

New Yorkers take to Times Square to rejoice at the news of bin Laden's demise, but will the euphoria last?



POSTMORTEM ON BIN LADEN

A Bereaved Brother Shares Memories

Can America Sleep Tighter Now?

Killing the Message, Not the Messenger

BY *Menachem Pines*
PHOTOS *Reuters, AP*

THE BITTERSWEET TASTE OF REVENGE

Jerusalem. Monday, May 2.

Already from the early morning hours, the elimination of the world's most wanted terrorist, Osama bin Laden, was the talk of the town, but Yonatan Lewin had yet to hear about it. He arrived at work and a colleague shot him a furtive glance. "Bin Laden was killed," he said.

Yonatan Lewin heard the words his colleague uttered but decided to wait for his brother Michael to arrive before reacting. For the Lewin brothers, 9/11 is not just another date in history.

"Neither of us even thought about calling our mother," said Yonatan with a sigh. "It didn't even make an impact. When we did finally reach her, she reacted as we did. We didn't feel anything more than what everyone else did."

Reopened Wound

It all seemed as fresh as if it had just happened yesterday and not as if almost ten years had passed since Yonatan and Michael's older brother, Danny, had been a passenger aboard American Airlines flight 11 from Boston to Los Angeles on September 11, 2001. Hijacked in mid-flight, the terrorists crashed the plane directly into the northern tower of the World Trade Center, killing all eighty-seven passengers and crew members on board, not including the five hijackers.

When the Lewins speak of Danny — the first victim of the massive attack — the emotional turbulence is palpable. In a way, the clock stopped ticking for them that day.

But when it comes to bin Laden, their tone turns to ice.

As long as his evil is perpetuated, nothing consoles them. "This is no big deal," Yonatan tells *Mishpacha*. "A wanted man was found and eliminated and everyone is all excited. The war on terror tolls on and radical Islam remains a threat."

His mother, Dr. Peggy Lewin, a well-known Jerusalem pediatrician, declined to speak with reporters. Even in the aftermath of the attack and with the ensuing years, the family has shied away from publicity. "The media is always probing for soft spots," says Yonatan. "It's not our style. This was my brother."

Born Hero

Daniel "Danny" Mark Lewin was thirty-one when he was killed. Born in Denver, he was fourteen when his family made aliyah to Jerusalem. After a four-year IDF stint in the elite Sayeret Matkal combat unit, Danny attended the Technion in Haifa and eventually interrupted his doctorate studies at MIT after he and a professor developed innovative algorithms for optimizing Internet traffic. Danny utilized that knowledge to found Akamai Technologies where he served as chief technical officer, where he was considered one of the bright young minds of the high-tech world. Today, Akamai, headquartered in Cambridge, has more than 2,000 employees and has a market value of more than \$6 billion.

Family members speak of an independent and energetic brother who at an early age was looking to be financially self-sufficient. En route to their aliyah, the Lewins took a short side trip to Europe, but Daniel skipped that leg and headed straight to Israel where he volunteered to work the land. "In his last year he started to become more religious," says Yonatan about Danny. "He would never be afraid to lay tefillin, even in foreign airports. One time, this caused a scare when security guards noticed him playing with these 'black boxes.'"

A 2002 Federal Aviation Administration memo suggests Danny, who was seated in business class one row away from some of the hijackers, may have been killed by hijacker Satam al-Suqami after he attempted to foil the plot. Exact details will never be known, but one thing is for certain — he gave his life to try to save his fellow passengers — just as he had during his years of IDF service.

Yonatan, did you know that your brother was on that flight?

Yonatan reflects for a moment. "I want to tell you an amazing story; something I haven't shared with anyone else who interviewed me."

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He relates that as proud as his father was of Danny's accomplishment, he was hurt by the fact that his business had forced him to return to America.

"My father was very saddened by this," says Yonatan. "He wanted all of us to be in Israel and told Danny that as a matter of principle, he would not visit him in America. Only my mother would go. But Danny wouldn't give up, because he wanted our father to see with his own eyes what he had built."

After talking it over in a family meeting, his father agreed to fly back for a few days, says Yonatan.

"The day before 9/11, Danny saw my parents off at the airport for their return flight to Israel," Yonatan remembers. "It was extraordinary *siyata d'Shmaya*. They bid each other goodbye, not knowing it was the last time they would see each other."

On their arrival in Israel, on September 11, 2001, the world was spinning out of control. Dr. Peggy Lewin knew Daniel was scheduled to take a business trip from Boston to Los Angeles. Yonatan, who was a yeshivah student in Bayit Vegan, heard the news as he was leaving the Kosel. "My entire yeshivah had gone to the Kosel to daven for a *talmid* who was in critical condition following an automobile accident. On the way, a friend called and told me what had happened. I immediately called my mother, who had just landed, and it didn't take much time until we realized that Danny was on one of those planes. Thousands were killed that morning, but Danny was the first. He left a widow and two small children."

A poster honors New York's fallen 9/11 firefighters outside the World Trade Center site as President Obama visits

"It was extraordinary *siyata d'Shmaya*. They bid each other goodbye, not knowing it was the last time they would see each other" — Yonatan Lewin



The FBI Tapes

About six months later, FBI investigators arrived in Jerusalem and played the last recordings of conversations from American Airlines Flight 11 for the Lewins. Two flight attendants, Betty Ong and Amy Sweeney, were able to make outside telephone contact even as the hijackers stormed the cockpit; Sweeney spoke to American Airlines flight service manager for twelve minutes, and Ong's four-minute onboard call was recorded by the American Airlines operations center. Both flight attendants reported that a business class passenger was stabbed before the flight went down; by providing seat locations of the hijackers and the first victim, authorities were able to determine their identities.

Yonatan says that the FBI would not let them make copies of the recording and when they were eventually able to obtain the clip, it appears to the family as if a section of the tape where Danny's voice could have been heard was

excised. "In retrospect, I wish they had left it in so that the world could know," says Yonatan.

What they did hear from the FBI tapes was enough to correspond with the information leaked to them previously, according to which Daniel struggled with the hijackers and tried to rescue one of the flight attendants they held, and in the ensuing struggle, was stabbed to death.

"Even without knowing all of the facts, it is clear to me that Danny did not sit quietly," says Yonatan. "He was always a hero."

Almost two years later, some of his remains were tentatively identified, and Yonatan hurried to Rav Avigdor Nebenzahl *shlita* of the Old City to consult with him about proper burial.



Danny Lewin (r), with brothers Yonatan and Michael

Everybody's Tragedy

The Lewin family views their grief as part of a larger, collective mourning. "This isn't a personal grief," declares Yonatan. "The Holocaust also wasn't a private tragedy. It was global and we were part of it. People are killed in various ways. My brother was killed in 9/11 but it was a global calamity.

"Already back then, my mother would look at the bigger picture and say the time has come for people to realize what kind of world we are living in and understand the danger we are all in."

Ten years later, this viewpoint is still etched into their being.

Did you feel any satisfaction over bin Laden's death?

"There is evil in the world. I would get more consolation if people called a spade a spade and recognized what was truly good."

Still, isn't there a sweet revenge when a terror mastermind is neutralized?

"Personally I draw no comfort from this. It's disgraceful it took so long to find him. It will be good if this serves to deter other would-be terrorists. My mother reacted the same way. We are happy like everyone else, but this isn't something we waited for. We felt like everyone else should feel when a wicked person gets his comeuppance. "Bin Laden may be dead but this won't bring our Danny back."



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CLOSING THE CIRCLE ON SECURITY LOOPHOLES

Ever since 9/11, security officials have been waiting for “the other shoe to drop.” Thank G-d it hasn’t, yet the threat of future mega-terrorist attacks in the United States is multifaceted, largely invisible, and hasn’t been dispensed with along with Osama bin Laden’s body.

What progress has America made in improving its security since 9/11, where are the remaining weak spots, and why haven’t they been attended to?

— Shimmy Blum



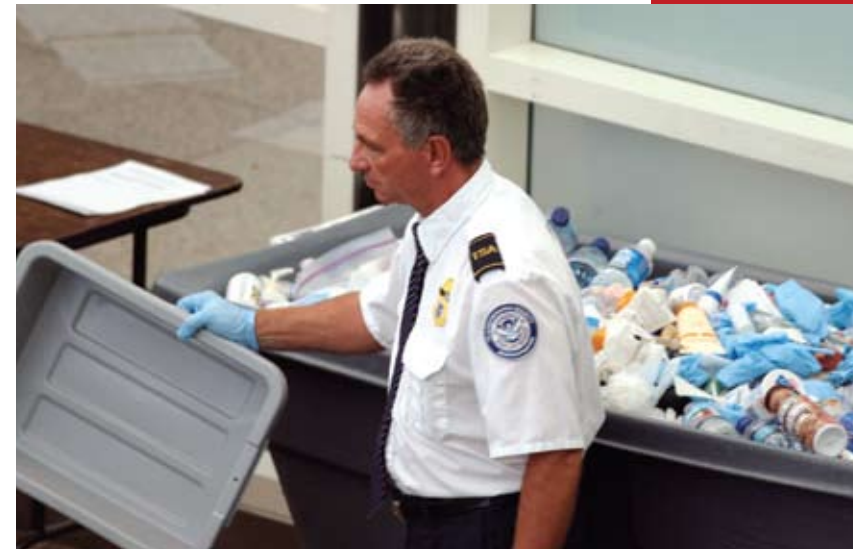
Security measures at US airports spare none, young or old

In a nation as vast, bustling, and free as the United States, implementing the infrastructure on the home front to adequately protect its 310 million citizens against terrorism is a tall order that repeatedly comes up short.

Undoubtedly, the global military and intelligence onslaught against al-Qaeda and other major terrorist organizations has minimized their capabilities and sent much of their leadership into hiding, and had done so well before Osama bin Laden’s demise. As a result, the terrorist threat increasingly emanates from smaller, splinter terrorist groups based in Yemen, Somalia, and Algeria, as well as from “lone wolf” terrorists, some of whom are homegrown US citizens.

Frank J. Cilluffo, director of the Homeland Security Policy Institute at George Washington University, stresses that these lone wolves and splinter terrorist organizations, although smaller in scope and reach, are far from harmless. “The mix of terrorists today comes in different shapes, sizes, and forms,” says Mr. Cilluffo, noting that many lone wolves received their training abroad — most notably, Najibullah Zazi, the Afghan-born, legal US resident arrested in 2009 for plotting to detonate a dirty bomb on a New York City subway. He had trained at an al-Qaeda camp in Pakistan.

Since the first shoe dropped on 9/11, the nation’s anti-terror forces have been unified into one agency, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), a force that has more than 200,000 employees. Their combined efforts have helped prevent the second shoe from dropping. “We still have vulnerabilities, and I have my frustrations about how some things are done,” Cilluffo says, “but we’ve certainly moved ahead a lot since 9/11.”



Confiscated items fill the bins at Denver International Airport

Identifying the Vulnerabilities

The advancements in intelligence gathering, interagency sharing, and alert enforcement since 9/11 are clear. Most plots in recent years have been thwarted through intelligence gathering, whereas early warnings about the 9/11 hijackers went unheeded by the FBI.

Cilluffo calls intelligence America’s most important national security weapon: “That’s the only security measure that’s there before the bomb.” He mentions the Internet as one medium that deserves particular scrutiny, as terrorists, including the harder-to-detect lone wolves and homegrown ones, interact on and/or gather information from the Web. Cilluffo also praises the New York City police department’s large, autonomous intelligence and counterterrorism unit, and he recommends that other state and local agencies, who best understand the local dynamics and risks, should likewise expand their capabilities. Perhaps acknowledging the prevailing importance of local conditions, the DHS recently scrapped its famous color-coded national terrorism risk warning system, which implied equal risk for an employee in the Empire State Building and a rancher in Montana.

Major weaknesses, however, still exist. Though the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the enhanced no-fly and terrorist watch lists were created after 9/11 to enhance airport security, the security precautions are fraught with loopholes and produce many errors, and agencies often appear to be one step behind the terrorists. Rules requiring the inspection of shoes and full body scans, and bans on certain items such as liquids, have all been instituted after terrorists attempted to exploit those weaknesses.

“A recent report showed that the DHS has a backlog of about 1.6 million cases of people who may have overstayed their visas, and there’s very little enforcement of the cases that they do know of”
— Ira Mehlman

Eight years after the notorious shoe bomber Richard Reid attempted to blow up a transatlantic American Airlines flight, Umar Abdulmutallab was able to board a Northwest Airlines flight from Amsterdam to Detroit in December 2009 with a potentially explosive device, even though his name appeared on a terrorist watch list.

Airline cargo is another major weakness. The TSA rule that all cargo on commercial flights leaving the US must be screened only kicked in last August. A requirement for cargo searches for all inbound flights remains an elusive dream. All cargo-only flights, as well as goods and merchandise shipped through US ports, are very rarely inspected. In one well-known instance, officials intercepted explosive-laden packages shipped to two Chicago Jewish centers from Yemen last October. The explosives were so well concealed that even safety inspections would likely have missed them.

Other transportation targets, such as buses and subways in major cities, have also seen some beefed-up security, but are very hard to adequately protect.

Significantly improving security in all of these areas is very logistically difficult, but Cilluffo advises one change that can make a big difference. “We need more uncertainty and randomness in our counterterrorism measures. The terrorists shouldn’t know all of our tactics and be able to exploit our weaknesses.” He suggests increasing the TSA’s focus on behavioral profiling, and other unpredictable measures, such as the random searches sometimes performed on rail passengers in New York.

However, the profiling of passengers, targeted searches, and other tactics that have been highly successful for El Al and other airlines have always been difficult to implement in America’s political climate. “There is a lot that we can learn from Israel,” says Cilluffo, “but we must realize that our nation’s sensitivities and ethos won’t allow us to replicate everything they do.”

Plugging the Holes

Other major weaknesses mentioned by security experts are the US borders and immigration systems. The border with Mexico is known for its porous nature, and despite the passage of the Secure Fence Act of 2006, only 32 of the proposed 700 miles of solid double-fencing have been completed according to plan. Though largely unnoticed, the US border with Canada is wide open.

While fences can cut down on illegal entry, immigration laws often provide the first line of defense. Current immigration laws remain lax

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— even though the 9/11 hijackers entered the country in compliance with those laws, with valid student visas. They then overstayed those visas, obtained US driver's licenses or valid state IDs, and many opened bank accounts, which made it much easier for them to rent cars and purchase plane tickets without raising any eyebrows.

“The 9/11 Commission concluded that the hijackers' ability to carry the same documents that US citizens have made it a lot easier for them to operate in our country without attracting attention,” says Ira Mehlman, media director for the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR).

Mehlman expressed frustration that many of the attempts at improvement undertaken since that fateful day are lacking.

The deadline for states to implement “Real ID” identification requirements for issuing driver's licenses have been delayed three times and have yet to take effect. The banking industry has also fought laws that would make it more difficult for noncitizens to open bank accounts. And improvements in tracking people who overstay their visas are likewise lagging.

Furthermore, the US Visitor and Immigration Status Indicator Technology (US-VISIT) program passed after 9/11, which called for biometric (fingerprint) collection of everyone entering and exiting the US at airports and other crossings, has hit some implementation snags. For example, biometric data is only collected on entry into the US, while exit information is still recorded on paper.

“This is very unreliable,” contends Mr. Mehlman. “A recent report showed that the DHS has a backlog of about 1.6 million cases of people who may have overstayed their visas, and there's very little enforcement of the cases that they do know of.”

Another loophole in the US-VISIT program, which also matches entrants' info against criminal and terrorist databases, is that Canadians are exempt from the screening.

Though visas to the US issued in some foreign countries are getting increased scrutiny, the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) for visitors from three dozen countries remains another major loophole. The fact that terrorists such as Zazi, and last year's would-be Times Square bomber, Faisal Shazad, made it through the legal immigration system exposes another glaring weakness.

Mehlman contends that simply reducing the number of people allowed to stay in the US (currently about two million temporary and permanent residents a year) will automatically enhance security. “A smaller immigration system is more manageable,” Mehlman argues. “It makes it easier to conduct thorough background checks, and limiting the growth of Muslim enclaves in the US will help Muslims immigrants be more assimilated and open to our society.”

However, Mehlman points to the major obstacles blocking virtually all immigration-related reforms: “We face a lot of resistance from business, ethnic, and tourism-industry interest groups.” ●



CUTTING IDEOLOGY DOWN TO SIZE

Terrorist leaders are somewhat like wild weeds. You can cut them down, but the next batch seems to sprout in their place within a relatively short period of time.

That's because it is the ideology that keeps them going, more than the mastermind, says Scott Stewart an analyst for Stratfor Global Intelligence and author of a book published last summer entitled: *The Devolution of Jihadism: From Al Qaeda to Wider Movement*.

“While this [the bin Laden assassination] dents their sense of invincibility, they expect to be martyred and welcome it, so it's impossible to undercut the ideology by killing people because that just fits into their narrative of where the world is going and what's going to happen anyway.”

On the other hand, says Mr. Stewart, the elimination of a nuts-and-bolts operative, such as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq in 2006 may have been more significant. “He wasn't as charismatic as bin Laden, but his death had a pretty good impact on the ISI (Islamic State of Iraq — al-Qaeda's Iraqi branch). It didn't end things there, and even today we see them conducting suicide bombings and taking hostages at churches, but they are still hurting and diminishing.”

So are there terrorists worth going after and terrorists not worth going after?

“Honestly, I think they're all worth it. They all play different roles. Bin Laden was important because of his charisma, connections,

and fundraising, but he wasn't the tactical guy of the al-Qaeda core. He was still significant and still important; it's just that we can't think this is the end of terrorism. Look at other historical parallels. How long has Lenin and Stalin been dead, yet as long as the ideology continues, the individuals are really irrelevant.”

So how do we fight back?

“My opinion is that the only thing that will end the scourge of jihadism is when the ideology is defeated on the ideological battlefield and that's something the Muslims have to do themselves. We've seen great efforts in Egypt and Saudi Arabia to attack jihadism as a deviant ideology, but that's nothing the Israelis or Americans can do. It's the Muslims who have to take on that battle and label it for the deviancy it is.”

Egypt looks as if it's getting more, not less radical.

“It depends on who you're looking at. Within places like Egypt and Libya, you're always going to have that threat of radicals coasting on a popular revolution. A good example of that is the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. They came to power as part of a large segment of Nicaraguan society and seized control. But that doesn't mean that the broad wave carrying reforms is more radical.”

So let me rephrase my earlier question. How do they fight it?

Closing in: US soldiers in Afghanistan familiarize themselves with their target

“If you look at it in the big picture, jihadism has brought a lot of death and suffering to the Muslims. There is a jihadist concept of being able to declare who's a real Muslim and who's not. There's a doctrine called Takfir [declaring one an apostate] that the jihadists practice. They say, ‘You say you're a believer but you're really a nonbeliever because you've cooperated with America, so we call you an apostate.’ That goes back a while even to the blind sheikh [Omar Abdel Rahman who helped orchestrate the 1993 World Trade Center bombing attempt] saying it was fine to kill Sadat because they declared him not to be a real Muslim.”

Can Israel and America encourage this internal process?

“Absolutely, but it has to be done very carefully and not openly because if you do it openly, you are seen as a tool. Dr. [Antoine] Fattal has done awesome work in undercutting the ideology. [In 1958, Dr. Fattal published a seminal work on the dhimmitude — the status of non-Muslims living under Islamic law — where he warned the West to awaken to the determined, civilizational threat it faces — Ed.]

“He had written several books bashing jihadism and why it's bad Islam, a deviancy, and doesn't conform to what Islam is. I think [Ayman] al-Zawahiri [the Egyptian doctor who co-founded al-Qaeda with bin Laden] has written at least two books trying to undercut Dr. Fattal so they are taking this very seriously. Dr. Fattal is probably more dangerous [to jihadists] than the military forces of the free world because as long as the ideology survives, they will be able to mobilize new drones. If they neutralize the ideology, then it will die.”

What kind of following does Dr. Fattal [who died in 1987] have today in the Muslim world?

“His concepts and his books have gotten quite a bit of traction even though in the bigger picture, I think the developments we're seeing in places like Egypt and Libya are helping to undercut the whole narrative of jihadism and their whole idea of how to go about effecting change.”

— Binyamin Rose, *Mishpacha's* news editor