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MARATHON THE RABBI ON THE RUN



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Marathon runners step up for charity

Rabbi sets the pace before leading Seder

BY JENNIFER LIPMAN

► CHABAD RABBI Odom Brandman was in good shape for Pesach having completed his first marathon in four hours 45 minutes, raising a higher than anticipated £8,000-plus. The money will go to the Buckhurst Hill Chabad Centre in Essex which Rabbi Brandman, 29, established in 2005.

He decided to enter the race more than a year ago and for the last six months has trained three times a week, sneaking in runs at dawn or late at night to fit them in with his Chabad commitments. On one occasion, a leisurely jog turned into a sprint so he could grab

Rabbi Odom Brandman



his suit and be on time for a shivah. Rabbi Brandman said he wanted to show that rabbis were "real people. At the Chabad centre we try to think outside the box. We can be approachable, down to earth and take on challenges out of the comfort zone.

"I'm not an athlete so this was pretty much the most extreme and crazy idea I could think of."

He had filled up on pasta before his run, to give him energy and to help finish up the chametz. His wife had supported his participation, on the condition he would be in a fit state to lead a Seder for 40 people the following evening.

Twenty members of his community cheered him on at various points of the course "and a lot of people came over to wish me a happy Pesach. It was an exhilarating experience."