

Thoughts From The Lubavitcher Rebbe

By Rabbi Yossi Groner

A Higher Radiance

A century ago there lived in the town of Polotsk in Russia a simple storekeeper by the name of Reb Yisroel. He was a follower of the Tzemach Tzedek (Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, third leader of Chabad; 1786-1866). Once, on a visit to Lubavitch, he heard a Ma'mar, a discourse of Chassidic philosophy from the Rebbe explaining how our Father Abraham was charitable monetarily, spiritually (e.g. sharing his knowledge of G-d with other people), and bodily (e.g. personally running to wait on his guests, etc.). The Rebbe proceeded to give a profound mystical explanation to show how Abraham's physical acts of charity in this material world were in a sense higher than the Divine attribute of Chessed, (kindness), emanating from the lofty plane of spiritual existence known as Atzilus.

Reb Yisroel did not understand the entire dissertation, but he did grasp these few words about Abraham, which he repeated over and over until he committed them to memory. When he came home, the Chassidim gathered to welcome him at the customary festive reception from Lubavitch. They asked Reb Yisroel if he could perhaps repeat the Ma'mar, the dissertation, that the Rebbe had said. Reb Yisroel replied that he could not, but had committed to memory a few words about Abraham's charitableness which he proceeded to repeat to them. After the reception, Reb Yisroel went back to his store as usual.

Nachman and Yosef, also storekeepers in Polotsk, were friends of Reb Yisroel. Reb Yisroel decided that he would go into Nachman's store and ask him for a loan. He did not need the money, but having heard from the Rebbe the great quality of charitableness (which includes lending money without interest, called "Gemillus Chassodim") he

wanted to give his friend Nachman the opportunity to fulfill this great Mitzva. Nachman and Yosef followed his example; every day they would borrow and repay small amounts of money from each other.

When Reb Yisroel was next in Lubavitch, the Tzemach Tzedek came out of the synagogue and asked one of the senior Chassidim, "Who is that person over there?" The Chassid was at a loss to answer, for Reb Yisroel was not one of the well-known Chassidim, but eventually he discovered that the name of the Chassid was Reb Yisroel and that he was a storekeeper from Polotsk. The Tzemach Tzedek asked that Reb Yisroel be sent into his room. When Reb Yisroel came in, the Rebbe asked him about his work and his daily schedule. Reb Yisroel replied that he got up every morning at five, he said Tehillim (Psalms), he drank tea, chopped wood, and then went to shul to daven. After davening he studied a chapter of Mishnayos, went home to eat breakfast and then went to the marketplace to his store. Later, in the afternoon, he went to shul to daven Mincha, studied a little more, prayed the Maariv service, and went home.

The Tzemach Tzedek was not satisfied. "Nu, and what about Tzedokoh?" he inquired. Reb Yisroel replied that he was poor and could not give any charity, but after further questioning by the Rebbe, Reb Yisroel's strange daily custom of taking and giving back small loans came to surface.

Later, the Tzemach Tzedek's son (Reb Shmuel, who was to become his successor) asked his saintly father, "What do you seek in him?" The great Tzemach Tzedek replied that he had seen surrounding the simple storekeeper Reb Yisroel a radiance, a pillar of light of the Divine attribute of kindness and "Chessed" of Atzilut.

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hebrew academy

Passover Sale

Plans are now in progress for the Hebrew Academy to sell Passover products to our Jewish community. A more detailed announcement will be forthcoming.

Recruitment Cochairmen

President Bob Bernhardt has appointed Rosanne Sklar to share recruitment duties with Ann Abel.

Guests at the Hebrew Academy

Rabbi Robert Seigel and Arthur Pressman recently came to the Academy to read the Torah. When Rabbi Yossi Groner visited the Academy for Succot he sang songs with the children and told holiday stories.

Nine four-year-olds from Temple Israel Nursery came to the school to help celebrate the Succot holiday. They enjoyed the Succot plays, songs, dances and treats.

A Visit to Greensboro

In October Eleanor Weinglass, Director, met with the Director of the Greensboro Hebrew Academy to explore ways of advancing the education in both schools. The 3rd, 4th and 5th graders in our school are pen pals with the children at the Greensboro school. In November the older children from Greensboro will visit our school.

Visit to Wallace's Farm

The entire school went to Wallace's Dairy Farm in October. All the children were able to see, touch, and smell the cows, hunting dogs and foxes. They also learned about the milking process.

Special Thanks

The Academy is very appreciative of the excellent copying machine donated to the school by White's Business Machines.

Students' Creative Writing

There once was a man from a temple
Who had a little pimple
On Rosh Ha-shanah day
He gave it away
And now he is left with a dimple.

by: Michelle Steiner
3rd Grade

Sukkot is when we harvest our crop
And clean the house with broom and mop
We build a sukkah with no roof
And use branches to top off the booth.
This is to tell
How we had to dwell,
In this free way
For many a day
So many years ago.

by: Carrie Lambert
5th Grade

There once was a man from Marucca
Who hung fruits up in his sukkah
He likes Yom Kippur
But he loves Sukkot more
In his sukkah he recites the brucha.

by: Lila Shapiro
4th Grade

There once was some lucious fruit
That was grown in England's boot
Because they were British
They sang the kiddish in Yiddish
And now they are singable fruit.

by: Keefe Bernstein
4th Grade

There once was the holiday of Sukkot
All the men wore pink kippot
They said the kiddish
Because they were Yiddish
And that is the tale of Sukkot.

by: Michelle Steiner
3rd Grade

There once was a man from Rucca
Who lived inside a sukkah
He made it with sticks
That turned into bricks
And now he calls it a brukkah.

by: Sarit Massachi
3rd Grade



At the farm; Michelle and Shara Steiner.



Kindergarteners making Sukkot decorations.
photos/Mitch Greenberg

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