

September 11 Commemorated At Rambam Mesivta

BY RABBI SOL APPLEMAN

A special assembly took place on September 12 in the *shul* of the Rambam Mesivta in commemoration of those who



Rabbi Steven Weil, executive director of the Orthodox Union, at Rambam.

were murdered by Islamist extremists nine years ago and in memory of those heroes who gave their lives trying to save the victims of the attack.

Rabbi Zev Friedman, the *rosh mesivta*, opened the assembly by welcoming all of the fathers who participated along with their sons in the inaugural day of what promises to be one of many such planned assemblies. The room was packed to overflowing on this *Tzom Gedaliah*. Rabbi Friedman continued with stirring words intended to awaken the souls of the participants to *teshuvah*.

Rabbi Friedman then introduced Rabbi Yotav Eliach, the principal of Rambam, who masterfully traced the start of the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001 and demonstrated that the planning took place prior to the first WTC attack in 1993—well before most of the students sitting in the room were born. Rabbi Eliach clearly and patiently explained that those who perpetrated the attacks were driven by an ideology that is contrary to that of the West. The 19 hijackers were all educated, intelligent, and resourceful. They lived in the United States for years before they attacked us. They learned how to fly the jets they used for the attack while they lived among us. For weeks and months they scouted out the airports from which they would depart on their nefarious plan of destruction. They learned how to use the resources guaranteed by our freedoms against us.

In a chilling revelation, Rabbi Eliach spoke of Steven Emerson. As one who specializes in investigating terrorist activities, Emerson created a film that deals with the first attack on the WTC in 1993. In his film, *Jihad in America*, shot in 1998, Emerson connects the dots of the Al-Qaeda worldwide network. Using the backdrop of the Twin Towers, Mr. Emerson unsettlingly declares, "I do not think they are done."

Rabbi Eliach then presented a graphic five-minute video of the terrible events that transpired during the four separate

attacks of 9-11. He reminded us that the only other similar attack upon the United States took place on December 7, 1941, when the Japanese Imperial Army attacked Pearl Harbor. Rabbi Eliach pointed out that in the WTC attack, carried out by only 19 dedicated *jihadists*, more people died in that terrorist assault than in the attack at Pearl Harbor.

He concluded his remarks with the recitation of a special *Mishebrayach* issued by the *rabbanim* of the Orthodox Union for the members of the U.S. Armed Forces, who put themselves in harm's way daily in their efforts to protect our way of life here in the United States.

We were reminded that *teshuvah*, *tefillah*, and *tzedakah* mitigate the harshness of the decree against us. Envelopes were distributed to the *talmidim* which contained information on the Global Jewish Assistance and Relief Network. This worthy institution assists those in dire need of food in Israel. This special relief network distributes credit cards that can be

used in the major food stores in Israel.

Rabbi Friedman then introduced Rabbi Weil, who proceeded to mesmerize the listeners with various wonderful explanations of the *davening* found in the Yom Kippur service.

Rabbi Weil, the executive director of the Orthodox Union, spoke about the discrepancy between the two words that figure prominently, not only during Yom

Continued on Page 68

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9/11 Commemoration

Continued from Page 65

Kippur, but also throughout the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah: *Avinu Malkeinu*. On the one hand, the word "Avinu," our Father, implies a close relationship between a father and his child, a relationship of love. On the other hand, the word "Malkeinu," our King, implies a distant

ence between the way in which we confess our sins in private and how we do it together in public along with the *chazzan* during the Yom Kippur services. He laid out the fundamental parts of our *viduy* through the words in the opinion of the Gemara, "*chatasi, avisi, pashati*." These three words are variations of the sins we have committed during the past year. Each term is increasingly more grievous



connection; one consisting of awe. Rabbi Weil explained this dialectic, or the juxtaposition or interaction of conflicting ideas, as the underlying factor in our relationship with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. We oscillate between love and awe in connection with Hashem.

Rabbi Weil then explained the differ-

than the previous one. *Chatasi* implies that we have been sloppy, lazy, or perhaps negligent in our actions. *Avisi* implies a willful act done out of desire (*mumar l'teiavon*). *Pashati* implies an action performed under total control, and in spite of knowing that it was wrong to do that action, we do it anyway

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