PROBING THE CARLEBACH PHENOMENON

BY AVRAHAM ARIEH TRUGMAN

Although Rav Shlomo Carlebach passed away in 1994, his legacy continues to inspire thousands. Jerusalem is home to 13 minyanim, while over 50 exist throughout Israel. The greater New York area boasts more than 10 minyanim and across America there are nearly 50, with new ones cropping up each month. And that is not all.

From South Africa to Australia, Amsterdam to Uruguay, Carlebach followers celebrate a Brit Milah at Moshav Modiim.

Carlebach was the most popular rabbi of the 20th century. In addition to the controversy, there was a paradox about Carlebach: his charisma actually prevented a great movement from developing during his lifetime. He made clear his great pain at being rejected by many in the religious world. Nonetheless, he was convinced he was fulfilling his life's mission.

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Although those leading the Carlebach phenomenon in many cases are Rav Shlomo’s oldest students and their children, it is clear that it’s mostly young people who are attracted to the spirituality of his music and teachings. And the attraction is across the board, from the unaffiliated to the fervently religious. In Israel, his popularity is as strong among the Hebrew-speaking Bnei Akiva and the fervently religious. In Israel, his popularity is as strong among the Hebrew-speaking Bnei Akiva and the fervently religious. In Israel, his popularity is as strong among the Hebrew-speaking Bnei Akiva and the fervently religious. In Israel, his popularity is as strong among the Hebrew-speaking Bnei Akiva and the fervently religious. In Israel, his popularity is as strong among the Hebrew-speaking Bnei Akiva and the fervently religious. In Israel, his popularity is as strong among the Hebrew-speaking Bnei Akiva and the fervently religious.

Throughout the shloshim and the first year following his death, his students around the world organized concerts, memorial services, and probably most important, Kabbalat Shabbat with “nusach Shlomo.” Busied by the initial successes of these events, they continued their efforts and things began to take on a momentum of their own. Rav Shlomo became a rallying point for those seeking to express a new vision of what a Torah experience could be.

We live in paradoxical times. On one hand, due to the incredible changes brought about by technology, the world is becoming smaller, a virtual world village. At the same time, with a culture of materialism pervading all sectors, people are feeling more isolated, spiritually dissa-