



SAM EIFERMAN

Let's talk about your background and what led you to this shul.

I was born in the Bronx, at the Bronx Hospital, back in the early '40s. At a young age, I lived across the street from an Orthodox synagogue, so I never knew that a Conservative or Reform synagogue even existed.

We lived in the same eight-room apartment with my aunts, uncles, and grandparents. My maternal grandparents had come from Poland and my father's side was from Russia. I'm named after my father's father, Samuel Eiferman. He passed away ten years before I was born.

Did the whole family go to this little Orthodox shul?

Right, and I went to the Yeshiva around there, a couple of blocks away in the Bronx. At home we spoke Yiddish, so I never learned to speak English. When I first attended Public School, my teachers couldn't understand me. So I learned English as a second language.

While growing up I always played around with the Orthodox Rabbi's kids and went to the local YMHA (Young Men's Hebrew Association). I grew up praying three times a day and still have the fire in me to pray everyday.

As an Adult, coming to Los Angeles (LA) in 1969 was a culture shock for me. I had never lived so far away from a shul as in LA.

I usually went to the shul right next to my house back East, and now I had to travel several miles to get to the shul.



Gravesite of Tillie Eiferman,
Grandmother of Sam Eiferman.

I lived in San Jose for a while and there became interested in becoming a real estate salesman, and then I came out here to

Anaheim to start my own brokerage in real estate in 1976.

I arrived and looked around for an Orthodox synagogue, and there just wasn't any Orthodox synagogue in Orange County. I said, "Okay, what's the next best thing? Conservative, I guess." I found a traditional Conservative Synagogue, Temple Beth Emet. They called it "Traditional Conservative," which means they were more or less Orthodox, but they didn't go along with the same tenets. Men and women sat together; there was no mechitza.

At the end of the 1970s, I discovered a couple of people who were also interested in Orthodoxy and davening in an Orthodox minyan. These people would get together once in a while to daven Orthodox before the normal services of Temple Beth Emet. We davened at the Murray Sporn Chapel there.

Eventually, we ended up davening in my real estate office on Euclid Avenue in Anaheim. It was called The Real Estate Stop.

That was a really nice experience. I converted the office every Shabbat and Holy Day and we borrowed a Torah from Temple

Beth Emet, because the cantor and rabbi there were all for it. Eventually, we obtained a Torah from a Chabad Shul down in the Bronx. I used to go back to the Bronx and tell them what was happening, and there was an extra Torah around, so they lent it to us. In fact, we used it for many, many years here before we finally gave it back.

This was in the early '80s, and we had a lot of people attracted to our Orthodox Shul. We were looking to get a Rabbi to aid in our growth so we looked into becoming a Young Israel, but that didn't go anyplace. We were mostly young, working people, trying to make a living, and it was a little hard in those days. So we kept meeting, and we kept on building our base.

In addition to real estate, I also worked in aerospace. I have a Bachelor's of Electrical Engineering, a Master's of Science in Quality Assurance, and a Master's of Business Administration, and so I make use of all my degrees in my work.

I was working at Hughes Aircraft at the time, and so I knew quite a few Israelis at work who would come to daven with us. We had a lot of people who would daven, but no one

truly could be called our supporters; I was the main person putting money in there. But it was quite interesting at that point because we were all young kids. We called our group Knesset Israel. My mother's father was called Israel, we had many Israeli praying there and we all supported Israel, so it was very appropriate to name ourselves Knesset Israel.

For three years we did that, and we just couldn't find a rabbi to come to us. We always went to Jewish fairs and Chabad was also at these fairs. So, in 1982, we went to Chabad for help. Jacob Hausman did the original contacting of Chabad to get them to come in. And sure enough, they said, "You know, we can do that."

So, Rabbi Eliezrie came to us, which was great.

Where did you daven with him?

He actually had a synagogue over at a storefront in Anaheim on Brookhurst near Orange, and before that in a real estate office opposite the fire station and the library on Euclid Avenue near Ball. He tried many things. And he tried to buy a couple of

properties in Anaheim to try to expand. We called ourselves Chabad of Anaheim at the time.

Finally, the demographics showed that things were not really good in Anaheim, everybody was moving out to the suburbs, and so Rabbi Eliezie said, “Well, let’s move the Synagogue to Yorba Linda.” So we lost the Chabad Rabbi of Disneyland.

What happened to this group that had formed with you originally?

When we moved out of Anaheim, it dissipated.

What appealed to you most about Rabbi Eliezie when he arrived?

Well, he was down to earth, very friendly. I was building an addition to my house, and he says, “Let me affix the mezuzah at the end when you finish doing it.” He’s always volunteering himself, very nice guy, and his family definitely is beautiful. Whatever was his is ours, it’s like “Mi casa es su casa” -- open house all the time.

How did you feel about the move to Yorba Linda?

I was still in Anaheim. What could I feel about it? I was very sad to see it happen, though it was for the best, and it looks like it probably was a lucky move for Chabad. I usually come here on Sunday morning, while I go Monday through Friday to Long Beach Chabad, to Rabbi Newman's synagogue.

Since I couldn't walk here from Anaheim, I used to come here and sleep over in the yellow house. I had a little sleeping bag, and I would put it over there and sleep in the rabbi's office.

That's probably a unique way to get to shul. Did others do that?

No. I'm a lifetime member, so I have special privileges! I'm the First Chabadnik of Orange County, as Rabbi Newman likes to say.

Now I sleep in my camper if I come here on the weekend. I won't drive on the Shabbat or Holy Days.

I was always hoping for Chabad of Disneyland, because Disneyland is mostly Christian. They have these candlelight

processions around Christmas-time and the Christmas parade, but they are selling a lot of things that are Jewish—like Hanukkah dreidels and decorations at Hanukkah time. I love the Mickey Mouse Happy Hanukkah limited edition pins that are sold at this time of year at Disneyland.

What has it been like for you living in that area where there weren't a lot of Jews?

It's kind of interesting to note that Anaheim used to be a hotbed of anti-Semitism. In fact, when my wife had first come out to California, her family told her, "How can you move to Anaheim? That's the anti-Semitic capital of Orange County!" Yet I haven't really encountered that type of really bad anti-Semitism. Once in a while walking back and forth in the street during the night of Sabbath, you'll have people yelling at you from cars and stuff like that, but people yell at you if walk in the street anyway, so I don't know if it's anti-Semitism or not. But I also notice I'll walk in the street on Sabbath, and people say, "Good Shabbos" to me. I don't know if they're Jewish or not, but I say "Good Shabbos" back, so I think they've accepted us. It's kind of nice.

Does your wife come to shul with you?

Actually, my wife doesn't go to shul much. Her father was a rabbi and it kind of turned her off to it. She hated that everyone would come over around the clock, so it turned her off a little bit.

So this is your thing.

It's my thing, right.

It obviously means a lot to you.

Oh God, it's something that I really enjoy.

Is there anything else that you want to say about what this shul and this community mean to you?

Well, having Chabad available gives me faith that we'll survive. When I first came, Orthodox was in a lull. Right now, the services in many places are less traditional, and they count women for the minyans. They really are more Reform than they were, so having this oasis over here, it means a lot.

I think we're very fortunate to have the Rabbi here. He's definitely a visionary. I don't know how he does everything he does. He

just amazes me. How he's got the strength to do everything, especially with two sons that have been so sick, and to pull them out of it.

He's still very involved in everything he does, he's got such strength. I think we're very fortunate to have a rabbi like that. So we lucked out in a little place of Orange County.

I'd like to read from this newspaper clipping from *The Orange County Jewish Heritage*, which is now gone. It was written on November 25, 1983, when we were Chabad of Anaheim. It says:

“Chabad Honors. ‘It was a wonderful evening,’ said Dr. Mark Leitner, the chairman of last week’s Safam Concert sponsored by Chabad of Anaheim. A highlight of the evening was a series of presentations to individuals who have aided the growth of Chabad since the founding of the center last year. Sam and Ellen Eiferman received the Menorah Award. Rabbi Gershon Schusterman, who presented the award said, ‘Sam and Ellen have been instrumental in the growth of Yiddishkeit in

Anaheim. They were early leaders of Knesset Israel, the forerunner of Chabad, and they have made possible the future of Chabad with their support,' which was the home, the house, the apartment that I gave them. Now 'Dr. Joshua Alpert and Mr. and Mrs. Heshy Brody received Benefactor Awards. Jacob Hausman received the Young Leadership Award.' Jacob was my right hand man; so he did a lot for us in helping things grow. 'Prior to the concert at Memorial Hall at Chapman College a private reception honored the supporters of Chabad at the College Art Gallery. At the concert, Dr. Leitner spoke of Chabad programs to bring Judaism to thousands in Orange County, including young people and hospital shut-ins.' Rabbi David Eliezrie, director of Chabad, said, 'It was a wonderful night rich in Jewish culture and tradition.'"

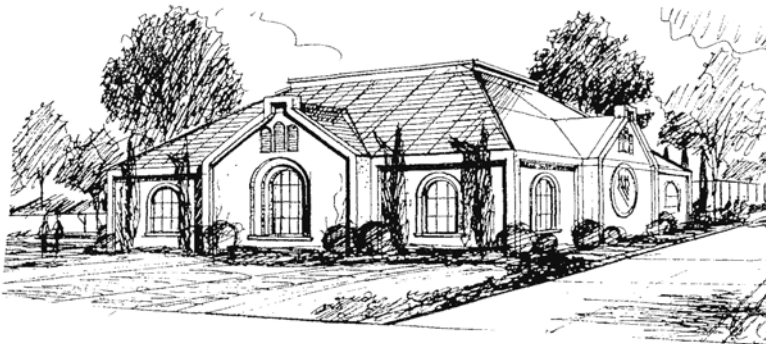
That's a wonderful piece of the shul's history.

Yes.

It is also interesting that my father's mother is buried next to the Ohel, the grave of the Rebbe. "The Ohel" is where the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory, was laid to rest on the 3rd of Tammuz 5754 (June 12, 1994), next to his father-in-law, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Y. Schneersohn, of righteous memory. I guess it was more than a coincidence that Chabad started in Orange County in part through my efforts, there must have been someone "up there" guiding my steps.

Join The Simcha At This Historic Event

Groundbreaking For The New



North County Chabad / The Gutnick Center

Congregation Beth Meir HaCohen

Special Guests Elected Officials, Rabbinical Leaders, Community Leaders

Guest Speaker: Rabbi Boruch Shlomo Cunin

Director West Coast Chabad

- **Laying of a Cornerstone from Jerusalem**
- **Children's Choir**
- **Rides and Face Painting for Kids**
- **Refreshments**

Sunday June 22, 1997/10:30 AM

North County Chabad Center/19045 Yorba Linda Blvd., Yorba Linda

Information 714-693-0770

Directions: 91 East to Imperial, exit left to Kellogg, right on Kellogg to Yorba Linda Blvd, go left about 1/4 mile at corner of Ohio

**Announcement: New Construction
Groundbreaking Ceremony**

Dedication Opportunities

All Dedications will be permanently recognized on a "Dedicator's Plaque"

Synagogue Building/\$90,000
Pre School/\$75,000
Adult Education Institute/\$50,000
Chabad Theme Menorah/\$36,000
Lobby/\$25,000
Children's Playground/\$25,000
Judaica Library/\$25,000
Jerusalem Cornerstone/\$18,000
Bima Torah Stand/\$18,000
Main Entrance/\$10,000
Stained Glass Window/\$10,000
Amud Prayer Stand/\$7,500
Rabbi's Pulpit/\$7,500

Benefactors Wall

The elegant "Benefactors Wall" will be a permanent fixture of beauty and tribute in the lobby.

Founder/\$5,000
Builder/\$3,600 Pillar of Life/\$1,800

Building Committee

Dr. Robert Morten Chairman/Walter Bruckner/Said
Cohen/Rabbi David Eliezrie/Dr. Victor Perkel/
Mary Rubenstein/Ruth Zakoski

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Groundbreaking

For The New

North County Chabad Center

Congregation Beth Meir HaCohen

June 22, 1997

17 Sivan 5757

Program

Welcome

Dr. Robert Morten

Chairman Building Committee

Greetings

Rabbi Yitzchok Newman

Dean of The Hebrew Academy

Jerry Werksman

President - The Jewish Federation of Orange County

Guest Speaker/Rabbi Mordechai Einbinder

Chabad of the Valley

Remarks

Rabbi David Eliezrie

North County Chabad Center

Laying of the Jerusalem Cornerstone

Rabbi Shmuel Dov David Raichek

*Shadar-Special Emissary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe
Community & Hebrew School Children*

Pioneers

Congregation Beth Meir HaCohen/Mr. and Mrs. Said Cohen

Dr. Ari Babaknia/ Mrs. Lucy Deutsch/

Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Feuerstein

Dedications

Campus/Rabbi Joseph and Stera Gutnick

Hebrew School/Mr. Harry Mohnhey

Sanctuary/The Gutman and Nash Families

Rabbi's Study/Mr. Larry Held

Office/Mr. Robert Bernfeld

Garden Park/Mrs. Esther Katz

Ner Tamid/Mr. Steve Drucker

Torah Scrolls/Mr. Paul Goldenberg

Mizrach-Eastern Wall/Mr. and Mrs. Said Cohen

Stained Glass Window/Anonymous

Special Dedication/Congregation Beth Isaac

Founders

Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Horwitz/Dr. & Mrs. Robert Morten/

Mrs. Mary Rubenstein

Builders

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Faazare/Dr. and Mrs. Fred Shalom

Pillars of Life

Mr. & Mrs. Monsoor Balakaneh/Dr. & Mrs. Seth Bernstein

Chebra Kadisha Mortuary/Mr. & Mrs. Eli Glovinsky

Mr. & Mrs. Adrian Gluck/Mr. & Mrs. David Kaplan

Mr. Steve Linkon/Mrs. Linda Rattner Nunn/Mr. Martin Taller

Groundbreaking Ceremony Program



Source: www.chabad.org

Rabbi Eliezrie, Rabbi Raichek and Rabbi Newman hold the Jerusalem Cornerstone at the Groundbreaking Ceremony



Source: www.chabad.org

Rabbi Eliezrie and Dr. Robert Morten address the audience at the Groundbreaking Ceremony



Framing begins on the new foundations



The Chabad property with Framing and Construction.



Rabbi Eliezrie and a view of the initial exterior walls.



A different view of the construction framing



The entrance to our beautiful sanctuary.



Looking at the west side of our beautiful sanctuary.

