

Bomb Shelters for Israel

This week I'm presenting an eyewitness account of the devastation in Southern Israel that is the result of the violence perpetrated against Israel by Hamas. The account is written by my good friend, Rabbi Aaron Rubinger.

When the air-raid sirens go off in cities such as Sderot, the people have 20 seconds to get to safety. Often there is nowhere to run to, so a ministry named Operation Lifeshield has made two different kinds of bomb shelters, one of which doubles as a bus stop in the cities. Thanks to the readers of *Charisma* magazine, along with the people who have attended Nights to Honor Israel in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina, a total of four bomb shelters have been donated so far.

I wrote this report without knowing the Friends of the Israeli Defense fund had purchased an ad. I encourage you to click on it and to respond as I have. Like Operation Lifeshield, they are doing a good work. It's timely that their ad is running at a time we need to show our support to Israel.

Now we must help out even more because, as Rabbi Rubinger says, the Israelis need us to hold up their arms as Aaron and Hur held up Moses' arms when the Israelites were fighting their arch-enemies, the Amalekites.

Our help is particularly needed now because, due to the downturn in the economy, donations nearly dried up during the month of January, according to Shep Alster, Founder of Operation Lifeshield. Thankfully, Christian Zionists helped build two bomb shelters in January. One of them was a result of some fundraising I did about a year ago. Faith Assembly of God in Roaring Spring, Pennsylvania, had read about it, raised some money through their church and in January sent a check for \$19,500. Shep was overwhelmed because the only donations

he received in January were from Christian Zionists.

You can give online through Christian Life Missions by clicking [here](#). In answer to the question "To which project would you like to contribute?" choose Operation Lifeshield. Every dollar raised will go directly to this organization. Our goal is to raise \$19,000, enough to build a bomb shelter. This e-mail is being sent to 25,000 people, in addition to the 16,000 who have signed up to receive the Strang Report. We have strategically chosen e-mail addresses from some of our other e-newsletters because we feel that this appeal is so important.

Please take time to read Rabbi Rubinger's message below. He gave it at his synagogue last Saturday after returning from Israel. If you want to contact Rabbi Rubinger you can do so at clergyassist@. I am including this with his permission. He has a great writing style, and it is written from his perspective as a Jew. It's very interesting for me to see the conflict in Israel through the eyes of my Jewish friends.

If each of us would give a little it would add up, and we could build another bomb shelter. I'm attaching some pictures of bomb shelters that were built with donations we've received in the past and that are now being used to help keep people in Israel safe from enemy attacks.

Steve Strang

"HOLDING UP THEIR HANDS"

OUR VISIT TO THE GAZA ENVELOPE

Rabbi Aaron D. Rubinger



As many of you know, yesterday afternoon I returned from Israel, where I attended the annual International Rabbinical Assembly Convention, which was held in Jerusalem this past week. I would like to share with you today one day's

experience that Donna and I had in Israel. The day I am referring to was this past Wednesday when we, together with about 50 others, rabbis and wives, visited the cities near Gaza that were hit by rockets from Hamas: Ashdod; Ashkelon; Sderot and Beersheva.

These were very moving visits, and I'll tell you why. First, because despite how many articles you read in newspapers—be it in secular or Jewish newspapers—despite what you see on the news on TV—it is a very, **very**, different feel to see the victims of these attacks *panim al panim*, face-to-face, and to hear their stories. Let me tell you that, thank God, the physical injuries on Israel's side during the war were very small.

The word "miracle" was used over and over again by the residents and mayors of those communities. For example, a large GRAD rocket, (not the smaller Qassam rockets, but a GRAD rocket, which are produced in North Korea, sent to Iran where they are assembled and then smuggled into Gaza from Iran, large rockets and very deadly) hit a kindergarten in Beersheva. It went through the ceiling, demolishing the entire building. That kindergarten normally houses 250 small children. Miraculously, it fell when none of the children were in the building.

We heard many stories like that, of people who just happened to be somewhere else, such as a neighbor's house across the street, when a rocket fell on their homes. Frankly, it was hard not to believe that *Hakodesh Baruch Hu, The Holy One* didn't have some hand in preventing some terrible tragedies from occurring.

While physical injuries on the Israeli side were remarkably few in number, the emotional injuries and the trauma experienced by the residents of those communities is still very, very raw. I think many of us tend to romanticize our brothers and sisters in Israel. We think they are so tough, so

hardened by the years, by the decades of struggling to defending themselves, that emotionally they must be hard as nails. But not so. They're flesh and blood just like you and me. They suffered from deep and severe anxiety for their own lives and even more so for those of their family members.

Most affected of course are the children. Not only are older children regressing and wetting their beds, but we were told that even today, to this very week, when young children hear the beginning of a piece of music on the radio, they sometimes think it is the sound of the warning siren indicating an incoming missile, and they begin to scream and run for a shelter until a parent or a teacher grabs hold of them, puts their arms around them and assures, again and again, that it was not a siren that they heard.

And imagine, imagine, how the non-stop rocket attacks affected the elderly. The many widows who live alone and continue to worry about new rockets attacks. You know we had lunch in Sderot that day—nothing fancy at all, in fact just eating sandwiches on the main street. While eating I saw an elderly woman who looked a bit disoriented walking a bit aimlessly in the middle of the road. I went over to her and asked if she needed any help. She told me she could use some money to buy food so I gave her some cash from my wallet. Yet, she kept speaking, going on and on, for a long while about wanting to give me a blessing for my health and safety. I thanked her, but it was clear to me that she was not emotionally well at all.

But realize, realize, that since 2001 over 10,000 rockets—10,000!—had fallen just in Sderot alone. How sound of mind do you think you would be if you lived in a little town not much bigger than about a couple of square miles in size that had been bombarded by 10,000 rockets?

Did you know that despite the so-called cease-fire, or better said the “time out” since the end of the Gaza war when Israeli

forces withdrew, rockets have continued to be fired almost every single day? That in the days before our visit—almost every day—and often several times a day—rockets continue to be fired from Gaza? I suspect that reality doesn't get much, if any, news play—at least in the non-Jewish media. In fact, rockets fell again just yesterday (Friday).

Depending on which community you are in, you have between 15 to 30 seconds from the time the siren sounds to get to a shelter. But what do you do if you are on a bus full of people, some of whom were much older than Donna and me? They told us if the siren went off to try to get out of the bus and get to a shelter. Yet, they also said, given the numbers on the bus, most likely we would not get out in time, so that, instead, we should lie down in the middle aisle of the bus. Now, how we would all fit lying down and stretched out in the aisle of the bus, no one quite explained, and knowing how impossible that would be, none of us even bothered to ask. Had a rocket landed on or even near our bus, we wouldn't have had a chance.

But you know what? This past Wednesday when we traveled to those communities near the Gaza border, that was the 1st day in the entire week's time that we were there that no rockets were fired. I think Hamas must have heard that my wife, Donna, was coming and so they went into hiding! Donna, you see, takes no prisoners!

It was amazing to stand on a hill in Sderot and look across the field and see the building both in Gaza City itself and in its outlying northern suburbs. You know what we saw? Most prominent were tall fancy-looking condo buildings—maybe 15 to 20 stories high—that years ago Yasser Arafat had paid to be built for his senior officers and cronies.

We learned from the IDF (Israeli army) officer briefing us that when Hamas had staged its coup against Fatah and had taken full control of Gaza, rather than just shooting the

supporters of Fatah, Hamas instead threw them off the rooftops of those high buildings as an object lesson to anyone who would not obey Hamas' orders.

They are a staggeringly cruel regime, Hamas. People who built smuggling tunnels that start in Egypt and end underneath the beds of innocent Palestinian civilians. Terrorists, too, who during the war, knowing that Israeli binoculars were watching their every move, would grab a child to hold onto when they would cross a street so as not to be fired upon by Israelis.

There has been a lot of talk in the media about war crimes carried out during this war, always directed, of course, at the Israeli government. My friends, there were indeed serious war crimes that took place. But not by Israel but by Hamas who stored weapons and shot rockets from elementary schools and homes of civilians in direct violation of the international Geneva conventions. Those are truly—not just morally and ethically but legally—war crimes.

We visited these communities in large part to hear firsthand the stories of the residents of that region. We went, as well, to show our support to those citizens of Israel. In truth, I didn't know if our being there really was of much help and support to those folks. But while there I found out differently. Again and again, people thanked us from coming. We were told that since the war ended we were the largest group—all 50 of us—to come and visit, and people told us how much that did mean to them.

One individual, a young woman who is the educational director of a Masorti , i.e. Conservative synagogue, in Beersheva, perhaps expressed it most powerfully.

She reminded us of the final section of last week's Torah portion, *Behallach*, which describes the battle between the Israelites and the ruthless Amalekites, who also made a practice of attacking civilians. If you recall the narrative,

the Torah says that while Moses lifted up his hands, the Israelites would gain the upper hand, but if his hands fell to his sides, the Amalekites would gain in strength. And Moses' arms would tire from having them raised many hours during the battle. Therefore, while Moses sat on a stone, Aaron and Hur would hold up Moses' hands for him so that victory could be achieved.

This young woman said that not only our coming, but that their learning throughout the war of all the rallies that were being held in Jewish communities across Europe and the United States—such as the community rally held here at Ohev—was of such great help to them. *“You have no idea,”* she said, *“how much those rallies meant to us. To know that others, fellow Jews and Christians around the world were thinking about us, praying for us, standing up to show their support for us, was so precious to our hearts.”* Like Aaron and Hur who held up Moses arms, we who showed our concern, our love for them held up their hands, and that helped in their victory more than we could possibly imagine, she told us.

My friends, we here in the U.S., we here in Orlando, cannot fight alongside the soldiers to help protect Israel from those monsters of Hamas. But we can and we must continue, to hold up their hands, to strengthen them not only during the times of actual war, but also in the battle for getting out the truth to the world about the genuine evil—those masters of atrocities—Hamas, who have no regard for the lives of even their own people. So let us never fail, never tire, never weaken in our resolve to hold the hands of our brothers and sisters in *Eretz Yisroel*. Shabbat Shalom

(c) 2009 Aaron D. Rubinger.

You are welcome to forward this email if you would like, but only in its entirety and unedited. This material may not be published in print or posted on a Web site without the express, written consent of the author. For further

information and consent on reprinting, please email
clergyassist@.

Pastor Brian Zahnd turned to the Bible for answers and discovered in the life of King David an inspiring story of hope and a pattern for full recovery. In *What to Do on the Worst Day of Your Life*, he reveals the steps you can take to recover—and to recover all.

You'll see David weep but not get bitter. You'll see him reorient his vision and regain his passion. And along the journey you'll be reminded that God's great work in David's life was not an odd, one-off miracle but a pattern of faith for all who are facing the worst day of their life. **No one wants trouble to come.** Order *What to Do on the Worst Day of Your Life* today and discover how you can recover...and prevail!

JOIN OUR
COMMUNITY!

Join us today,
interact with
others, find
support from those
facing similar
trials. And learn
the principles you
can use to
recover. And
ultimately to
prevail.

{ CLICK TO JOIN
}

Also follow
us here: