## THE NEW START

Between 2000 – 2010, a number of problematic individuals rose to positions of authority within the Shuvu Banim community, and started throwing their weight around. Some of these individuals demanded large sums of money from anyone who wanted to speak to the Rav or ask for a blessing. Others started to play “power games” within Shuvu Banim, demoting and promoting students on a whim, drawing up lists of those people who would be allowed access to the Rav privately, deciding who could attend the Rav’s weekly *shiurim* and even, deciding who would be allowed to pray with the Rav on Shabbos.

Anyone who was “caught” recording or photographing the Rav’s classes would be blacklisted, as would anyone who tried to talk to the Rav or get a blessing without paying a large sum of money to the people who’d effectively seized control of the *yeshivah*.

The Rav and his family were greatly pained by these developments, and in private, they begged the people responsible to stop. But in public, the Rav kept silent.

So the Rav became a virtual recluse in his home for more than ten years. He stopped *davening* with the Shuvu Banim community in the Old City. He barely gave classes or attended public events. This continued until Chanuka 5771, (December 2010), when, with the help of two students and one grandchild, Rav Eliezer Berland finally managed to escape.

At that time, Rav Berland recorded a message for his followers where he told them:

*“After I ended up being admitted to the hospital three times in just four weeks… after I saw that this is now a situation of pikuach nefesh and that I was on the cusp of a complete physical breakdown, I decided to leave [Jerusalem]…*

*“It pains me to leave my family and especially my beloved wife, beloved children and my beloved grandchildren. But [understand] I left because I care for them, I care for my son that he should have a father, and for my grandson that he should have a grandfather.*

*“When I used to leave my wife for long periods of hisbodedus I would say to her that I left in order to bring you back a husband who is a Rosh Yeshiva, so now I left in order to bring you a Rosh Yeshiva who is alive, not a Rosh Yeshiva who is in the hospital every two weeks, and who every three or four days has a heart attack (G-d forbid).*

*“I don’t want them to eulogize me in the newspaper, saying what a holy person I was, so I decided to lengthen my days…*

*“Now I’m in the North doing hisbodedus and going to kivrei Tzaddikim. I wish you could all be here with me. I learned more Torah on one Shabbos [up North] than I learned in almost all the last ten years…*

***“If I can’t return to Jerusalem, where the threats against me are very serious and terrible, I can’t go into details about them here, but the threats being made against me are increasing each moment. The situation in Jerusalem is only getting worse with each passing moment, so there may be no choice except to reopen the yeshiva in the Galilee****.*

*“If the terror continues, so we’ll build a yeshiva here so we can all be together, and serve Hashem, a yeshiva that will accept all different kinds of people, an elementary school for all different kind of boys, and girls school for all different kind of girls so that there will no longer be a possibility that a boy or girl is asked to leave or not accepted because they don’t fit a certain criteria and they have to go to a school for off-the-derech children.*

*“There will be a place in Shuvu Banim for everyone, for every type, so we can once again raise up the glory of Torah. That’s the goal of Shuvu Banim, my goal all my life, to raise up and glorify the Torah…*

*“I want to make a new start now. The Rebbe [Rebbe Nachman] wrote in Lesson 64 that every machlokes leads to a new creation of the world… Everything that has been done until now, it’s for the best… The Rebbe explains that it’s forbidden to condemn anyone, or to put anyone down, or to take vengeance against them. Now, we’re getting ready to create the world completely anew. Shuvu Banim is going to get a new lease of life…*