

Jewish Community Members Celebrate Chanukah at The White House

By Ben-Tzvi

In what has become a White House tradition since the administration of President George H.W. Bush back in the 90's, a ceremony is held to honor the Jewish community by inviting leading Jewish communal leaders, and individuals who interact with the administration on various levels helping and impacting the community.

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Over the years the magnitude of the reception at Th White House has evolved into a Glatt Kosher affair with dedicated times for Mincha and Maariv that has greatly enhanced the experience for the observant participant.

The arrival of Chanukah this year was no exception as President Obama hosted 2 separate receptions to accommodate the multitudes of invites extended to a diverse Jewish community. Having two individual re-



President Barack Obama and Rabbi Abe Friedman



Guests of the White House Chanukah party davening Maariv in the Red Room

ceptions was instituted by the Obama Administration and featured personalities ranging from Ambassador Stu Eizenstat, Secretary of the Treasury Jack Lew, Israeli Ambassador Ron Dermer and numerous Jewish congressional members.

"Needless to say, the announcement by President Obama at the onset of his remarks regarding the release of Alan Gross caused great joy for everyone at the White House Chanukah reception and the personal acknowledgment by the President regarding the great importance of "pidyon shivuiim" underscores the sensitivity to a central tenant of our faith by a dignitary no less than the President of the United States. "It was

a testament to the level of acceptance the community has risen to-only in America" said Ezra Friedlander, CEO of The Friedlander Group.

Agudath Israel Trustee Chaskel Bennett remarked, "It is always an honor to be invited to the White House and in particular to be one of the representatives of the Orthodox Jewish community at the invitation of the President. The United States has historically proven to be a Medinah shel Chessed (a benevolent country) and out of the Holocaust the broader Orthodox community thanks Hashem for allowing us to flourish on these welcoming shores. It is also incumbent to say thank you to our highest government

official on behalf of a deeply grateful community. Chanukah at the White House is one such opportunity."

Rabbi Abe Friedman a community leader and law enforcement chaplain who works closely with various federal agencies within the US Department of Homeland Security thanked the President in person at the Chanukah reception for the close cooperation between the Orthodox and Chasidic communities who responded "that's why we invited you Rabbi" alluding to his appreciation.

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seph B. Stamm CEO, of MedReview which is now celebrating their 40th anniversary of service to the healthcare industry.

Representatives of numerous Jewish organization attended and in particular representatives from a myriad of Orthodox Jewish groups, who work closely with the Administration, including Agudath Israel of America, the Orthodox Union, Chabad and many others attended. Some notable orthodox attendees included, Malcolm Hoenlein of the Presidents conference, Rabbi Michael Miller of the JCRC, Nathan Diamond and Allen Fagin of the OU, Bob Levy & Farley Weiss of the National Council of Young Israel, Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zwiebel, Duvi Gross,

Abba Cohen, Chaskel Bennett & Leon Goldenberg of Agudath Israel, Rockland County legislator Aron Wieder, renowned attorney Nathan Lewin, Law Enforcement Chaplain Abe Freedman, Ezra Friedlander of the Washington based Friedlander Group, activists Howard Freidman, Stanley Treitel, Benny Polatsek, Rabbi Daniel Ginsberg, Joe Stamm, Yoel Lefkowitz, Chanina Sperlin, Yaakov Behrman and many others. Of course the entire events was conducted under the auspices of Rabbi Levi Shemtov of the Washington Chabad whose organization certified the kosher preparation and serving of the food and who also arranged the private Mincha and Maariv Minyanim.

Boston Bomber Appears in Court for First Time Since 2013

By: A7 Staff

Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev returned to court on Thursday, Dec 18th for the first time since he was arraigned in July 2013, The Associated Press (AP) reported.

Security was tight at the federal courthouse in Boston for Tsarnaev's final pretrial conference. Tensions ran high, and one bombing victim had a testy exchange with protesters outside, the report said.

During the brief court hearing, District Court George O'Toole Jr. made no rulings, saying he would rule in writing

on pending motions, including the defense's latest push to move the trial out of Boston.

David Bruck, one of Tsarnaev's lawyers, told the judge that the defense plans to file a motion to delay the trial, which is now scheduled to begin on January 5 with jury selection. Bruck did not say how long of a delay the defense will seek.

Three people were killed and more than 260 were injured when two bombs exploded near the finish line of the April 2013 marathon. Tsarnaev, who has pleaded not guilty to 30 federal charges, faces the possibility of the death penalty if he is convicted.

Tsarnaev, 21, wore a black

sweater and gray trousers and had a scruffy beard and a curly hairstyle similar to the one seen in earlier photos. He smiled to his attorneys and one patted him on the arm, reported AP.

The courtroom was packed with FBI agents, police who worked on the case and more than a dozen survivors and family members.

At his last court appearance 17 months ago, Tsarnaev still bore signs of the bloody standoff with police that led to his capture and the death of his older brother, Tamerlan. His left arm was in a cast, his face was swollen and he appeared to have a jaw injury. In court Thursday, he had no visible in-

juries.

Tsarnaev has confessed that his older brother Tamerlan was behind the attack and that he "wanted to defend Islam from attack."

The FBI discovered Tamerlan Tsarnaev sent text messages to his mother as early as 2011 suggesting he was willing to die for Islam.

Following the bombings, the interfaith group Americans for Peace and Tolerance said that the mosque attended by the two brothers "has a curriculum that radicalizes people."

Tsarnaev's trial is expected to last several months, and seating a jury alone could take several weeks to a month. (INN)



An artist's rendering of Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev. He returned to court on Thursday, Dec 18th for the first time since he was arraigned in July 2013

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