledge in geostrategy issues. Similarly in 2007, when he was designated to be the General Jewish Chaplain of the Army and the Polytechnic school.

From 2009 to 2013, he worked closely with the Chief Rabbi of France, Gilles Bernheim. The numerous publications of Chief Rabbi Haïm Korsia report the bulk of his concerns, from current ethical issues facing the Jewish values, societal debates and Halakha (Jewish law) to the place of the Jew in the French citizenship and interreligious dialogue.

On June 22, 2014, he was elected Chief Rabbi of France, for of a 7 year-term by the General Assembly of the Central Consistory.

On December 15, 2014 he was elected as a member of the French Academy of Moral science and Politics (also known as the Institute).