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Thoughts From The Lubavitcher Rebbe

10th of Teveth — Weakening of Jewish Wall

By Rabbi Yossi Groner

On the conclusion of the past month we commemorated a sad event in Jewish history. This occurred on the tenth day of the Hebrew month of Teveth (which corresponds this year to Dec. 31.) It has been declared as one of the five public fast days on the Jewish Calendar.

The Tenth of Teveth is the day on which the king of Babylonia laid siege to the city of Jerusalem in the time of the First Temple. They cut off its supply line of vital necessities and with this the destruction of Jerusalem began. This action led to the ultimate and final blow — the destruction of the Temple on the ninth day of Av two and a half years later.

When we examine the laws of fast days we find that they should not be observed on Fridays. The reason being that one may not complete a fast on Friday since it extends in to the Shabbat, and it is forbidden to fast on Shabbat (except when it falls on Yom Kippur.)

However, this is not the rule with the Tenth of Teveth, which could and should be observed in full even when it falls on a Friday, since this fast day signifies a deeper sense of loss than other fast days of the year.

Indeed the Tenth of Teveth fast day is treated as one of the strictest and harshest ones. The Code of Jewish Law explains that this is due to the fact that on this day the enemy of Israel succeeded in surrounding the wall of Jerusalem. It is the beginning of the destruction that hurts more and should be seen as very serious, for this allowed the total destruction of Jerusalem.

When we reflect on the lesson from this sad day, we

realize the tremendous significance of a protective wall in Judaism. Many observances and customs in Judaism which may seem outdated and somewhat meaningless or perhaps a bit too strict, actually serve as a protective wall to the essence of the Torah.

These laws and customs have an important place in our Jewish life and have kept us together and alive under the most trying circumstances. When people want to do away with these protective walls for whatever reason it may be, whether convenience or downright ignorance, they are actually weakening the heart of Judaism.

Our history has shown that those who have succumbed to the pressures (from within and without) and weakened their protective walls, are presently suffering from the maladies of assimilation and other serious problems affecting the entire Jewish community.

The purpose of fasting on the Tenth of Teveth is not to increase in sadness, but rather to learn from the lesson that this day teaches; namely, to strengthen those protective walls by increasing in our observance and commitment to Torah and its commandments.

Maimonides, Rambam, the great Jewish teacher, writes in his famous Code of Mishna Torah, that one must perceive the inner meaning of these fast days. They remind us to harken to the call of return to G-d and the ways of Torah, and indeed when Moshiach will come these very days will be transformed to happy days and days of great joy. And the proper observance of these days will hasten the revelation of these days in their true sense as the most joyous days of the year.

Cult Deprogramming on Charlotte Radio

One of the great problems facing our college youth today is that many cults lurking in the shadows are trying to find new souls to fill their greedy coffers. These groups vary in size and style, but they all have one thing in common: to capture the young and enslave them to the selfish greed of the cult leaders.

Lubavitch-Chabad has been in the forefront of battling these cults with a two-prong campaign: (1) education for the purpose of prevention; (2) deprogramming, which allows the victims of the cult to lead normal lives.

"The Jewish Sound" will air a special documentary-drama on cult deprogramming produced by the National Com-



Rabbi Groner producing "The Jewish Sound."

Giant Menorah Was A Delightful Sight

Chanukah was the season to be happy and bright. Perhaps the name of the holiday, *The Festival of Lights*, explains it best.

At Lubavitch of North Carolina, the giant size Menorah stood at Chabad House overlooking Shalom Park. A 12-foot Menorah was also placed at Independence Plaza in the atrium of the Charlotte Marriott City Center Hotel. A special thanks to Andrew London for constructing such a beautiful Menorah.

Rabbi Hesh Epstein of Lubavitch in Columbia, SC reports that a large Menorah was placed at Columbia Mall on the second night of Chanukah. The event was broadcast on the local television pro-



Rabbi Groner with Menorah at Chabad House overlooking Shalom Park.

gram PM Magazine. The many participants at the Menorah lighting ceremony were treated to latkes and other Chanukah delights.

In Myrtle Beach, a large Menorah was placed at the

newly acquired Chabad House in the center of the city. Being it is located at a busy intersection, the Menorah attracted many motorists and pedestrians in the area. This too was carried by local TV.

Preschool Experiences Winter Events

As the winter winds came blowing in to Charlotte, the students at Lubavitch Preschool prepared for it in an academic way.

A special science program at the Nature Museum was educational and informative. The children studied how animals get ready for winter. Some grow a thicker fur, some hibernate, some migrate, etc. Says Fern Sanderson, morning teacher, "We had the opportunity to feel the fur of various animals and to also hold some of the animals that were discussed. We also saw a movie that reinforced the concepts taught by the instructor. After we came back we wrote a story about our trip."

Another winter experience is the holiday of Chanukah. Chanie Weiss, Judaica teacher, rehearsed with the students for the grand Chanukah play. The Chanukah production was a special opportunity for the preschoolers to demonstrate their talent and knowledge for parents and other visiting guests.

A spectacular way to bring the Chanukah story home to the children was the creation of a Chanukah scroll. They



Elka Azleson, afternoon teacher, at story time.

studied all the details of the miracle of Chanukah and put it in the Chanukah scroll.

Since it is the year of Hakhel, the year of assembly, they learned that the Maccabees would assemble the Jews by sounding the Shofar. They had their own assembly with Rabbi Binyomin and Chanie Weiss which began with the sounding of the Shofar.

Debbie Maslov, early education instructor, has been busy with the little ones. By introducing concepts of creative play, the children discover how to interact and share ideas. The creative play furniture together with the friendly learning environment



Rabbi Weiss begins outdoor assembly with call of the shofar.

leave an indelible impression on any visitor to the school.



Debbie Maslov instructing preschoolers on creative play.

photos/Debbie Burks

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