

Shabbos Bereishis at war

JERUSALEM REPORT

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Notice in a Jerusalem shul informing members of the safest locations in the event of an attack, in order of priority: 1) Ma'mad (Security Room); 2) Storage Room and Corridor between the Main Beis Hamedrash and smaller Beis Hamedrash; 3) Interior Wall of the Building; and 4) In the Main Shul, to dis-tance from windows.

At the end of one of the most difficult weeks in our history, here in *Eretz Yisrael* we came to shul on Friday night to be greeted by something we had never seen before. Most weeks on Friday night, the shul noticeboard is full of announcements, notably the latest *Mazel Tovs* in the community: births, *brissim*, *barmitzvahs*, engagements, *chassunahs* and so on.

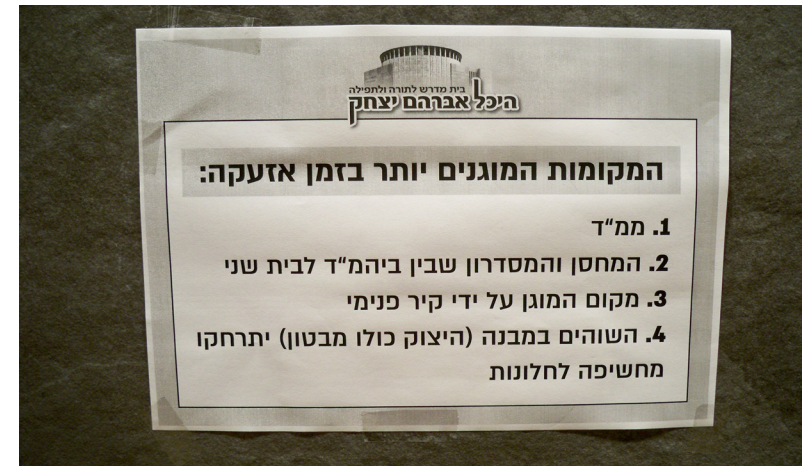
Last Shabbos, however, was different. In shuls there were other notices, too. One was a list of soldiers who had asked shul members to daven for them, evident from the names that many were not even observant. But at this time, they had turned

to us. Other than the printed list, additional names had been added by hand, perhaps by someone on behalf of someone else.

Other lists included those tragically sitting *shivah*, stating the name of the deceased, who had died *'al Kiddush Hashem on Shabbos Kodesh, Simchas Torah'*. So too, were lists of *cholim*, the sick, many of whom had been seriously injured, to daven for them *Besoch Sha'ar Cholei Yisrael*. Most poignant of all were lists of those who had been taken captive, whose fate was unknown, that we should pray for them *Besoch Sha'ar Shevuyei Yisrael*, amongst the other captives of Israel.

Whilst Israel was taken by surprise by the onslaught on Shabbos morning, the army quickly mobilized. But it wasn't only the military that mobilized. The home front, everyday Jews, too, who had never seen military service responded. Called up at a moment's notice, hundreds of thousands of reservists had left without even basic provisions.

Immediately, voluntary groups were organized in areas, with the public notified of drop-off points, requested to donate items such as toothpaste, soaps, towels, snacks, canned drinks, and food, including corn, chickpeas and tuna. From these locations the supplies would be



delivered to army bases, until the army itself could catch up.

Additionally, women's groups quickly organized in different areas to ensure that those in particular need were provided for: the housebound, elderly, sick, and mothers with children home from school. Food parcels were delivered and meals prepared. All this, of course, was apart from those who waited on line to donate blood

at *Magen Dovid Adom* and those who had volunteered to assist in hospitals.

So, we continue here in *Eretz Yisrael*, not running to the radio or newspapers for every bit of information, but gleaning only enough to take appropriate measures.

The hearts and minds of Israel have been mobilized.

The author is an avreich in Jerusalem.