



Security for the Jewish community was a top agenda item as an Orthodox Union Delegation led by OU President Harvey Blitz and Executive Vice President Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb met with Attorney General John Ashcroft on July 30, 2002. Rabbi Hershel Billet, President of the RCA was also present.

## Security: A Communal Priority

Dozens of Jewish organizations from around the United States and Canada par-

ticipated in the Orthodox Union's Security Seminar in July at the Orthodox Union's headquarters in lower Manhattan. Area synagogues, schools and communal institutions were represented at the one-day seminar, and kehillot from Phoenix to Montreal participated through a live webcast via the Internet. Representatives of the Orthodox Union, Jewish Community Relations Council and the Jewish Community Security Trust of the United Kingdom were among the day's presenters.

"This conference serves as the beginning of a discussion on institutional security in the Jewish community," said Rabbi Moshe D. Krupka, National Director of Community and Synagogue Services. "We organized this Security Seminar to provide a program that will have a positive impact in our community, particularly in light of recent FBI warnings and renewed threats against Jewish targets in the United States."

In his introductory remarks, Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, Executive Vice President of the Orthodox Union, urged every Jewish community to learn about security and implement whatever is necessary, "so that Jewish gathering places can protect our families." Rabbi Weinreb invited

participants to make use of the OU's resources and to work together to come up with a response to the security needs of the American Jewish community.

David M. Pollock, Associate Executive Director of New York's Jewish Community Relations Council and Community Security Resource Liaison, discussed the increase in anti-Semitic attacks around the world since the start of the Arab uprising against Israel. While a third of all attacks are against individuals, most attacks include damage to property, which too often is treated by police as ordinary crime, Pollock explained.

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or e-mail: [membership@ou.org](mailto:membership@ou.org)

### An alert from the JCRC of New York

## High Holiday Security Planning

More people attend *Yamim Noraim* services than any other synagogue event. Congregations around the world are already busy planning meaningful services and are faced with the additional burden of ensuring that congregants are as safe as possible. There is no specific cause for alarm, but prudent measures to protect our constituencies are always in order.

In these uncertain times people appreciate security measures rather

*(continued on page 10)*

FROM THE DESK OF

## Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

Executive Vice President



אם ה' לא יבנה בית שוא עמלו בוניו בו, אם-ה' לא ישמר-עיר שוא שקד שומר

If God will not build the house, in vain do its builders labor on it; if God will not guard the city, in vain is the watchman vigilant (Tehilim 127: 1).

This verse from Tehilim speaks about the twin processes of building – *binyan* – and protecting – *shmira*. Both processes are necessary, and both require human effort together with divine assistance.

These twin processes are both mitzvot with regard to the Beit HaMikdash. The Rambam speaks of the mitzvah of building the Beit HaMikdash along with the mitzvah of protecting it. The mitzvah of “protecting” was effectuated by having members of the tribe of Levi positioned at various stations at all times. Even when there was no fear of enemy intruders, the Leviim maintained their position, just as symbols of the glory of the Holy Place.

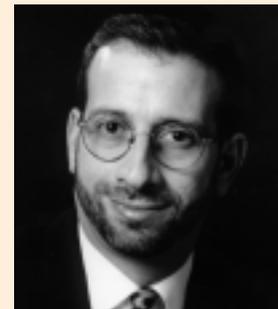
At all times, we are called upon to build holy places, to expand the boundaries of *Kedusha* – in *Eretz Yisrael*, and across the world. But in our difficult times, the mitzvah of *shmira*, of guarding against danger, has become the special challenge. The Orthodox Union is committed to responding to the challenge in every possible way, and the ideas contained in this issue of “Synagogue Trends” will help in this response.

We look forward to a day when *shmira* will only be symbolic, and when we can concentrate on *binyan*. For now, however, we must be vigilant and act effectively and responsibly to protect ourselves and our sacred facilities. We do so in the knowledge that we can only be successful with **דשמיא**, with heavenly assistance, and it is for that assistance that we pray so fervently during these Days of Awe.

FROM THE DESK OF

## Rabbi Moshe D. Krupka

National Director, OU Department of Community and Synagogue Services



We in the Department of Community and Synagogue Services are proud to present you, the leadership of Orthodox kehillot throughout North America, with this new edition of “Synagogue Trends”. This special edition is devoted entirely to the subject of security for the Jewish community.

I am sure that each of us in preparing for the *Yamim Noraim* would rather focus our attention on more spiritual matters than terrorism, vandalism, and anti-Semitism. Regrettably, the Jewish people, this year, are faced with a heightened degree of threat and uncertainty.

As communal leaders, we have a responsibility to provide for the safety of our constituency. It is precisely for that reason that the Orthodox Union felt it crucial to hold a training seminar dedicated to the topic of security. This seminar was held on July 10, 2002 in our Manhattan headquarters with a capacity crowd and with many others joining us via live Internet web-cast from throughout North America (details about obtaining a video of the seminar can be found on the back page of this issue).

This “Synagogue Trends” is a synopsis of the topics covered during that seminar. **It is not the final word on security preparation for the Jewish community; it is only the beginning.** We hope to initiate a dialogue that will evolve and develop over the coming months as we respond to new realities here in the United States and around the world. What is critical is that each of us begins discussions in our own kehillot on this topic, and places the issue of security in the forefront of our communal agenda.

As always we in the OU Department of Community and Synagogue Services are available to help you. As you develop your local protocols and procedures to ensure the safety of your membership, feel free to call upon us for help and resources.

To paraphrase the closing *tefillot* of *N'eilah* on Yom Kippur: **שערי שמים פתח, והושיענו אלקי ישענו** – ‘Open the gates of heaven...and save us, O God of our salvation.’ Let us hope that our efforts to safeguard our community will provide the necessary actions to ensure a safe and secure environment, and more importantly that our prayers during these *Yamim Noraim* bring about the desired divine intervention that will remove these threats and uncertainties from our lives once and for all.

Best wishes for a *Ketivah v'Chatimah Tovah* for you, your family, and community.

**Security:  
A Communal Priority**

*(continued from page 1)*

He recommends that every Jewish community implement a three-tiered plan of action, which includes vigilance, hardening and planning. Pollock said that communities should not overly rely on technology, but should instead train people to be the eyes and ears of the police.

“After all, the worst enemy of a terrorist is a good neighbor,” Pollock said. The Jewish Community Relations Council, for example, was instrumental in prompting the New York City Police Department to establish its anti-terror hotline, 1-888-NYC-SAFE, which can be called with tips nationwide. Pollock urged every Jewish institution to make itself a harder target for terror; and for synagogues to plan for extra High Holiday security [see alert on page 1].

Representatives of the Jewish Community Security Trust of the United Kingdom (CST) presented the hands-on portion of the seminar. With its roots in the East End of London following World War II, CST

is a non-profit organization that works closely with police and government officials to provide security for the Jewish community across the UK.

“CST is seen as an invaluable resource by the British police to help fight terror; anti-Semitism and racism,” the conference was told. Drawing from across the Jewish communal spectrum, CST is considered in Britain to be a model for providing security to minority communities.

The CST’s assessment is that threats against Jewish targets must be taken very seriously. A study of recently discovered documents in Afghanistan showed outlined targets for terror to include United States holdings and landmarks, as well as Jewish communal facilities. The “Manual of Afghan Jihad” states that Jews must be sought out as targets and that “any strike should cause thousands of deaths.” It is known that Bin Laden forged alliances with Hezbollah and suicide bombers, training thousands of “volunteers” as terrorists in Bosnia, Chechnya and Afghanistan.

CST is founded on the basic premise



that “we cannot rely on other people to defend our community.” While we cannot necessarily predict the next attack, we must prepare our communities properly and share information with one another.

In discussing “New Threats, New Realities,” the conference was given a practical introduction into the measures which CST has developed in order to enhance the safety of the Anglo-Jewish community. For example, every single Jewish communal building in the UK has a security officer; (usually a lay leader from within the community), who is responsible for the security of that building. Emphasis is placed on the need to build relationships between the Jewish community and local law enforcement and there is in place a laundry list of do’s and don’ts should an anti-Semitic incident occur: From the obvious - such as reporting the information to the police, providing the basic details of an attack, etc., - to the not-so-obvious - providing evidence such as photographs, videotapes and witness statements - CST encourages and supports every synagogue, school and community center in the UK to implement appropriate security measures. There are specific procedures in place to handle telephone threats

**Communities should not overly rely on technology, but should instead train people to be the eyes and ears of the police; the worst enemy of a terrorist is a good neighbor.**



*A capacity crowd of communal leaders hones up on security awareness.*

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## Editor's Message



HAVE A NICE DAY. — I start my message with a casual, sincere, disarming, and profound greeting. I wish a nice day to readers who are doubtless experiencing tension from threats and attacks against Israel and Jews. I wish a nice day to readers who are being inundated if not overwhelmed with precautionary security warnings and advice. I hope that you the reader will take security precautions and that you will heed good advice. But I hope that you will not let security concerns overwhelm you.

This issue of "Synagogue Trends" is intended to be an informative introduction to the vast topic of synagogue security. It encapsulates some of the important security considerations synagogues and Jewish community institutions should consider – always, but especially in today's political climate.

This issue is not intended to be alarmist or apocalyptic. As is the goal of all "Synagogue Trends," this issue is intended to inform synagogues of relevant, important and useful considerations to help

synagogues to be as effective as they can.

There is a lot of overlap between the articles on these pages. As diverse as the subject of security is, many elements of the topic interrelate. Furthermore, when dealing in generalities with a topic that has many specifics, it is difficult not to repeat certain universalities.

**DISCLAIMER:** I want to make it perfectly clear that this magazine is not an attempt to cover all issues of security. This magazine should not and can not substitute for a professional security survey. This is at best a primer. It is intended to get you thinking from a security perspective. Hopefully this will motivate you to prioritize your shul's security while giving you some practical ideas as to areas which deserve proper investigation.

We expect to focus further on this topic, as it is clearly a synagogue trend. As always we in the Department of Community and Synagogue Services remain available to work with you on all synagogue issues. So read, think, enjoy...and have a nice day.

Rabbi Mayer Waxman, *Editor*

and mail; how to have secure access control; and how to implement a disaster management plan. The success of these security measures depends on proper staff training and the sharing of information.

"Communication is the key to everything CST does," the conference was told. "Build a relationship between your community and local law enforcement and report incidents ASAP – don't wait. Make sure there is follow-up as well."

CST recommends that each institution do a security survey, or request one from their local police department. They advised caution when advertising events, recommending that too much information about large events not be publicized.

Among CST's domestic guidelines which could be adopted by the Jewish community in America are the following:

- **Deterrent Security:** Have trained, professional-looking security personnel at your front door. The benefit: Stopping an incident before it happens. There should at least be well trained volunteers filling this role.
- **Access Control and Circles of Security:** If you get it right at the front door that will serve as a blue-

print for 100% security. Guard the outer perimeter of your facility as well as other areas before anyone can get to "the front door."

- **Weapons:** The greatest weapon is a camera! Closed circuit video and even a disposable camera will serve as deterrent security.

- **Suspicious or non-suspicious?** As far as your facility is concerned there are only two types of people. Don't make it easy for suspicious people to enter your buildings. If you're unsure about someone, don't let them in.

- **Instinct:** Following a gut reaction is often best.

The seminar included a question and answer period where participants asked about balancing openness and suspicion; balancing threats with fear; "profiling" within Jewish institutions; financial assistance for increased security and security measures allowed on Shabbat.

Some of the topics discussed at the seminar are discussed in further detail in these pages. The entire seminar is available on video by contacting the Department of Community and Synagogue Services. The Orthodox Union is committed to bringing similar programs to com-

munities throughout the country and will work with synagogues, schools and community groups in planning a conference. Please contact the Orthodox Union Department of Community and Synagogue Services at 212 -613 -8188.

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# Circles of Defense

Security measures, to be effective and professional, must radiate beyond the immediate vicinity which is being protected. Premeditated attacks or offensive actions are accompanied by surveying the target, planning, and pre-attack activities. If all of a shul's security precautions are compounded at the door; then by the time an attack reaches the front door it will often be too late to implement existing security measures.

To bolster security while maximizing resources it is important to create an extended safe perimeter. This can be achieved by utilizing

**Security is in place to make members and guests feel comfortable, not uncomfortable.**

Circles of Defense. This method entails the establishment of several areas around the synagogue, each of which represents a different level of security vigilance.

There are three general "circles" which a synagogue should consider. The widest reaching is the Outer Circle. Next comes the Middle Circle. The final, most intimate circle is the Inner Circle. The function of all of these circles will now be explored

The **Outer Circle** is the vicinity outside the synagogue, yet close enough that it should be watched. It is from this area that the shul would be observed by people planning to disrupt it. Synagogue professionals, lay leaders and members should be taught to be aware of suspicious or out of the ordinary people, vehicles, or events in this area.

If a car circles the block and passes the shul slowly two or more times, it is suspicious. If there is an out of place truck or van parked nearby and no one observes anyone moving to or from it, be wary. If someone is standing in the Outer Circle and taking pictures or writing notes, be suspicious. People from the shul should have a sense of what is normal around the shul. Anything which breaks the pattern of normalcy deserves further consideration.

The Outer Circle should be monitored for the purpose of observing, questioning, and filming suspicious people, vehicles, and acts. That means if you see someone who looks suspicious [but not if they appear dangerous!] approach them – which lets them know they have been seen – and ask why they are there. Ask open questions such as "What brings you here?" By getting general information from them you can usually determine quickly if they are in fact suspicious. It is important that in such interactions you remain non-

confrontational and that you do not give them any information. If the person remains suspicious, call 911, tell them you represent a synagogue, and describe your concerns.

This is an instance where having an easily accessible camera comes in handy. A shul should have an instant camera, a digital camera, or a one-step camera such as the disposable kind for the weekday use of whatever shul personnel might be watching the vicinity. Should this person observe a person who still seems suspicious after initial contact, snap a picture. Do this only when it will not expose you to excess risk; do this if you are close enough to the synagogue that you can get in and lock it before the suspicious person could stop you. If the person has no ill plans for the shul, this will not cause much fuss.

The purpose for doing this is to let a person with bad intent know that if something should happen to the shul, there will be a picture identifying this person as a suspect.

Similarly, take pictures of cars

passing slowly for a second time or of suspicious parked vehicles. Try to get the license plates in pictures, as well as the cars' makes and models. This information should be shared with synagogue contacts in the local authorities immediately via the congregation's community liaison.

The **Middle Circle** is where synagogue security – including professionals, lay-leaders and volunteers – address people who approach the synagogue. Security is in place to make members and guests feel comfortable, not uncomfortable. If a member or someone you know comes in or brings in a guest, let them in. But if someone who is not familiar wants to come in, find out who the person is.

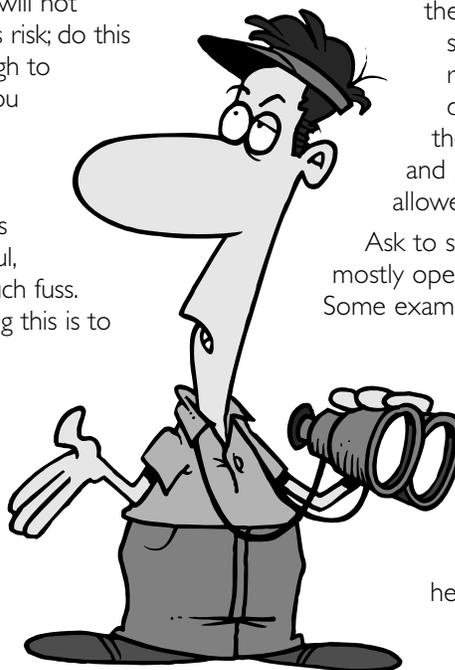
Whether there are regular services taking place, a regularly scheduled class, a special event, or nothing in particular a synagogue representative should have an idea of everyone who is there, and why. Whoever is in charge of security cannot assume that strangers are there for a good reason; a valid reason must be established. Ask them who they are and what brings them there. If they answer your questions appropriately and you are satisfied with the

answers, let them in. If they have no good reason to be there or refuse to answer questions altogether, they remain suspicious and should not be allowed in.

Ask to see identification. Ask mostly open-ended questions. Some examples of the type of

questions you should ask a stranger are, "can I help you?" "What brings you here?" "Who do you know here?" "Who is your rabbi?"

When questioning a



stranger; make eye contact; does the stranger avoid returning the look in the eyes? Is the person sweating profusely? Is the person talking too fast, or hesitating to answer some seemingly innocuous questions?

**Don't enter the building if you have reason to believe an attacker may be there. Don't touch a box you think may be booby-trapped; alert the authorities.**

Does the person look nervous? These signs should telegraph to you that this person has something to hide. Do not let such a person in, and contact the authorities. For weekdays consider requiring that all strangers' bags be checked by someone who is trained in this skill. If there is an eruv in your community you should also check the tallit bags strangers bring into the shul on Shabbat. Of course this precaution, like any other measure, is not failsafe.

Nonetheless, searching the bags of strangers might turn up some ill intentioned wares, and it shows the community that you are serious about stopping those with bad intent. This method is a deterrent to potential attackers, and encouraging PR for shul members.

The **Inner Circle** is the core of what you are protecting. One must pass through the Outer Circle and the Middle Circle to reach the Inner Circle, but you must remain steadfast in your protection of this Inner Circle. This means that everyone must remain alert to anything out of the ordinary.

The first person in the shul and the last one out must make sure that all

doors and windows are locked. Look around the facility, inside and out, every night and every day. If something looks out of the ordinary – a jimmied window, a suspicious box outside the back door – alert the authorities. Don't enter the building if you have reason to believe an attacker may be there. Don't touch a box you think may be booby-trapped; alert the authorities.

The synagogue is the center of Jewish life. To live comfortably as Jews we must be able to feel safe and secure in our own synagogues. In today's political climate, that means we must alter the openness and trust of the ideal situation. But with proper precautions and preparedness, the sanctity and comfort of the synagogue can be maintained for the community by using circles of defense

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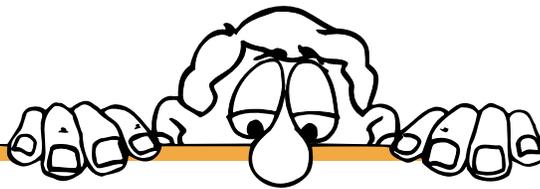
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Many Israeli communities, organizations, families, even units of soldiers are thirsting for the kind of support and attention your synagogue could easily provide through small drives and projects. Connect with an interested community in Israel. Call Tobey Herzog at (212) 613-8399, or see the OU Online Israel Resource Center at [www.ou.org/israel](http://www.ou.org/israel)

*“I think what you are talking about is a very exciting idea....social needs still exist, and often are exacerbated by the 'situation', but are not getting the help they need. As usual it is the little guys who are getting hurt the most.”*

GAILA COHEN MORRISON, MITZPE YERICHO

# Building Security



The synagogue – or school or community center etc. – is the building in which your congregation gathers to bask in the warmth of community. To help ensure that the physical space of the shul is as safe as it feels emotionally, it is important to maintain a secure facility. This article is an attempt to familiarize the reader with some key areas of the building and its surroundings which deserve attention when setting up a security system, and when opening the building in the morning and closing it at night.

**Many precautions will not by themselves keep potential intruders out, but they will serve as deterrents, and make the intruders' ill goals that much harder to achieve.**

## Involve Law Enforcement

The first point that must be considered is that there are experts available to help congregations establish a secure facility. Set up an appointment with your local police department to audit the building's security. Get their input on what should be implemented or installed where. There are also security firms that create security plans for institutions. There are of course also security equipment companies which will do similar audits, but they usually have in mind the goal of selling you their equipment. It will serve your congregation well to utilize the local police and to familiarize yourself with possible areas of concern, as well as available security equipment, before having the building surveyed by a security equipment firm.

When conducting the security survey you will start from the outside and work inwards. As you inspect the environs, be methodical and think like the enemy. Look for any possible weak point or point of easy access. This will be the best way to secure those areas.

Look for fire hazards as well. Although your intended goal may be establishing security from intruders, keep other safety risks to the building in mind. The police might be able

to help you spot areas of fire concern – such as precarious wiring or masses of paper too near lights, electricity or the kitchen – but it would behoove you to involve the fire department in your survey as well.

## Secure the Perimeter

Creating a safe environment entails securing the building itself, as well as the perimeter around it. Securing the perimeter includes making sure the area around the shul is well lit at all times. You might consider putting up fences at whichever sides of the building possible. If there are areas around the shul that are hidden by shrubbery, especially near low windows, consider replacing brush with prickly bushes that will deter people from getting too close. These, like any precautions will not themselves keep potential intruders out, but they will serve as deterrents, and make intruders' ill goals that much harder to achieve. Any cameras or people who monitor the synagogue environment for security should scan the whole outlying area, not just the immediate vicinity.

## Secure Doors

When it comes to protecting the building itself the first concern is the main entrance. In these times no one should enter your building with-

out being identified. To minimize the possible points of entry, there should be only one open doorway. Some might initially complain about the inconvenience of having to walk around the building to get to the open entrance, but everyone should understand the need for maintaining everyone's safety. The main doorway should have strong, sturdy, secure doors, with secure hinges as well. There should be secure locks on the doors, such as bolt locks.

Some congregations opt for access control systems to be used on weekdays. These are systems which keep the doors locked until someone inside identifies the person at the door and "buzzes" them in. These systems can entail a set-up in which there is a person stationed directly inside the doors who lets people in, or systems can involve methods of remote access such as audio entry speakers or phones, video surveyed entrance, or a video audio combination.

A security officer – either professional or volunteer – should be at the door when the doors are unlocked to monitor who is coming in. It is a powerful deterrent to have a visible, clearly identifiable security guard at the front door.

The doors should allow you to discern who is outside, such as via a spy hole or video camera. Other possible points of entry in the building should be secured, and checked throughout the day. Most synagogues have more



**From the OU Israel Action Task Forces:**

## THIS IS A TEST

*(answers, page 8):*

**What Can I Do for Israel?**

1. Who would appreciate a bundle of "Shanah Tovah" cards from you at: AWIS, 60 Weizman St. Tel Aviv, Israel 62155?
2. How many Americans made aliyah in 2001 and 2002?
3. What has caused a \$1.2-1.5 billion loss per year in revenue to Israel?
4. How many Israelis have been killed in terror attacks since September 2000? Injured? (as of 8/6/2002)
5. List three ways you can buy Israeli products in America.

than one door. Make sure these doors are secure too, and that they are kept locked throughout the day. Be even more mindful of these doors if there are people around who might use them: is there a door near the kitchen and is the caterer in today? Is the door to the playground in back and are there youth groups taking place today. It is important that all relevant parties be allowed to take full advantage of the amenities of the facility, but it is imperative that someone be in charge of assuring that doors and windows are secure when not being watched.

### Secure Windows

Regarding windows, make sure that window locks and frames are secure. You may consider investing in shatterproof windows – or consider treating existing windows with impenetrable laminate.

### Alarm Systems

Alarm systems are usually to detect fire, intruders, or integrate the two purposes. [There are also alarms which monitor carbon-monoxide in the air which were proven important after several tragedies last year.] There are many types of alarm systems and video surveillance products available. One security hardware suggestion is to have a burglar alarm connected with a Central Station which is immediately informed when the perimeter is breached, and which responds appropriately. Such a security system will ideally keep unwanted intruders out of the synagogue when it is closed, and will at least

keep the appropriate synagogue personnel informed should someone enter. Motion detectors for inside the shul doors when the shul is closed are also worthwhile. Motion detectors and an added alarm system near the Aron Kodesh is important, even if the Aron is reinforced like a safe and under lock and key.

At strategic locations in the shul there should be panic buttons to alert the Central Station that there is a distress situation taking place. In a similar vein, have a cell phone readily accessible in the sanctuary. The shul office should have a panic button, some shuls place one by the rabbi's chair as well.

Many modern security systems can be set on Shabbat-clock-like timers for Shabbat use. This is not a Halachic discourse, and there are many Halachic issues that can arise in regard to alarm and camera use. Please involve appropriate Halachic authorities when establishing a security system.

### Cameras

There is value to having video cameras or closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras which monitor the doors, as well as the perimeter. These should transmit to a monitor in the office. The complexity of such systems ranges from simple internal video or digital monitors to complex systems which can transmit to the internet. This latter system allows you to monitor the shul from home or when on vacation – if the shul has a preschool program, it is possible to

set up cameras so parents can check in on their kids during the day via the internet!

### Emergency Plans

There are many types of emergencies: natural and manmade. The congregation should establish some emergency plans so that congregants or designated leaders will know what to do in emergency situations. Some shuls have committees which establish such plans. A building is made more secure when its occupants, when the community, is prepared to react effectively to emergency situations. Here too it would be beneficial to involve local law enforcement, as well as fire and emergency services.

As with all issues of security, the topic of building security is wide-ranging and complex. There is no end to the list of what-ifs. It is important to earnestly and judiciously survey the building, institute prudent security measures, and establish a set of sensible emergency plans. In this way you can not only keep the shul as safe as it can be, but you can instill in the congregation a serene sense of security. And that is how people should feel when they are in shul.

*Rabbi Mayer Waxman, Director of Community Services and Editor of Synagogue Trends holds a masters degree in forensic psychology. Although not a security expert – most of the information in these articles is thanks to CST and to David Pollock of the JCRC – he can be reached for further discourse on the subject at (212) 613-8285, or at waxmanm@ou.org*

### From the OU Israel Action Task Forces:

### ANSWERS (questions, page 7)

1. IDF soldiers! Also see [www.apackagefromhome.org](http://www.apackagefromhome.org) to send care packages.
2. 1200 Americans made aliyah each year. Encourage aliyah in your synagogue: [www.aliyah.org](http://www.aliyah.org) [www.tehilla.com](http://www.tehilla.com) [www.nefeshbnefesh.org](http://www.nefeshbnefesh.org)
3. Drop off in tourism is costing Israel \$1.2-\$1.5 billion/year. The OU Missions Desk can help. Call 212-613-8171. OU missions are being scheduled for November, January, and February.
4. 604 Israelis killed. 4462 injured. See [www.walk4israel.com](http://www.walk4israel.com) for ways to provide assistance to these families.
5. Online! At Israeli vendor fairs: See our calendar of fairs nationwide, and learn who to speak to to arrange a fair for your community! And buy Israeli products in America. Online shopping, fair information and product lists all at [www.ou.org/israel](http://www.ou.org/israel)

The Orthodox Union Department of Community and Synagogue Services proudly announces the new

### "ISRAEL MISSIONS" DESK



Call Richard Stareshefsky to arrange synagogue or group missions to Israel, or to join the next OU mission to Israel

**Next OU Missions to Israel:  
Nov. 23 – Dec. 1, 2002**

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Winter Solidarity Mission:  
Jan. 18 – 26, 2003**

# Threat Assessment for Events

“Be prepared.” The renowned motto of the Boy Scouts seems prudent even as it is unfeasible. You can't foresee all the complications [or worse] that will befall you. Synagogue leaders know that this is particularly true when running an event or function. But from a security perspective, if you take the time to clearly consider each step of running an event, you will certainly bolster your preparedness for security threats.

The Community Security Trust (CST) suggests that synagogue leadership assess these ten criteria from a security perspective when preparing an event. As with other security issues, it is important to interact with the authorities in establishing security plans. This list should help you focus while conducting your event security assessment together with the police.

## Advertising

Consider what information you are publicizing regarding the event, and in how public a forum. If major media publicizes your event – either via advertising or as a news item – you are readily exposed to infiltration by potential disruptors. If someone is looking to particularly target a Jewish gathering, they are likely to monitor Jewish newspapers for event listings. If they are looking to target a particular neighborhood or area, they will note information in posters which line the community that publicize local events.

This concern does not mean that you should not advertise your events. Advertise and publicize, but be cognizant of the information that is in the public's reach. Take appropriate security precautions with this in mind.

## VIPs

Will the event feature a known personality, dignitary or other VIP? Publicizing that person's presence will of course help attract the target audience to the event. It also pre-

sents an attraction to disruptors. Are there existing threats to that VIP? You, in coordination with the VIP and with law enforcement, must take security precautions for the VIP as well as for the audience.

## Entrance to the event

Will there be someone monitoring who attends the event? Someone – or a small group of people including checkers and security personnel – should be checking the invitations, tickets or names on a

list of people attending. If the event doesn't require reservations, someone should be taking names, or at least be looking over who is entering. Intuition and gut sense are surprisingly accurate most of the time – although it is best not to rely on them exclusively.

Especially in today's political climate it is not unusual to have someone at the door of a weekday event searching bags and purses. Some events even utilize metal detecting wands. If the event is totally open, with no one monitoring the door, then it is most vulnerable.

## Location (location location...)

Know the location before the event! Is the neighborhood of the location generally safe? Have there been threats to or actual security breaches of the location in the past? Does the location have its own security personnel? If so, are they reliable? If you haven't utilized the facility before, consult with someone who has. Establish a security plan that includes monitoring of all possible entranceways.

## Organization

Some organizations, by nature of their being Jewish or Israeli, are more likely targets to hate mongers. Synagogues fall into this category. Nonetheless, some synagogues are more prominent targets than others. Has your congregation been in the news much recently? Is your Rabbi

or are your leaders often quoted in the media? Does your congregation otherwise stand out? Has the synagogue received threats? Have there been recent threats or warnings to Jews in your community?

## Date of Event

Some dates are particularly prone to disruptive events – as represented in the extreme by Tisha B'Av. Does the date of your event coincide with any volatile anniversaries? Are there other events taking place that day – rallies, protests, marches – which could effect your event?

## Attendance

Larger crowds attract more attention – both wanted and unwanted. Of course you must take security precautions for small events, but the bigger the event the more likely that security will be an issue. You must also make sure that there are enough security professionals or volunteers to attend to the needs of a larger gathering.

Other important considerations when dealing with larger crowds include assuring there are enough exit routs in the event of an emergency. Consider health issues: will there be enough room to avoid people being crushed? Enough air? Enough bathrooms? Are there trained emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with oxygen, defibrillator, epinephrine, sterile dressings etc. in the vicinity? Be particularly cognizant of fire hazards when addressing the security concerns of large crowds.

## Threats

This issue of “Synagogue Trends” is unfortunately relevant to the times, as threats against Jews abound. That is a factor that must be considered when making security plans for an event. If there is a high alert level at the time of the event or its planning, extra security efforts are in order.

The level of threats can be assessed from Federal warnings, local warnings from law enforcement and from community and Jewish watchdog

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groups. Their information, as may yours, derives from specific threats to your shul, your community, to Jews, or from more general threats including reliable third-party hearsay.

### **Past Incidents**

As George Santayana famously said, those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it. If you have experienced incidents in the past, review how they occurred and take precautions to avoid them. Similarly, review the history of the location you are holding your event, have they experienced incidents? Have similar events in the vicinity experienced incidents?

Most professionally planned events are followed up with post-operational reports. Try to review the post operational reports of others who have run comparable events without incident, as well as of those who experienced incidents. Similarly, review the post-op reports of other events held in that location. Even upon reviewing others' reports you must try to expect the unexpected – as much as it is possible to “Be prepared.”

### **Community Interest**

Your considerations will not be made in a vacuum. Community politics may take a role in your security planning. Sometimes you may want to supply more visible security than your assessment deems necessary. You might also have security volunteers arrange with the local authorities to help out at events in the

broader community which have some Jewish participation but are not Jewish communal events. It is critical, however, not to let political concerns lead you to apply less security than is prescribed.

### **Real Time Assessment**

At the time the event is taking place the security measures in place must be continually assessed for adequacy in light of the reality of the event. Preparedness is the crux of security planning. Nonetheless your security system must maintain flexibility during the actual event to assure its relevance and worth.

During the event you must constantly consider all the previous points and be prepared to update/change your assessment/plan at any time.

Some of the factors which you should consider during the event are:

- The operational plan of the event: is everything running as planned and does the security meet the existent needs?
- Stages/times: is there enough security for each focal shift of the event? Are any adjustments in security which are planned to be made as the program progresses running coordinately?
- Are security personnel positioned appropriately?
- Are security shifts and adjustments rotating adequately?
- Are your security measures working well with other security forces involved?
- During the event reevaluate your

planned emergency procedures, evacuation procedures, plans in the event of medical emergencies or attacks. Are they realistic and workable?

- Searching of the premises for intruders and suspicious packages should take place not just as a preparation, but throughout the event as well.

A last-but-not-least insight: attacks often take place after an event. Secure the exits and their periphery. Also make sure that the last people closing up the event are protected, and that the security volunteers themselves have some security as they finish their task and depart.

### **Post Event Assessment**

After an event is run, write a post-operational report. This will minimize the effort for you next time you run an event, as well as for your congregation. The report should be shared with other congregations or community organizations and groups to establish a continuity of information and to ease event planning. But do not share the report too liberally or freely, if it goes beyond its intended audience it not only loses its value, but it provides a blueprint for someone wanting to breach security.

This list is long. Even so, there are many unique considerations which must be made for every situation. Do not be daunted by the massiveness of the possibilities. Rather, be prudent, be cautious, and feel secure in the knowledge that “*hakol bydei Shamaim...*”

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## **High Holiday Security Planning**

*(continued from page 1)*

than resent them. Some of these measures have halachic implications. Therefore, they should only be implemented after appropriate consultation with your rabbi.

The following are recommendations regarding issues that should be considered during your High Holiday planning process:

### **Tickets**

Most institutions require High Holiday tickets as a matter of course.

In the current environment High Holiday tickets can be an important component of a security plan. Institutions should assume that those in possession of legitimate tickets should be admitted to services. How secure is your High Holiday ticket? Do you give blocks of tickets to third parties (e.g., Hillels) for distribution? Could it be counterfeited on easily obtained cardstock or on a color copier?

If tickets are to play a role in your security plan those receiving tickets should be pre-screened. There is an obvious hierarchy to those attending High Holiday services: long-term

members, long-term casuals (who regularly attend only on the holidays) and new casuals.

New casual attendees require the greatest scrutiny. If someone calls to purchase tickets their identity should be confirmed. Are they in the phone book? Did they pay by check or credit card? Is their name and address printed on their checks? Be suspicious of anyone who insists on paying in cash.

### **Training**

As plans are developed staff and volunteers should be informed and trained to carry them out. Specific concerns

include screening and monitoring congregants, evacuation procedures, etc. Written policies and procedures are the easiest to carry out effectively.

### **Communication**

Use newsletters and flyers to inform your congregants about visible changes in security and any changes in policy, e.g., advising congregants to carry fewer bags, that weapons will not be allowed, etc. Attendees tend to feel reassured if they know that security concerns are being addressed.

### **Emergency Communication**

How will you communicate in case of emergency? Does the staff have walkie-talkies or cell phones? Are there "panic buttons" at key locations that signal a central alarm company that there is an emergency?

### **Vendors**

Be prepared to look gift horses in the mouth! Be suspicious of vendors offering prices that are too good to be true. How well do you know your caterer, baker, florist, security or janitorial supplies dealers? Known purveyors are less likely to be abusing their relationship to gain illicit entry to your building. If you are going to make a change be sure to ask for and to check references.

### **Crowd Control**

The JCRC recommends that no person should be admitted to any Jewish facility unchallenged and this holds true of synagogues on the High Holidays. Wherever possible, tickets should be required. Those checking tickets can be assisted by long-term members or staff who can personally identify congregants. Only those specifically identified by ticket or by a known person should be admitted to your services. Develop a policy about handling people without tickets. If you don't want to require tickets do you have an alternative method of identifying congregants? Should you prepare signs to inform your congregants of any changes in policies? Do you have a way of immediately notifying the police if you need assistance?

### **Disposable Cameras**

It's a good idea to keep a disposable camera handy in case you see some-

thing suspicious or if a suspicious person approaches your facility on a weekday or pre- or post-Shabbat or holiday. The mere fact that a picture is being taken could prove to be a deterrent.

### **Searching: People and Bags**

Determine your policies ahead of time. Should everyone be searched or should you "profile" those wishing to enter? Should you use metal detectors?

### **Evacuation Planning**

In the event of a threat or an actual emergency it may be necessary to evacuate the building. If a threat is received it should immediately be reported to the police.

Each congregation should have an evacuation plan. The plan should explicitly:

1. Determine lines of authority – Who makes the determination to evacuate the building? One person must be in charge. How will the decision be communicated?
2. Map out logistics – If your sanctuary has several exits plan which rows or sections should use each exit – ahead of time. How will you notify each of the services or classes meeting in your building that an evacuation has been ordered? Prepare the evacuation announcements with explicit directions, in writing, and have the appropriate announcement available on the bimah and other convenient locations in case it is necessary to order an evacuation.
3. Have family assembly areas – Since many synagogues have several, simultaneous services any announcement should include provisions to reunite families. For example, parents should know that they can meet their children at a specific location outside rather than adding to the chaos by trying to find them inside the building.
4. Identify mutual support agreements with neighboring institutions or facilities – an evacuation could be necessary during inclement weather. By pre-arranging an agreement with a neighboring facility you can instruct your congre-

gants to relocate to a specific site should an emergency occur.

### **Security Guards**

While police departments in the region will give extra attention to synagogues during the holidays (remember: notify your local police precinct of the times of all services), it is rare that police will be stationed inside the building. Many synagogues hire extra staff at this time. While anyone in a uniform provides some benefit of deterrence, the most effective guards are those with adequate training and supervision (Note: New York State requires all security guards to be licensed). If you choose to use an outside security company make sure to request and to check references.

Many people ask whether they should hire armed guards. Experts believe that the most important qualification of a guard is his/her training. Putting a weapon in the hands of a poorly trained individual can be more dangerous in an emergency than not having an armed person.

Alternatively, many security companies employ off-duty and retired police and corrections officers. Their training is a distinct advantage.

These suggestions are not meant to cause alarm, but rather to describe the prudent measures that synagogues can implement to ensure safe holidays for all. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call David Pollock at the JCRC (212) 983-4800, ext. 132 or email him at PollockD@jcrny.org.

*David Pollock is the Associate Executive Director of New York's Jewish Community Relations Council and the Community Security Resource Liaison*

**From the OU Israel Action Task Forces:**

#### **Help Send \$2.3 Billion to Israel!**

##### **Attention all synagogues :**

Don't just call. MEET with your representatives now to encourage their support for President Bush's proposed \$2.3 billion in foreign aid to Israel. Every community is needed! See [www.ou.org](http://www.ou.org) <http://www.ou.org/> for a how-to "Town Hall Meeting" guide with talking points on this issue and the Arafat Accountability Act and the Syria Accountability Act. Or call the IPA at (212) 613-8123.

Action Point: Please post your representatives' addresses on your bulletin boards and encourage your members to write to them.

# SecurityAlert

for synagogues, schools  
and Jewish organizations



These times demand that increased vigilance and security measures must be put into place.

We urge all synagogue, school and community leaders to meet with local law enforcement agencies in order to coordinate the security needs and procedures of your facility.

As a first step, the Orthodox Union recently held a very successful One Day Security Seminar. Presented by a team of experts who are specialists in synagogue and school security, it covered such topics as:

anti-Semitic incidents; break-ins; suspicious letters and/or packages;  
suspicious vehicles/objects; bomb threats; damage and desecration;  
hate mail; strangers in our synagogues/schools; physical and verbal attacks.

A video tape of this presentation is available for purchase by recognized communal institutions only. Applications must be on your letterhead and accompanied by payment of \$50, including shipping (\$25 for OU member synagogues). Mail to: Security Seminar, Department of Community and Synagogue Services, Orthodox Union, Eleven Broadway, New York, NY 10004.

For more information, please call 212.613.8226.



*May God protect us in the shadow of His wings*

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