

Shimon Rosenberg

From Hezbollah To Torah

The Muslim Who Spied For Israel...
And Then Converted

He grew up a Lebanese Muslim in the shadow of the Iranian-backed Islamic terror group Hezbollah. He witnessed them torture and murder his family members, ultimately dedicating his life to avenging his brother's brutal death. And he did so by joining Hezbollah so he could undermine their operations from the inside!

Zman gets the absolutely incredible story firsthand from Ibrahim Yassin, now Avraham Sinai, who cheated death time and again, before escaping to Eretz Yisrael where he became a righteous convert to Judaism!



As he sat behind lock and bars in the Hezbollah prison, waiting for the moment when the door would swing open and he would be led out to his death, thoughts flew through the mind of Ibrahim Yassin. He knew that he had sacrificed his life for a worthy cause but he could not block out memories of his wife and children. He knew he would never see them again.

He had undergone terrible tortures. Worst of all was the murder of his 10-month-old baby, a scene he was forced to watch.

But the more they tortured him, the more adamant he became. With unbelievable tenacity he refused to cooperate, even when they told him, "Everything you suffered until now is nothing compared to what is still awaiting you...."

Now, as he languished in prison, he knew it was all over. His mind told him the worst was yet to happen, but in his heart he was at peace. He was proud of what he had accomplished and was pleased that thanks to his heroic and selfless efforts a number of terror attacks had been avoided and countless lives saved.

It took several days to reach him by phone. It was the olive harvest and Avraham Sinai was badly overworked. A busy man with little free time, Sinai nevertheless promised that if I came out to visit him in the groves picking his olives he would sit down with me for an interview.

Following his directions, I reached the *kever* of Rabbi Yossi Saragossi, an early 16th century *tzaddik*. Rabbi Saragossi was born in Spain (1460), and after the expulsion he wandered across Europe, eventually reaching *Eretz Yisrael*. He settled in Tzfas and was crowned as the city's rabbi. According to a tradition, Eliyahu Hanavi appeared to him on the spot where he was later interred. This is in the Ein Zeisim neighborhood, on the side of the mountain where the Tanna Rabbi Yehudah bar Ilai is buried, about one mile from Tzfas.

As the name implies, there are many olive trees growing in



Avraham Sinai, the former Hezbollah member who is now a proud Jew.

the region. Sinai chose one area as his workplace for this season. It was identifiable from the highway due to the thin column of smoke that rose from the spot where he worked. Sinai was in the process of clearing the area using controlled fire to remove dead trees and brush. A strong wind blew and his fire, which was intended to eliminate a single dead tree, quickly spread to a nearby bush and threatened to blaze out of control.

As I descended the hill and was confronted by the conflagration, I was sure that this was the beginning of a major wildfire, one of the many that Arab hooligans start from time to time. Yet, Sinai stood there and observed the scene with detached calm. It was clear that his experiences trained him to remain cool and analytical under all circumstances.

As I drew closer, I saw his eyes darting back and forth from the fire to a nearby tree. "The wind is blowing in that direction," he pointed out to me with his finger. "It will take at least two or three minutes until the fire reaches that tree."

With the patience of someone waiting for the Chanukah candle to catch, Sinai turned around and picked up several thick branches. "These are moist and thick so they'll put out the fire before the heat dries them and allows the flames to ignite them."

He took a few quick steps in the direction that the fire was blowing and, striking



We arrived to find Sinai using a controlled fire to clear the brush.

with the stout branches at several strategic points, brought the fire under control. In less than five minutes the fire had burned itself out and the dead tree was reduced to ash.

Turning to me, Avraham Sinai noticed the look of astonishment plastered across my face. "One mustn't lose oneself so quickly," he admonished with a smile and a friendly tap on my shoulder. "Oh, I almost forgot: *Shalom aleichem*...."

"Come," he said leading me to crumbling stone wall, "let's sit down."

He began telling me his incredible story. Fantastic though it sounds, it has been confirmed by officials of Israel's intelligence community and, more significantly, by the rabbis who converted him.

"My story is hard to believe, to put it mildly," he tells me as he makes himself comfortable on the ground. "But it is true. I was born to a traditional Muslim family and now I am a Jew, a believer, one who fears *Hashem*."

Among the Cedars of Lebanon

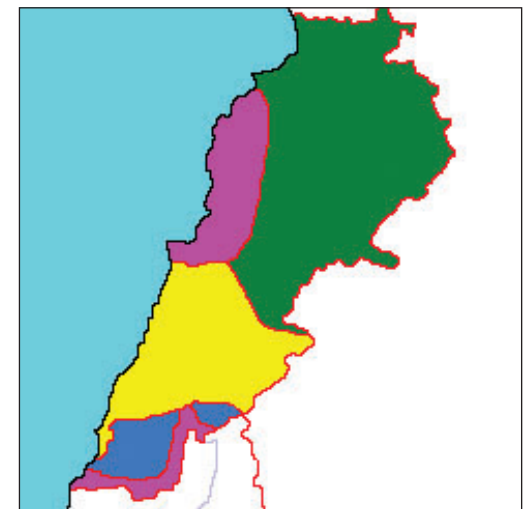
Ibrahim Yassin was born in 1962 in Lebanon, "among the cedar trees that were used to build the *Beis Hamikdash* a few thousand years ago," he comments with a smile. He lived in a village of Shiite Muslims.



With his son in the olive grove.

In Lebanon, especially in the area where his family lived, calm and peace had reigned for many years. The earth was fertile and the air in and around the village where the Yassin family lived, not far from the sea, was pleasant. The Lebanon of those years was very different from the Lebanon today. People lived well and tourism flourished. It was the most peaceful country in the Middle East.

"We ate from the fruits and vegetables that grew in the garden right next to our house. We had everything we needed in life."



Map showing the power balance in Lebanon, 1983: Green represents Syrian control, purple controlled by Christian groups, yellow under Israel and blue under the administration of the United Nations.