

Elevate^{THE}Light

THIS CHANUKAH, JOIN IN UPLIFTING
OHR HATORAH IN ERETZ YISRAEL.
YOUR SUPPORT SPREADS LIGHT TO YOU,
YOUR FAMILY, AND ALL OF KLAL YISRAEL.

Adopt-a-Kollel
AN INTERNATIONAL RELIEF RESPONSE

866.953.2735
INFO@ADOPTAKOLLEL.ORG

Dirshu

כ"ד - ל' כסלו
Sun. 12/14 -
Shabbos 12/20

חברת ש"ס בבא בתרא קטז. - קיח.	עמוד היומי פסחים עה. - עח.	דף יומי בבלי מסכת: זבחים צא - צא
קנין חכמה שערי תשובה: "עוד שנית יגלו" (אות קל"ג) עד "היצורים (אות קמ"ג)	דף יומי בהלכה מ"ב ח"ד: מדף קצח: סימן שמ"ה סעיף י"ג עד דף ר: סימן שמ"ו סעיף ג'	

Yated Ne'emman

22 Kislev 5786 / December 12, 2025

Price: NYC Regional Area \$5.00 Parshas Vayeishev / Vol. 37 No. 47

**MAKING THE
DESERT BLOOM**
with Torah

AN INTERVIEW WITH RABBI ARIEL SHOSHAN | PAGE 66

THE WORLD SHOPS
Lakewood
LAKEWOOD SHOPS THE
bpweekly
732.987.3725

SOLaTM
solapayments.com

FAMILY - \$499/MONTH
345,039
SHARING REQUESTS
SUBMITTED BY UNITED REFUAH MEMBERS

United Refuah
HealthShare
UNITEDREFUAH.ORG (448) U-REFUAH

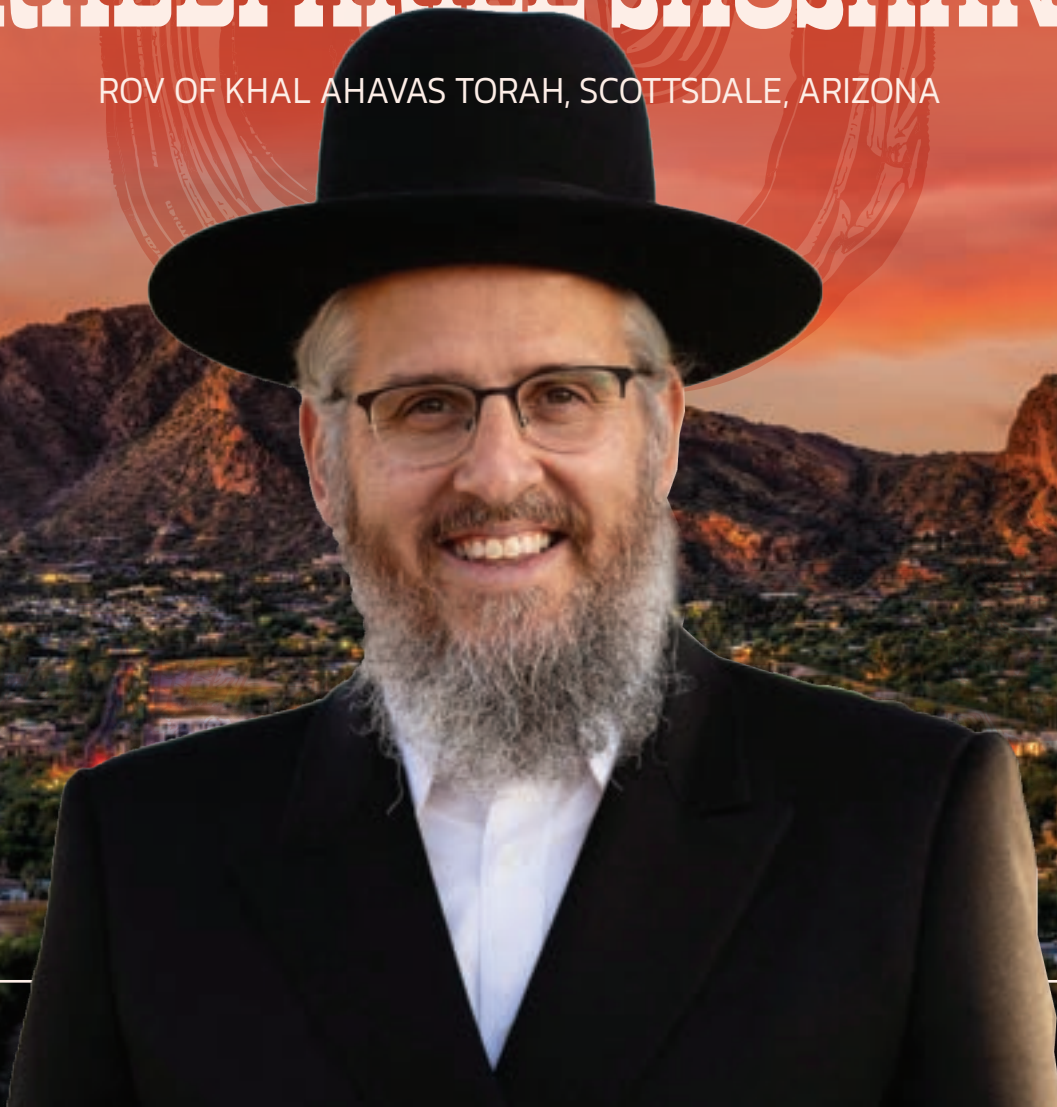


BY AVROHOM BIRNBAUM

“*Chazbos Kerod
Shomayim*”

**AN INTERVIEW WITH
RABBI ARIEL SHOSHAN**

ROV OF KHAL AHAVAS TORAH, SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA



Kabbolas Shabbos in Scottsdale, Arizona. An experience not easily forgotten!

It is impossible for a *Yid* with a Jewish heart not to be inspired.

For those living on the East Coast, Arizona seems like a tropical oasis. The palm trees standing tall wherever one looks with different types of cacti gracing every front yard. The magnificent blue sky with nary a cloud in sight. To a person coming from the East Coast, it feels like a completely different world, a slower, more placid world. In all truth, however, as beautiful and relaxing as it is, the true oasis is the oasis within the oasis.

That oasis, that outpost, that Torah embassy, is Ahavas Torah: the Scottsdale Torah Center.

The singing during *Kabbolas Shabbos* becomes increasingly more animated until...the *neshomah* of *Shabbos* bursts forth during *Bo'i B'shalom*. Suddenly, the people in the *shul* begin to dance, holding hands, singing, clapping, enthusiastically welcoming the *Shabbos* Queen. The sight, the emotion, the joy is worth more than a thousand words. There is the elderly retiree holding hands with the long-haired college student, the *yeshivishe*-looking fellow holding hands with the Chabad *chossid*, the newly minted *baal teshuvah* enthusiastically dancing with the *shtrimmel*-bedecked *chossid* with white socks who is vacationing from Brooklyn.

The *neshamos* of all these *Yidden* meld together to be *mekabel Shabbos* with the words *Bo'i B'shalom*.

So many varied *neshamos* all serving one King with the most beautiful *achdus* that brings out the best of all worlds. That microcosm is only one part of the unique beauty of Hashem's embassy in Scottsdale's Khal Ahavas Torah.

The man most instrumental in making it all happen, the individual who guides and cultivates the *kehillah* as it continues to blossom, is Rav Ariel Shoshan. Rabbi Shoshan is not only the founding *rov* of the *shul*, but he has guided the *shul* and presided over a veritable spiritual revitalization during the quarter of a century that he has been in Phoenix.

The *Yated* caught up with the busy Rabbi Shoshan, who kindly consented to share the exceptional story of Ahavas Torah and what it means to be a pioneering *rov* in a fledgling community and to raise a family there.

I must ask you this question first, because it struck me as I first walked up to the *shul*. The sign on the *shul* says, "Ahavas Torah: The Scottsdale Torah Center," but then, underneath the name, there are three words in Hebrew: "*Leharbos Kevod Shomayim* (To Increase Kevod Shomayim)."

What was your intention in putting those words under the name of the *shul*?

Rabbi Shoshan: That is our mission. Those three words always appear under our logo. It is on our schedules, flyers, emails, and business cards. It is not only the mission of our *kehillah*, but, as I understand it, it is the mission of all Jews.

Mission?

The mission of our *shul* from its very inception was to grow into a place where people can develop in their *Yiddishkeit*. It was not established as a *kiruv shul*, although many people have become *frum* within its walls. We saw the increased honor of Hashem in both more people getting involved in their *Yiddishkeit* and in those already engaged deepening their *avodah*.

We hoped people would say *Hallel* with more passion and would increase their dedication

“ THE MISSION OF OUR SHUL FROM ITS VERY INCEPTION WAS TO GROW INTO A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN DEVELOP IN THEIR YIDDISHKEIT. ”

and intensity to learning Torah, meticulous *mitzvah* observance, and improving character.

Some organizations are founded with a goal that they can realize, and then, once they achieve that goal, there is no reason for the organization to exist. For example, an organization may be established to free a prisoner. When that prisoner is freed, the organization has accomplished its mission.

Our mission, "*Leharbos Kevod Shomayim*," is forever. It is alive in every moment of every life. It never ends. This ideal is our North Star. It is our focus, because there is always more *kevod Shomayim* to foster.

Is there anyone who inspired you to create this mission?

The *sefer Nesivos Shalom* is a *sefer* that I have been learning and teaching for years. The central concept behind this idea was derived from that *sefer*, but the actual statement itself, "*Leharbos Kevod Shomayim*," was used in our early community meetings and then somehow forgotten. The words came alive again on a visit to my hometown of Chicago. While there, I went to give *shalom aleichem* to Rav Yehoshua Heshel Eichenstein, the Zidichover Rebbe, with whom my

family had been close for years. After inquiring about my welfare, the next question he asked rang in my ears:

"Are you being *marbeh kevod Shomayim*?"

I remember thinking to myself, "That's it!" With that question, he encapsulated our entire purpose in three words.

Can you tell us a bit about your background?

I was blessed to grow up in a wonderful Modern Orthodox home in Skokie, Illinois. I went to great schools, Hillel Torah and Ida Crown Jewish Academy, and a special *shul*, Or Torah. While we were in many ways just like the other families in our community, there was an important element of *Chassidus* in our family life, as my father came from a very well-known Vizhnitzer *mishpacha*. My grandparents lived in Kiryas Vizhnitz in Bnei Brak, and my mother's family was also closely connected to the Sassover Rebbe (a son-in-law of the Satmar Rebbe), who had a *bais medrash* on 103rd Street on Manhattan's Upper West Side. My siblings and I were the only kids we knew who had a "*Zydie*" and a "*Bobbi*" with that pronunciation. As a child, I visited my grandparents several times in Vizhnitz. Our family name was Rosenberg, but after the war my father wanted a Hebrew name and changed his name to Shoshan.

Were there any people who had an outsized impact on you during those years?

The non-family member who had the greatest impact on me was undoubtedly my eleventh and twelfth grade *rebbe*, Rabbi Meyer Juzint.

Rabbi Juzint was a *talmid* of Rav Elchonon Wasserman and of the pre-war Slabodka Yeshiva who suffered through many years of Nazi torture. He was a true, old-time European *talmid chochom* who was *mesayem Shas* seventeen times, and he taught in Chicago for over 50 years.

Rabbi Juzint's love of Torah and personal example made a profound impact on me and countless others. Though he never married, he was like a father to many of us. My twin brother, Rav Gidon, and I both have sons named for him, and there are others too.



RABBI MEYER JUZINT

What happened after you graduated?

Modern Orthodoxy provides many great spiritual opportunities, and one of them is a post-high school year in *yeshiva* in Eretz Yisroel. I was *zoche* to learn in Yeshivat Hakotel. On arrival, I was already kind of predisposed to "flipping out," since I wanted to be more like my *rebbe* and my *zydie*. With thanks to my parents and the wonderful *rabbeim* in Yeshivat Hakotel, I remained in *yeshiva* for almost two life-changing years.

After returning to America to consider some new university options, the most important turn in my life began to unfold when I spent two months learning in Yeshivas Ner Yisroel in Baltimore.

When I arrived in Baltimore to learn there for the last two months of second year, I attended the *shiur* of Rav Yissocher Frand. I



very quickly became close with Rabbi Frand, other *rabbeim* and *chaveirim*. With unending thanks to Hashem, my two-month stint turned into seven-and-a-half years. For three-and-a-half years, I was a *bochur* living in *yeshiva*, and then I learned in the *kollel* for our early married years.

Can you describe the impact Ner Yisroel had on you?

My years in Baltimore were the most impactful time of my life. In Ner Yisroel, I became close with and received guidance from my *rabbeim* — Rabbi Frand, Rav Tzvi Berkowitz, and the *mashgiach*, Rav Berel Weisbord, who were all instrumental in my growth. I used every possible opportunity to go to the *shiurim* and *shmuessen* of the *rosh yeshiva*, Rav Yaakov Weinberg.

I am forever indebted to Rabbi Chaim Dovid Lapidus and Mr. Bill Goldberg for their love and care for me while I was a *bochur*.

I was very fortunate to forge a special relationship with the *menahel* of Ner Yisroel's *mesivta*, Rav Yosef Tendler. Though I didn't learn in the *mechinah*, one day Rabbi Tendler asked me who was helping me with my *shidduchim*. When he realized that I was generally handling calls on my own, he personally, despite being ultra-busy running the *mechinah* and having a very large family of children and grandchildren, took over my *shidduchim*. Rabbi Tendler was the *shadchan* who suggested my wife Ayala, the daughter of Rav [Ilan] Feldman, *rov* of Congregation Beth Jacob of Atlanta, and granddaughter of the *rosh yeshiva*, Rav Weinberg.

The extent of Hashem's kindness from my arrival in Baltimore through my *kollel* years is indescribable.

How did you end up in Arizona?

After a few years in *kollel*, we decided to begin looking for an opportunity to be *marbitz Torah*. Rabbi Zvi Holland, *rosh kollel* of the two-year-old Phoenix Community Kollel, offered me a position as its first *menahel*. As director, I learned part-time and I ran all of the *kollel's* projects outside of the *bais medrash*. As part of my arrival, we opened a learning storefront in Scottsdale, Aish Hatorah Scottsdale, in partnership with my wife's uncle, the *rosh yeshiva*, Rav Noach Weinberg. When I first came, the *kollel* had six *yungeleit* and that number soon grew to eleven.

The Phoenix Community Kollel, a Torah Umesorah affiliated *kollel* founded by Rabbi Nate Segal and local Phoenix community leaders, had a transformative impact on the entire Phoenix community. The *kollel* was built on the shoulders of all that had already been accomplished by Rabbi David Rebibo and *ybl"c* Rabbi Chaim Silver, the primary visionary behind the *kollel's* opening.

The larger community was like an empty canvas. There were so many Jews who had never experienced any meaningful connection with Torah. Thousands of non-Orthodox Jews came to our programs and seminars, hundreds at a time. Over time, many families and individuals became *frum*.

A growing number of newly *frum* families lived in Scottsdale, and the *kollel* team realized that if we wanted to serve the increasingly *frum* leaning people in Scottsdale, we needed to open a *Shabbos minyan*.

In 2004, my wife and I moved from Phoe-

nix to Scottsdale to start the new *minyan*. The *baalei batim* of the *shul* chose to form a *shul* and name it Ahavas Torah. At that point, I wasn't sure that I would be the long-term *rov*. My hands were full because I was still the director of the *kollel* full-time. This went on for the first three years, during which time the *shul* was mostly operating on *Shabbos*, as weekday *minyanim* and *shiurim* started to form.

In 2007, when I decided that I could no longer do both, I was blessed to focus all of my attention on the *shul*, becoming its full-time *rov*.

Four, an embassy of the Torah world, a sovereign home of Torah where people from all over the world would gather, and where locals would benefit from the visitors' example and visitors would find a Torah-true space and Torah-true people by whom to be inspired.

As time would show, countless *gedolei Torah* and *talmidei chachomim* have visited and shared themselves. Thousands of *yeshiva bochurim* have made Scottsdale their summer home, and many *yeshivos*, *kiruv* programs, and camps have used our space for their goals.



(L-R) THE RABBONIM OF AHAVAS TORAH: RABBI NOACH MUROFF, RABBI ARIEL SHOSHAN AND RABBI YANKY MORGENSTERN.

What was your vision for Scottsdale when you first started and has it changed since then?

From the beginning, we hoped that the *shul* would be a place where people would be able to serve Hashem passionately, a place where anyone who wanted could find an access point to authentic, passionate *Yiddishkeit*. This basic ideal has endured throughout. Eventually, we established four pillars upon which we wanted the *shul* to stand.

First, a place where people would have outstanding *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* experiences.

Second, a caring community where every *shul* family would be embraced and cared for, and where we could care for and look out for each other.

Three, a place of constant and consistent learning and *davening*.

On the East Coast, we are much more polarized. How do you make it all work?

There is a common thread running through the people who come to our *shul*. They are *mevakshei Hashem*. In the time of the *Bais Hamikdosh*, *Yidden* from all types of backgrounds came together, and that is the way things will be again when we have the third *Bais Hamikdosh*. We don't ask people to relinquish their identity and upbringing and be exactly like us. We look for ways through which people can be true to the *minhagim* of their forebears. We are better when we are together, when we learn from the *maalos* that each group brings to the table. We can grow from one another.

This has become a primary goal of this era of the *shul* — to overcome things that might separate us. We know that we can achieve more when people enhance the lives of one another, each according to his *nusach* and *mesorah*.

This is something about which we are extremely passionate. We are working on a future home for our *kehillah* that will have several *botei medrash* to serve the varied needs of our community and a world of visitors.

Many vacationers come to Scottsdale throughout the year. If you could give the vacationers one message and one piece of advice, what would it be?

We are all in this together. Small community life is a space where interdependence is obvious and is important. In truth, it is just as necessary in larger communities, but it gets forgotten because many well-educated people have the luxury of doing things on their own. In truth, their presence and example in the lives of others is a gift waiting to be opened.

What do you find challenging about being a *rov* in your community?

Rabbonus is a major gift and a tremendous *zechus*. When you are a *shul* rabbi, you are invited into the family life of so many people. It is a privilege and responsibility not taken for granted. At the same time, in order to care for so many people with their varied needs and challenges, you have to find the time and mental energy. I call it "bandwidth." Finding enough bandwidth for everything is an ongoing challenge. Each of us is only one person. Sometimes, it is difficult to prioritize. Do I invest time in individuals, in community infrastructure, in financial concerns, or in learning and teaching? All of these things have to be attended to while first and foremost being an *eved Hashem* and a devoted father and husband, raising a family that knows it is loved, cherished, and prioritized.

Indeed! So, what are both the great parts and the challenges of raising a family in a small community like Scottsdale, away from the major *frum* centers?

For us, raising a family in Arizona has been *lechatchila sheb'lechatchila*. We are very satisfied with the excellent schools and the education that our children have

What has changed with time is the depth of learning and *davening* opportunities. Our schedule of learning for beginners to advanced has been constantly upgraded, and we are honored to be the first *shul* in our region that offered multiple *Shacharis* and *Maariv minyanim* daily.

We were never specifically a *kiruv shul*, but we were always a *kiruv* friendly *shul*. Our *shul* is a place where successful *kiruv* professionals bring people to grow and become part of our *tzibbur*.

It is striking to see the wide range of *mispallelim* in your *shul*: local patrons, *baalei teshuvah*, many *Sefardim*, Moroccan and Bukharians, as well as numerous *shtreimlach* representing vacationers from the tri-state area and even a few locals.

received. Our sons and daughters have wonderful friends and outstanding *rabbeim* and *moros*. We are fortunate that our children share our mission of *ribbui kevod Shomayim*. We are in it together, and they are leaders.

We sent our older girls and our boys out of town for ninth grade, but we now look forward to our eighth grade daughter remaining here next year to attend Rabbi Raphael Landesman's excellent Shearim Torah High School for Girls. Like all parents, one has to manage media and outside influences. We have also sent our kids to camp, and that is a major access point to the larger *frum* world.

We have had a great *zechus* that so many great people, *ehrlische rabbeim* and *rebbeis* and *Yidden* from all over America come here. Our lives have been enriched from getting to know some of *Klal Yisroel's* great *ovdei Hashem*. The Spinka Rebbe of Williamsburg, Rav Abish Horowitz, has become a huge part of our lives.

I see that, *boruch Hashem*, the *shul* has expanded over time and there are already two *rabbonim* assisting you in the spiritual development of the community.

Yes. *Boruch Hashem*, we have experienced great growth both in quality and quantity over the years. Rabbi Noach Muroff is a crucial part of our leadership team. Although he has a full-time job serving as a boys' principal in Torah Day School of Phoenix, he makes a difference in most areas of the *shul*, meeting the practical needs of the congregants, running our *Mincha-Maariv*, and giving numerous *shiurim*. He is also the primary creator of the *shul's chesed* and *hachnosas orchim*, helping local people and hosting the thousands who come throughout the year from across the globe.

Rabbi Yanky Morgenstern is the most recent addition to our team. He has been here for a year and a half. His role is almost exclusively in learning, teaching, and promoting Torah learning in the community. Throughout the day, he gives many *shiurim* and *chaburos* and learns one-on-one with community members. His impact on the *limud haTorah* of our community both day and night has been fabulous.

So much of the *shul's* daily success is dependent on our devoted *gabbai*, Reb Chaim Zimmerman, and many of the other *baalei batim*.

What do you see as the future of Ahavas Torah and Scottsdale Jewry?

Over these past 21 years, we have been blessed with unending *siyata diShmaya*. What Ahavas Torah has become, the families that have developed in its midst, the young men and women who have grown to be amazing *bnei Torah* and *bnos Yisroel*, what it has meant to a worldwide *kehillah* and those who have been inspired by its example is all beyond anything we could have hoped for.

Ad heinah azarunu rachamecha. If Hashem has created so much so far and so many financial supporters from all over America have made the dream possible, then we can set our sights on shocking goals *be'ezras Hashem*.



TOP TO BOTTOM

DAVENING AT AHAVAS TORAH.

SUMMER BEIN HAZEMANIM LEARNING AT AHAVAS TORAH.

NIGHT SEDER CHABURAH WITH SHUL MEMBER RABBI MENDY BARTH.

When I was growing up in Chicago, I saw what Rabbi Eichenstein's *shul*, now the world-famous Chicago Center, became. I remember it as simply the "*shul* across from Dunkin Donuts" with a very great *rov*, but then it became so much more. It became a beacon of light, a source serving community members in Torah and *tefillah* and countless other ways. They added more *minyanim* until they had *minyanim* throughout the day. They added *shiurim*, morning *kollelim*, night *kollelim*, *Chol Hamoed shiurim* for *bnei Torah*, and legal holiday programs. But Rav Eichenstein did not stop there. His *shul* became not just a Torah center, but a *chesed* center with medical referrals, a medical center, taxi services arranged for *Shabbos*, the community directory, *hachnosas orchim* apartments, and more. He and his illustrious sons and staff were there to serve the *tzibbur* for every need, spiritual or material.

Though our city is much smaller and circumstances are always different, Ahavas Torah can be a beacon in that model. Together, we can serve *Yidden* in innumerable ways. We had a *kollel* for a few

years, and in the future, we will have it again. We have *mikvaos* to serve the entire population. We have coffee that is the talk of the town. We have an active English lending library and a vast *eruv*, and we had a vital hand in starting TAG Arizona and Arizona Chaverim. We hope to be blessed to meet needs in ways not yet imagined and in the context of a large campus that is the continued home of *Ashkenazim*, *Sefardim*,

and *Chassidim*.

This interview will be featured in the Pre-Chanukah edition of the *Yated*. Is there any Chanukah message that you can share with our readers?

The *Gemara* says that the miracles of *Chanukah* were not given over to be written down in *Tanach* like *Megillas Esther*. Why is that?

The answer is found in the words of the *Ya'avetz*, who says that the greatest miracle that Hashem has done for us, greater than *Yetzias Mitzrayim* or *Krias Yam Suf*, is the ongoing existence of *Klal Yisroel*, serving Hashem with the same Torah and *mitzvos*, despite our long *golus*.

This miracle becomes greater and greater as the years pass. If we still hold onto the Torah five years after the *churban*, that is wonderful, but it is also understandable because it is only five years later. If, however, after nearly two thousand years, we are still holding onto the Torah and serving Hashem and we remain protected by His *shemirah elyonah*, that is an even greater and greater miracle!

The reason why the story of *Chanukah* cannot be written is that it is still ongoing. We are still experiencing the *neis* of *Chanukah*. The *Yevonim* and all of those who have followed them and persecuted us until we assimilate into their cultures have all failed *b'chesed Hashem*. A story that is not over cannot be written down.

Today, too, in America, wherever we find ourselves, we witness the miracle every day. We live here in Arizona where we see how wonderful Jews are, how Jews are not just holding onto their *Yiddishkeit* but are deepening their commitment and creating ever deeper bonds with Hashem and His Torah. Wherever we find ourselves, the oil, the *shemen tahor*, rises to the top and is not swallowed up in the waters of the nations and the exile.

