

Bar Mitzvah Boy From Istanbul Attack Invited to Celebrate at Western Wall

כ"ה בחשוון תשס"ד, 11/20/2003

Israel's Chief Rabbis, Rabbi Shlomo Amar and Rabbi Yonah Metzger flew to Turkey to take part in the funerals of those killed in the Sabbath terror attacks on two Istanbul synagogues. The Rabbis were invited by the heads of Turkey's Jewish community.

Rabbi Metzger paid an emotional visit to 13-year-old Aaron Cohen, the boy who was celebrating his bar mitzvah (Jewish ceremony honoring a young man's acceptance of Jewish law) at the time of the explosion. The Chief Rabbi presented him with a silver menorah (ceremonial lamp kindled on the upcoming Chanuka holiday) as a bar mitzvah present. He extended an invitation to the boy and his entire family to offer a prayer of thanks (for their having survived the attack) at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, and to celebrate his bar mitzvah there.

Fearing that many Jews in Turkey will be afraid to go to synagogue this Sabbath [Parshat Chayei Sarah], Barbara and Mordechai Goldman of Be'er Sheva have started an internet campaign, attempting to fill in the resulting "prayer deficit." In a widely circulated email, they write, "The only way to make this up is to encourage someone who does not normally go to synagogue to do so, at least this one time. It is also a form of identification with the plight of our brethren elsewhere. We would really like it if you could help get this idea rolling. Who knows where it could lead to..."

<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/53183>

BACKGROUND:

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Shabbat Parshat Vayera - Istanbul, Turkey

Two trucks carrying bombs slammed into the Beit Israel and Neve Shalom synagogues in Istanbul, Turkey, and exploded. The explosions devastated the synagogues and killed more than twenty people, and injured more than 300 others. An Islamic militant group claimed responsibility for the blasts.