

LUBAVITCH OF N. C.

Thoughts From The Lubavitcher Rebbe

Lag B'Omer

By Rabbi Binyomin Weiss

Among the reasons cited for the distinction, importance and significance of Lag B'Omer (the thirty-third day of the Omer period between Passover and Shavuot, two bear special attention: The Shulchan Aruch, our Code of Torah Law, explains that a plague had broken out amongst the numerous disciples of Rabbi Akiva, and on Lag B'Omer the death toll came to an end.

At the other end of the scale, Lag B'Omer is noted as the day of great joy for Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai (called the Rashbi). It was the day of his demise and ascent to heaven. Rabbi Shimon, who lived at the time of the Roman conquest of Israel, was an outstanding student of Rabbi Akiva. He transmitted the teachings of the esoteric aspects of Torah to a select group of pupils and was the author of the Zohar (The Book of Brightness). The Zohar became the source-work of Kabbala and the basis for the philosophy and teachings of general Chassidism founded by the Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760) as well as Chabad Chassidism expounded by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1813).

There is an obvious correlation and connection between the two above aspects of Lag B'Omer: After most of Rabbi Akiva's disciples had died in the plague, Rabbi Shimon Ben Yochai was the one outstanding and distinguished pupil of the very few who remained and restored the desolate world. His distinction is attested to by Rabbi Akiva himself, who said to Rashbi, "Be satisfied that I and your Creator recognize your worth."

The disciples who were

stricken by the plague had brought down Divine judgment on themselves by not treating each other with due respect, but Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai's approach ran counter to their conduct and rectified it, as he declared, "I am willing and able to absolve the whole world from judgment, from the day I was created to this moment."

Torah is called Toras Chayim, "instruction in life." Lag B'Omer, in common with all Torah-ordained remembrance days, calls for reflection on the significance of the day and on the personality of Rashbi; reflection in a way that will lead to positive action in one's daily life.

Two outstanding points of Rashbi's personality that should stand as shining examples to us all: (a) his study of Torah to the exclusion of all else was so intense that it was said of him "his Torah is his vocation." (b) His Ahavas Yisroel (love of fellow) embraced the "whole world" — every Jew in whatever situation he may find himself, including one, who faces Divine Judgment and needs to be absolved from it.

Though one may justly wonder "who can even approach the level of Rashbi's exclusive devotion to Torah-learning?!", yet everyone can set fixed times for Torah study, so that as such times one's learning attains the quality of a person whose Torah "is his vocation," to the exclusion of all else. Moreover, in the spirit of boundless Ahavas Yisroel one should do everything possible to encourage other Jews in all parts of the world, to do likewise—to set for themselves fixed periods for Torah study and to induce others in their environment to follow their example.

Maimonides Celebration

A musical program was held at Shalom Park, on Sunday, March 29, in honor of the famous Jewish scholar Maimonides. The celebration was part of an ongoing effort by the Lubavitcher Rebbe Shlita to honor Maimonides through studying his writings, and was sponsored by Lubavitch of North Carolina.

The program began with a lecture by Rabbi Yossi Groner, director of Lubavitch of North Carolina, on the life and teachings of The Rambam — Maimonides, including the conclusion and beginning of his classic work of Jewish law entitled Mishna Torah.

The feature of the evening was a musical concert with Moshe Yess and his mixture of comedy and song. Moshe sang many of his original composi-



Rabbi Yossi Groner speaking to audience about Maimonides

tions like "My Zandie" and "I Have The What Page Are We On In The Prayer Book Blues". He kept the crowd going with his popular songs and his wit.

Participants also enjoyed

excellent Israeli delights like authentic falafel and chumus served during the party. There were many other Middle Eastern foods and sweet delicacies to honor the region where Maimonides lived.

Preschoolers Learn About Spring Holidays

Lubavitch preschool children discovered the joy of spring and its holidays to involve the children with their most creative ideas in the particular project at hand.

Since Passover contains so many things to do, the teachers and children decided to experience all that is possible. First the children designed their own Haggadah, with their own artwork and depictions of Seder foods. Then the children watched a special video entitled, "The Animated Haggadah" which is a wonderful claymation describing the

Seder and story of Pesach through the eyes of a youngster.

The most exciting project of all was the actual baking of traditional matzah, during which, the children experienced how the Jews felt when they baked their matzah in haste during the exodus from Egypt.

Chanie Weiss, Judaica teacher at the school, led the children in a model Seder where they ate their own matzah and learned how to ask the four questions.

The children also had an ex-

citing tour at the Audiology Center at Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte. The children learned about the ear and its care. Thanks goes to Jan Glick who is an audiologist and parent of Aron Glick, one of the students at the school. The children also visited a new born infant and were treated to an exciting learning experience that afternoon.

Other activities included roller skating and a visit to the theatre to watch the Tarradiddle players.

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