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LONDON MARATHON PREVIEW: PART I

Chabad man on his marks for 26-mile race

Rabbi's raring to go in London Marathon

THIS year's London Marathon is set to offer something different - the first participation of an orthodox rabbi.

Rabbi Odom Brandman from Buckhurst Hill is training three times a week for the 17 April race, and has even made a promotional video on YouTube to help him get into the mood.

The 29-year-old runs the Chabad Centre and Synagogue in Buckhurst Hill, Essex, with his wife Henny, plus the support team of his three boys - all of whom are under five-years-old.

But having spent the past six years building up a Jewish community which is constantly growing, the Rabbi has now also decided to switch his attention to building himself up for the 26-mile run.

Explaining why he decided to take up the challenge, he says: "I want to show, firstly that Rabbis are real people, that we can be approachable, down to earth and that I'm ready to take on challenges out of my comfort zone".

Buoyed on by his wife, family and the local community - all of whom regularly see him pounding the local streets - he's had to find a balancing act in order to carry out his communal work, spending time with the family, as well as the all-important aspect of training for the world-famous race.



Either heading out for his runs at 5am before his children get up, or at 11pm once everyone's asleep, he has though also found his numerous obligations sometimes overlap.

Recollecting one such instance, he explains: "One evening when I was out on a run, I took an urgent call from a family who had sadly just suffered a bereavement. They desperately needed me to come over to help them so I promised to be over within the hour as I didn't want to make the family feel uncomfortable by telling them that I was actually quite far away from home on a long run."

"Turning my jog into a sprint to quickly get home, shower and change from my running gear to a suit and tie, I managed to get to the family's home within the

promised hour. "But, that's my life and I love it. I'll always drop everything to help somebody and my family and I am dedicated to the needs of the community".

With just over a week to go to the race, the rabbi's video can be found on YouTube by searching "Go Rabbi Go", or via his website www.chabadonthehill.co.uk.

You can also sponsor the rabbi at: www.virginmoneygiving.com/odombranman

Running in the Marathon? Email details to andrews@thejngroup.com to be in next week's preview

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