

The “HAR” in English

Simultaneously with the spiritual growth, the challenges persisted. One Rosh Hashana, upon seeing Bedouins leaving the house of a neighbor who was away for the holiday, on the first night, and concluding rightly that they had burgled the home, Rabbi Sharaby stayed up all night the second night of the holiday guarding the home of another neighbor who was away. Fortunately, no Bedouins burgled the other neighbor’s house--but Rabbi Sharaby was ready for them if they did. Yes, he is a gun toting Rabbi, and is active in ensuring the security of Har Shmuel.

One amusing anecdote illustrates how Rabbi Sharaby conquered unusual challenges in his desire to do mitzvot. It was Succot, and the animals were roaming wild in Har Shmuel. Rabbi Sharaby wanted to sleep in the Succah, and he did. He placed pails of water on the feet of his bed in the Succah to keep the ants scorpions etc. away. Fire to keep the dogs and the foxes away, He kept a pistol under his pillow. The ploy succeeded in keeping the dogs and foxes and scorpions at bay, but when Rabbi Sharaby awoke in the morning, he discovered 6 cats in bed with him.

Another story also illustrates how Rabbi Sharaby and his family used a challenging situation to further warmth and hospitality in the community. As a result of the garbage strewn in the area as a result of all the building, there was wood and other materials for bonfires. He created bonfires, and opened them to the community, regardless of Shul affiliation. He succeeded in creating a warm and inviting venue for people of all haskafot, ages and interests to join the Sharabys for dinner and Torah in the warmth of the blaze.

While the community has grown too large for one bonfire to suffice, Rabbi Sharaby, his wife, Mirav, and his wonderful family, continue to light the way for all of us who have chosen to live in Har Shmuel. He continues his Torah learning, inspiring all to follow in his ways, and makes it his business to visit each family to celebrate memorable events in their lives. He gives drashot in all the Shuls, when invited, and consults with anyone who seeks his sage advice, regardless of Shul affiliation,

While Rabbi Sharaby didn’t plan to be a community Rav, he is more than equal to the task. He has set the foundation and continues to keep Har Shmuel the vibrant, warm and Torah loving community that we see today.

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Interview Article- The First Har Shmuel Pioneer- The Wild and Wooly West (We are West of Jerusalem)

by Yocheved Miriam Zemel

Those of us who just arrived in Har Shmuel may have the mistaken illusion that they are on the ground floor of a community that is just beginning. Seeing the multitude of homes under construction, it appears that Har Shmuel is in its infancy.

That’s not exactly the case, both from spiritual (Ruchani) as well as physical (Gashmi) vantage points, we are not exactly on the ground floor. The pioneers before us created the warm, Torah loving atmosphere, and the secure situation in which we live.

For this Alon, I have chosen to interview Rabbi David Sharaby, the very first pioneer who established his home with the support of his wife, Mirav, and his family. The security fence was not erected as yet, and Bedouins roamed freely throughout Har Shmuel.

Rabbi Sharaby explains that when he moved here from Jerusalem in the year 2000, at the height of the Intifada, “I had not planned in advance to be a Rabbi. I planned to learn all day, and to create a place of Torah and happiness in Har Shmuel.”

Both the physical and spiritual challenges were enormous. He recalls, “ I came here by horseback. There were no roads. It was all open fields. The Bedouins lived among us. There were no facilities for water or electricity. I paid the Bedouins to bring in water on donkeys, and I used a generator.”

How did your wife, Mirav, react to all of this? I asked, “ She was amazed when the bedouin women came to greet her. The men had 5 wives, and they welcomed Mirav, along with their sheep. She braved it all.”

“ Before the roads were constructed, owls, quail, sheep, and dogs (there were 50 dogs) had free rein of the area.”

Not intimidated by the physical limitations of the area, Rabbi Sharaby, never surrendered his goal to create an atmosphere of Torah and Simcha on Har Shmuel. “ As soon as I was able, I made a minyan by walking to the top of the area, and, with difficulty, garnered 10 men for a Minyan. I transported my children to Yeshivot in Ramot and Geula, and I invited people to my home. It was the only house on the mountain. I had a waiting list of people who wanted to come for Shabbat. And many chose to stay.”

Har Shmuel was established on the basis of Chesed. Rabbi Sharaby’s “Hachnasat Orchim” is legendary. He created the “Aviyra,” the environment of Joy, love of learning and Chesed that pervades the community today. This was the spiritual basis of the community. “ I focus on people who are positive, who are into Ahavas Yisroel,” he said.

Interesting stories abound. Having arrived with 7 children, the Sharabys had 2 children here. Mirav summoned an ambulance when she was in labor, instructing the driver to turn down the siren, so that she could maintain her privacy regarding the birth. The driver didn’t heed her request, and burst into the community siren blasting. There were very few houses at that time, and he bounded down the hill arousing the interest of all. The entire community ran out to see what was happening. That baby was born with the cheering of the community.

Having foresight, Rabbi Sharaby started the Alon immediately, and invited all who wished to participate. As the community grew, so did the Alon. In addition to stimulating Divrei Torah, it focuses on happenings in the community, keeping people abreast of Smachot and other memorable events in the lives of its members.

