

7/7 BOMBINGS 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

On Tuesday the nation paused to remember those killed in the bomb attacks on London's transport system 10 years ago. In the second of two features the *Recorder* speaks to two people who walked away from the horror and remembers one of those killed.

Rabbi 'saved by God' vows to make it count

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A rabbi believes a higher power was at work when he chose to board the neighbouring carriage to one that was bombed during the 7/7 attacks.

Rabbi Aryeh Sufrin of Chabad Lubavitch synagogue, Woodford Avenue, Gants Hill, was on his way to a meeting when he boarded a train from Gants Hill station a decade ago.

When he changed trains during rush hour he chose the carriage to his right - a decision which changed his life forever.

Rabbi Sufrin, who felt the bomb go off at Aldgate East, said: "When it went off, I thought we had crashed - I didn't think of anything else it could be.

"It became so dark, the smoke was particularly black and there was an eery silence.

"The carriage became smoke-filled and I saw a fireball down the side of the train - I thought 'this is it', I thought I was going to die."

Rabbi Sufrin said he witnessed the good and bad in people who were in "survival mode" when those in the bomb-hit carriage opened the door to his carriage to get some air.

"The smell in there was so sick," he said.

"People were screaming, saying to close the door because we need-

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Rabbi Aryeh Sufrin

ed the air ourselves.”

He also recalled a woman in a red jacket who helped to keep commuters calm amidst the "chilling" screams of passengers.

"We walked alongside of the train at Aldgate East and I saw this massive hole in the side of the train.

"I saw injured people with no clothes on, lying around - it was horrendous"

Rabbi Sufrin was told by police to remain at the Tube station following the attack to gather the details of those on the train.

"I just wanted to go home," he said.

"I was in control up until I found out that it was a suicide bomber. I was just thinking horrible thoughts - I could have been on that carriage."

He added: "But the emergency services that day were something special - they were at their best."

Since the attack, Rabbi Sufrin



says he has made it a priority to speak to those in need - just to see how they are.

He makes calls every Friday to check in on those who may not have anyone to talk to.

"I'm lucky to survive and I'm sure I survived for a reason," he said.

"When I think about it, God saved me for another day and I've got to make it count. That day, I said to God, I've got so much more to do - I thought I'll work harder, I'll do more, and I've kept to that commitment.

"I just hope that these people didn't die in vain and that we have learnt lessons from it."