

A QUARTER OF A MILLION JEWS IN UNITY RALLY IN SUPPORT OF U.S. AND ISRAEL

250,000 Jews (and, *l'havdil*, a nice showing of gentiles) from all over the United States and from all walks of life, took off a day of work on Monday, April 15, to rally in support of the United States and Israel.

There was never a gathering like this of Jews in the history of the U.S., not even during the Six-Day War. These days Jews feel that they cannot remain apathetic to what is going on in Eretz Yisroel and throughout the world.

Within six days, the leaders of the Jewish Federation organized the rally with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. They set aside their differences of opinion and united for one purpose: to tell the president of the United States, and the rest of the world that the Jewish people are one nation.

1,200 buses were rented, and others arrived by car and plane. The airlines and bus companies can't recall a similar occurrence in many decades. New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut used every last bus.

Members of Congress expressed how impressed they were by the organization of it all and by the massive participation.

Among the speakers at the rally were former Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, Natan Scharansky, Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel, former mayor of N.Y. Rudy Giuliani, parents of terror victims, and even a woman from a

Christian organization who spoke in support of Israel.

All the speakers expressed their unconditional support of Israel's war on terror. The only ill-received speech was

said by only one speaker – who wasn't even Jewish – and she was wildly applauded.

There were additional rallies held throughout the U.S. and Canada in which many thousands participated.

The Crown Heights Beis Din had announced that all those over 18 should participate in the D.C. rally. So many people responded that 30 buses from Crown Heights alone went to the rally.

It was an amazing sight to behold how all the highways leading to Washington were full of long lines of hundreds and thousands of buses and cars filled with Yidden ready to protest for the sake of our Jewish brethren across the globe. Parking places on the sides of the roads were full of thousands of Jews, resting along the way. The time was used for *minyanim* as well as *Mivtza T'fillin* and *besuras ha'Geula*.

R' Meir Shmukler, who disseminates the Rebbe's position regarding *shleimus ha'Aretz* via his website

TruePeace.org, used the opportunity to give out thousands of stickers with the message, "Read the Bible: The Land of Israel Belongs to the Jews," along with the address of his website. R' Shmukler said that in the days following the rally, thousands of people checked out his site and many sent him feedback.

The stickers were placed on thousands of cars and buses, and during the rally there were signs with



A partial view of the enormous crowd at the D.C. rally

made by President Bush's representative to the rally, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz. His speech was fine until he mentioned the suffering of "innocent Palestinians." The crowd reacted with boos.

All the speakers based what they said on matters other than the simple truth – that Eretz Yisroel belongs to the Jewish people forever! This was actually

the same message watched by millions on TV news programs.

Thousands of Anash and T'mimim spread through the crowd and put *t'fillin* on with thousands of people. Jews were willing to put on *t'fillin* especially in lieu of the explanation they were given – that in the merit of *t'fillin* we are victorious over our enemies.

The Lubavitch presence was very obvious and made a tremendous *kiddush sheim Lubavitch*.

It should be noted that this huge rally took place in a *Shnas Hakhel*. In a general letter dated 13 Iyar 5741 (a *Shnas Hakhel*), the Rebbe wrote that in connection with the “spiritual



The Rebbe's view being broadcast to the world

and material state of the world, regarding Jews and regarding Judaism, which is not at all stable, and which

continues to deteriorate, *r"l*, there should be *Hakhel* gatherings this year in all places.”

The D.C. rally definitely caused the hundreds of thousands of participants, especially those not yet observant, to feel a sense of pride and connection to Torah and the Jewish people.

The most moving speech of the rally had to be the one given by Seth Mandell, father of 13-year-old Koby Mandell, who was savagely butchered last year. He referred to the heartrending story of the father who told his 4-year-old son to say *Shma* with him, as they died in Sbarro's. Mr. Mandell asked: “Who said *Shma* with *my* son? Let us all say *Shma* now...”

AT THE JENIN BORDER CHECKPOINT:

“Immediately to T’shuva, Immediately to Geula”

At the Jenin border checkpoint, one of the returning battalions that lost 13 men in an ambush and another two soldiers by snipers assembled for a briefing after spending 2 weeks inside Jenin. The 160 men listened to their commander for a half an hour.

A young officer, 23 years old, son of an Israeli rabbi, sported a long ponytail. He had strayed from Torah observance years before.

After the briefing, the young man spotted a Chabad tankist he recognized from his original army service five years ago. In Jenin the officer was with his reserve unit.

The young man asked the tankist if he could borrow *tallis* and *t’fillin*. The tankist, upon realizing who he was, kissed and embraced him. The young officer then boarded the *mitvza* tank for a few quiet moments of prayer.

The pervading mood of this battalion was one of depression.

As the music played from the Chabad tank, the tankist grabbed a soldier and began to dance. The clapping and singing was contagious and the other soldiers began to do likewise until a joyous mood spread throughout the rocky, desolate checkpoint area.

After the young officer put on *t’fillin*, the rest of the unit slowly, one by one, also put on *t’fillin*. The tankist had many conversations with the soldiers, most of them asking, “What is going to happen?” referencing their fears of an unknown future and how to look at that future through the eyes of Hashem in terms of the well-being of their country and their own lives.

The tankist quoted the Rebbe concerning a previous military campaign when he said that if Tzahal did not finish the work at that time, the



Moshiach Flag, a gift from the Chabad Tank to the Tzahal Tank



Inside the Chabad Tank: soldier thanking Hashem after the fighting in Jenin

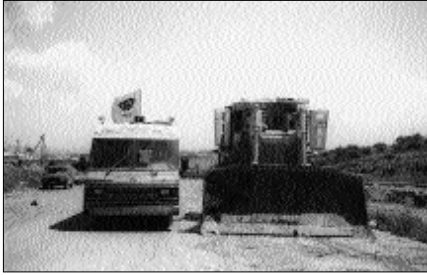
country would suffer for it later.

(And the suffering was very clear to this small unit that lost 15 men.)

“And the same voice,” continued the Chabad Tankist, “assured us that Moshiach is coming now!”

This last idea is hard for the soldiers to absorb amidst the agony that they experienced, but on the other hand, they know very well that they, as soldiers and civilians, suffer the vulnerability caused by political decisions.

One soldier said that after many years of marriage he and his wife have not had children. His fellow soldiers told him to put on *t’fillin*, sure that it would



Basic equipment to break through the obstacles to *Geula*



help. The tankist told him that if he would put on *t'fillin* each day, he and his wife would have a child. (The tankist has the power of the one that sent him



– the Lubavitcher Rebbe. His blessing should be fulfilled.)

Since the IDF has pulled out of

Jenin, the tankist has returned to his regular work schedule of traveling to neighborhoods and villages to teach children in the network of youth clubs that exist in the lower Galil and to travel to army posts in the area. He knows that the next good deed that is stored in his *mitvza* tank could tip the battlefield advantage to the favor of Moshiach and *Geula* forever.

Several repairs were needed on the *mitvza* tank after the stay in the Jenin area. The tank is now in shape for the upcoming Lag B'Omer Parade, at which time it will join other Chabad tanks, poised to bring Moshiach and *Geula*.

All who are interested in supporting the work of bolstering the morale of Israel's brave defenders should send their contributions to:

MOBILE MITZVAH CENTERS – Israel
Lubavitch Mitzvah Tanks in Israel
820 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213
Tel (718) 756-1898; Fax (718) 756-0017
Rabbi Dovid Nachshon, Director
ChabadIsrael.org

MORAL SUPPORT FOR THE SOLDIERS

Every day, a group of people organized by *shliach* R' Lipa Kurtzweil leaves Kiryat Malachi for army bases in the Gaza strip and other areas where tanks and soldiers are located. The group brings refreshments to the soldiers along with a positive and joyful attitude, helping to break the ice even with soldiers unfamiliar with Chabad's activities. Many of them agree to roll up their sleeves for *t'fillin*.

R' Avshalom Kiel, *shliach* in Gan Ner near Jenin: "The rear command of the war in Jenin is situated in our *yishuv* Gan Ner. Our *yishuv* looks like one big military camp. The army is spread out in the *yishuv*, and tents and equipment are everywhere.

"Thousands of soldiers have been here as of Chol HaMoed Pesach. Everybody knows that in the major call-up of reserves there wasn't enough food and equipment to go around.

"I immediately began working on helping out. Along with my son and with the help of others from the *yishuv* and some T'mimim, we began distributing food. We invited soldiers home for hot meals.

"On Erev Shevii Shel Pesach, right before they were going to enter Jenin, I met with the command staff and encouraged them. I blessed them that just as at the Splitting of the Sea, when the Egyptians drowned without the Jews having to lift a finger, the same should happen with us, with Hashem's help.

"Right after Pesach we continued with *Mivtza T'fillin* among the soldiers. We had a *mitvza* tank with us and we went to every spot in the area where soldiers could be found. We brought refreshments and distributed *shmira*



kits which have chapters of *T'hilim*, a *pushka*, and *T'fillas HaDerech*. We encouraged the soldiers and put *t'fillin* on with them.

"At first their spirits were good, but after 13 soldiers were ambushed, they were demoralized. We did our best to revive their spirits.

"One day, we approached a line of armored vehicles that were about to enter Jenin. We put *t'fillin* on with the soldiers and hung up Moshiach flags with them on their tanks. That's how they proudly went off to fight our enemies."

LUBAVITCHER YESHIVAH OCEAN PARKWAY CAMPUS PTA SCHOLARSHIP BENEFIT DINNER

The first Lubavitcher Yeshivah Ocean Parkway Campus PTA Scholarship Benefit Dinner, honoring the late Holocaust hero, Japanese Consul Chiune Sugihara and the Lubavitcher students whose lives he saved, was held this past Sunday, April 21, 2002 in the grand ballroom of Oholei Torah in Crown Heights.

The gala event began with an elegant reception at five-o'clock in the evening. Guests lined up at the registration table in the lobby, where their table numbers were assigned and a documentary video on the Sugihara saga played on a monitor. The several hundred guests then proceeded to a buffet set to a Japanese theme, where numerous community notables, yeshivah friends and local politicians mingled and socialized. Seen on the scene were the Japanese Deputy Consul, General of N.Y. City Council Member James Davis, Congressman Major Owens, Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, and the entire faculty of United Lubavitcher Yeshivah of Ocean Parkway.



Part of the overflow crowd that gathered for the dinner

At six-thirty, the guests made their way to the main ballroom, where lavishly set tables were graced by Japanese-themed



The rebbes of the ULY Ocean Parkway at the dais



The Japanese Consul flanked by Rabbi Ari Raskin (left) and Rabbi Shmuel Dechter (right)

centerpieces, complete with bamboo, shrubbery and miniature Japanese structures. Rabbi Ari Raskin, the Lubavitcher Rebbe's *shliach* to Brooklyn Heights, New York, Yeshivah graduate and event Master of Ceremonies, opened the evening from the

dais with a formal welcome. His remarks centered on the motivation of the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom D. Schneersohn, the Rebbe Rashab, in establishing Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim Lubavitch, the forerunner of today's United Lubavitcher Yeshivah. "...the Yeshivah is based on three very important principles: the spirit of non-compromise in Torah education, *mesiras nefesh* [self-sacrifice], and finally, the love and loyalty for our people, Torah and G-d." Raskin

concluded: “Other Rebbes were looking for followers. The Rebbe was looking for leaders. Every [United Lubavitcher Yeshivah] student is a leader.”

The emcee then introduced Tuvia Lyampe and Rachamim Dweck, two young United Lubavitcher Yeshivah students, who recited Chapters 101 and 20 of the traditional Psalms, as the assembled rose and repeated the sacred words after them. The crowd was asked to remain standing as Col. Jacob Goldstein, Staff Chaplain of the New York State Army National Guard and chaplain of Ground Zero and a graduate of U.L.Y., approached the podium in full military regalia to recite the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe’s Prayer for America. Goldstein, who had just returned from a four-week tour of visiting U.S. servicemen in the Middle Eastern theater, including conducting a *seder* on the aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy and visiting the troops in Afghanistan.

A videotaped talk of the Lubavitcher Rebbe dating to 1988, courtesy of Jewish Educational Media, was then played on the large projector screens mounted in the hall. The brief talk touched upon the ancient mitzvah of Hakhel, in which the entire Nation of Israel would gather in Jerusalem’s Temple to hear their king read from the Torah, and proffered a spiritual and practically relevant interpretation of this now-defunct practice—“how to apply it to our modern lives,” as the video’s introductory narration stated. The selection concluded with the Rebbe’s prayer that “we celebrate Hakhel in Jerusalem this year!”

Rabbi Dovid Raskin, Dean of the United Lubavitcher Yeshivah, then delivered greetings with the words of *Hayom Yom*, the collection of wisdom

and customs compiled by the Lubavitcher Rebbe. “The Baal Shem Tov [the founder of Chassidism] taught: Everything we witness contains a lesson in our relationship with G-d.’ And since we are here tonight for United Lubavitcher Yeshivah, the lesson we learn is “*l’chatchila ariber!*” [Loosely translatable as “always take the high ground,” the motto of the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Rebbe Maharash.]

The chairman then introduced Rabbi Shmuel Dechter, Principal of the Ocean Parkway campus, who touched upon the dinner’s theme of “courage,



Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz presenting citations to the guests of honor, Yossi Greenbaum (left) and Sholom Laine (right)

conviction and commitment to the future,” and how the Yeshivah history so inspires today’s students. He then introduced at length the evening’s two honorees, Yossi Greenbaum and Sholom Laine, both Crown Heights residents and graduates of the United Lubavitcher Yeshivah. Both honorees posed with their elegantly framed awards for the cameras, and, on the other side of the *mehitzah*, their “better halves” received matching awards for their support of their husbands and of

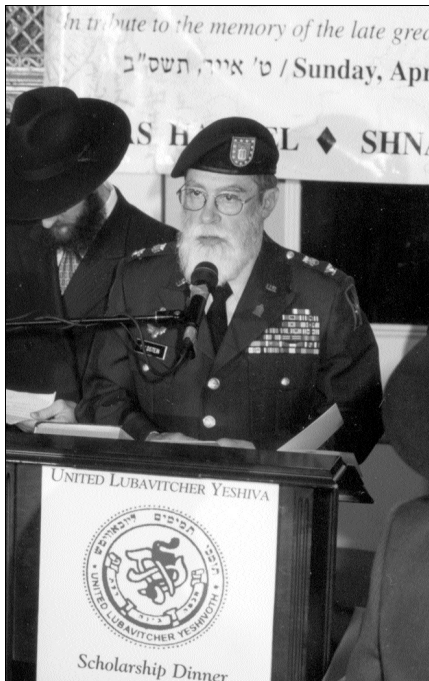
the Yeshivah.

The two honorees then graced the assembled with brief remarks, with Mr. Greenbaum, the Sar Hachessed awardee, commenting that “it is not that Lubavitcher Yeshivah is honoring me—it’s that I was given the opportunity to honor Lubavitcher Yeshivah.” Guest of Honor Mr. Laine, known for his brevity, simply stated, “Thank you for supporting this wonderful organization.”

Dr. David Kranzler, a noted Jewish historian and authority on the Sugihara story, then addressed the guests and reviewed the actual dramatic sequence of historical events, from the desperate plight of the Jewish refugees to the convergence of “ironic” factors—read *hashgachah pratis*—at the Japanese Consular office in Kaunas (Kovno), Lithuania and their unbelievable escape across Siberia to Japan, Shanghai and eventually the Free World. “The word ‘*Yehudi*’ comes from *hoda’ah*, which means thanks,” said Kranzler. “We as a nation owe a great debt of gratitude to the Japanese government, the Japanese people and the Sugihara family,” he asserted to great applause.

Emcee Raskin followed with mention of “three special women who deserve honor,” and proceeded to call upon Mrs. Peshy Teller, Mrs. Seema Goldstein and Mrs. Ettie Gottlieb to receive well-earned awards for their tireless, critical efforts on the Dinner’s behalf. It was their vision and determination that culminated in this standing-room-only display of appreciation to U.L.Y.

A ceremonial unveiling of newly created postage stamps commemorating Mr. Sugihara’s heroism then commenced on the hall’s stage.



Chaplain Colonel Goldstein recites the Rebbe Rayatz's prayer for the security of the USA

The stamps were designed and produced by a good friend of U.L.Y, Mr. Sam Malamud, of Intergovernmental Philatelic Co.. in conjunction with the foreign governments involved. The five poster-sized reproductions, shrouded in black cloth, were ceremoniously uncovered as the emcee called out the nationality of each. The unveilings were performed by the Hon. Kazuhiko Koshikawa, the Japanese Deputy Consul General of New York; Dr. Kranzler; Mr. Sam Malamud; Mr. Pinny

Teller; and Representative Owens, respectively, each of whom posed for an official photograph. The five countries issuing the stamps are Gambia, Grenada, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Grenada Carriacov.

Perhaps the evening's most remarkable highlight then began, with the Hon. Mr. Koshikawa taking the stand to convey an official message from the Japanese government to the "Sugihara survivors," their families, the Yeshivah's supporters and to the Lubavitch community at large. The Japanese diplomat, aware that Chiune Sugihara's position in Lithuania was similar to his today, repeatedly mentioned his personal gratitude in being able to meet the survivors themselves and their numerous living descendants. Paraphrasing the Talmud's Tractate Sanhedrin: "He who saves one life... is as if he saved a full world," the Consul mentioned an episode of heroism from September 11, 2001, in which a young media executive on the 81ST floor of the South Tower carried a wheelchair-bound woman down to the ground floor. Both survived the collapse. "When asked, 'Why did you do it?' he said, 'I'm no hero. I just knew that I could not possibly live with myself had I left her stranded up there.'" Likewise Mr. Sugihara knew that he could not live with himself as Jewish refugees asked him to save their lives," said Mr. Koshikawa. He concluded by

acknowledging the bridges between Japan and the Jewish community built by Mr. Sugihara, and the commitment to education that the survivors, their descendants and the Yeshivah have in common. He received a standing ovation upon conclusion.

An emotionally powerful moment was had as the emcee then asked all the Sugihara survivors and their descendants to rise. What a powerful statement this was, as 20-30 people stood as each survivor was mentioned by name. Respect and recognition was also given to those survivors no longer with us. Their families, sometimes three generations, rose to be acknowledged by the assembled guests and dignitaries.

The keynote speaker, Rabbi Abraham Hecht, was then introduced. Rabbi Hecht, one of a handful of American students to study at Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Otwock, Poland before World War II, thanked the



Mr. Shmuel Malamud with the Japanese Consul unveiling one of the five commemorative stamps in memory of late Japanese Consul Chiune Sugihara



Rabbi Avrohom Garfinkel, speaking on behalf of the Shanghai Temimim

Deputy Consul for his "very moving and inspiring words," and recounted the gripping tale of his and his friends' escape from bombarded Poland in the early days of the war. Following a theme of "past, present and future," Rabbi Hecht regaled the audience with his personal memories of the past and present of Lubavitch in America, and inspired his listeners with his hope for the future with his description of the vast, sweeping international force for good that Lubavitch is today.

Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, a born-and-bred Crown Heights and former New York State Senator, took the stand in his dynamic style to assert that "Brooklyn is the Chassidic capitol of the world," and that he "was privileged to serve the

Lubavitcher community for 23 years" in the State Capitol. To vigorous applause, Markowitz also said, "Lubavitch has made this community better than it was when I grew up." The Borough President then presented official Proclamations to the Dinner's

honorees, and concluded: "Anyone who devotes his life to our kids deserves our respect."

Rabbi Aaron Garfinkel, a veteran teacher at United Lubavitcher Yeshivah for close to 60 years and teacher to several generations of Dinner-goers, was then introduced and warmly greeted as he approached the podium. Rabbi Garfinkel recounted his origins in Otwock, his journey to Shanghai and his beginnings in education in the early 40's. He ended with the traditional plea for the immediate arrival of Moshiach, to thunderous applause.

The emcee proceeded to read letters of greeting sent to the Dinner by numerous political notables, including Sen. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, Rep. Major Owens, and Benjamin Lessin, President of the Visas for Life Foundation, the Sugihara family's humanitarian organization.

The witty, well-known badchan Rabbi Yankel Miller, the Yarmer Rav, then took the stand and entertained the audience with his unique brand of Yiddish humor. His tall tales and endearing sense of levity had the audience laughing during his 20-minute presentation.

The dinner concluded as guests recited *Birkas Hamazon* from the Dinner's elegant programmes, *davened maariv* with the several *minyanim* that formed about the hall, and slowly departed.

This was indeed an evening to be remembered. Crown Heights has rarely seen such a professional, prestigious, and sentimental dinner such as U.L.Y. produced.

The survivors, their families, and the entire Lubavitch community came one step closer to greeting Moshiach by realizing that the actions of one person can affect generations and generations to come for the good. May it be now *mamash!*

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