

LUBAVITCH OF N. C.

Charlotte Jewish
FEDERATION
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Thoughts From The Lubavitcher Rebbe

A Fish Story

By Rabbi Yossi Groner

Rabbi Akivah was once asked why he persisted in teaching Torah publicly at a time when such action was punishable by death.

The sage gave the parable of the fox who called out to the fish, "Why don't you come out onto the land where you will be safe from the fisherman, and you and I can live together in harmony?" Replied the fish: "You foolish fox. If we are in danger in the water, the source of our life, how much more would we be in danger on dry land!"

Just as a Jew can not change the fact of his Jewishness, neither can he change the criterion of his existence. What if one should stubbornly insist on removing the fish from the water and placing them on dry land? There are no two ways about it, the fish must soon die.

Yet this is most undemocratic; the fish itself declares that it wants to live on land. People also protest loudly; it is better, more convenient, to

keep fish out of tanks they maintain. Unfortunately, all their protestations are of no avail. No sooner does the fish leave its environment, it dies.

Whether the Jew likes it or not, he and Judaism are inextricably interconnected. Being democratically inclined, he may conduct polls and newspaper surveys. Public opinion may shout that he should, must and ought to live "on dry land" — devoid of the waters of Torah, dry of the moisture of mitzvot observance.

We need no faith to refute this opinion, the very nature of the Jew refutes it.

Torah is "our life and the length of our days." True, a day is twenty-four hours, no more no less, but the day can be lengthened or shortened according to its content. Eaten, slept and gone for a walk? Was that all? — that day is a mere "moment." Studied Torah with warmth and enthusiasm? That day is "long;" each minute worth another's hour — through immersion, like the fish, in the life-giving waters of Israel's true environment.

Lubavitch Women's Group Meets



Enjoying a good discussion.

Lubavitch Women of Charlotte, a new group led by Mariashi Groner and Chanie Weiss, have been holding a series of educational and social gatherings. The purpose of this group is to find companionship and support in matters of Jewish life.

The most recent meeting was held on April 26 at the home of Cheryl Spangenthal. More than 25 women gathered to discuss the holiday of Shavuoth and the many customs associated with it. The meetings are informal and allow for participants to ex-

press thoughts and share experiences.

One of the high points of the evening was sharing the most wonderful events in life. People were just amazed about the good moments they have and they talked about these meaningful experiences. In addition to all the discussion, there was plenty of food. Women sampled delicious cheese blintzes, cheese cake and other holiday delicacies.

According to Mariashi Groner, "The women who participated created a very joyous and positive feeling; it was just good being there."

Jewish Birthday Club Founded

As part of making people aware through education, Lubavitch has launched an important campaign to celebrate your Jewish birthday in Jewish style. A Jewish Birthday Club has been founded in conjunction with Tzivos Hashem, which is the largest Jewish children organization in the world. Each member of the club will receive a free birthday kit.

Lubavitch of North Carolina will send out a colorful registration form to all Jewish families in the Carolinas, to enable them to receive the free but important material.

The project was initiated by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson Shlita, as a new project in memory of his late wife the Rebbetzin Chayah Mussia Schneerson.

Lag B'omer Celebrated at Chabad House

Many exciting Jewish holidays come during springtime. One which is sometimes obscured by Passover is the significant day of Lag B'omer. It is a day which commemorates important events in Jewish history and is celebrated with joy and happiness.

One custom, in particular, is to take to the outdoors especially with children. This is to symbolize the life of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai who lived in a cave for over twelve years hiding from the Romans. Although he and his son were in hiding, they continuously studied Torah and lived on carob and fresh well water.

This year Lag B'omer came on May 5 and it was celebrated in grand fashion on the grounds of the Chabad House. A large banner welcomed over 250 participants.

Rabbi Binyomin Weiss and wife Chanie coordinated the event which began with special games for the children. The games, Jewish in nature, allowed the children to experience the holiday in a fun manner.

Since food and outdoors mix well, everyone enjoyed a cookout, consisting of kosher hot dogs and beef burgers complemented with such items as baked beans, corn-on-the-cob, potato chips and assorted condiments and sodas. The cold sweet watermelon was a perfect dessert.

The main event came when a large campfire was built in a designated area, and all the adults and children sat around the fire singing traditional Jewish songs. Andy London



Participants enjoying warmth of the fire.



Eating and schmoozing.



All ages gathered to partake of the food.

led the crowd with his guitar to the tunes of "Hinei Ma Tov" and "Uforatzto." Rabbi Yossi Groner explained the significance of the day to the children, and involved them in

his Talmudical stories about Rabbi Akivah and Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. As the evening grew chilly, the people cuddled around the warm fire, and sang some more.

Reflecting on the Past Preschool Year

Time passes very quickly when you are having a good time. This is certainly true at the Gan Yelodim — the Lubavitch Preschool, where every day is a full day of fun and learning, under the care of the most qualified teachers.

"It is difficult to believe that another school year has just ended," says Mariashi Groner, administrator at Lubavitch. "Reflecting on the past school year, I think we had a super year with super children."

The last few months were indeed busy ones as the children learned all about spring and its special holidays, and even created wonderful arts and crafts projects.

The morning program, under the able guidance of Fern Sanderson, concentrated on outdoor life, studying plants and insects. Their arts and craft projects included making caterpillars out of styrofoam cups, forming insects out of cotton and adding a creative butterfly to the collection. Even the two-year-olds learned about the spring and summer months by making their own art projects with Debbie Maslov, early childhood teacher.

The children prepared themselves for the Shavuoth holiday with many creative pro-



Chanie Weiss leads children in lighting holiday candles.

jects. Chanie Weiss, Judaica teacher, constructed a large mountain with cotton clouds and gold lightning rods. The mountain had 49 steps leading to the top, where there was a large replica of the Tablets containing the Ten Commandments. Each day the children counted the special Omer and "climbed" one more step towards the summit where they would receive the Torah. This symbolized the journey of the Israelites when they left Egypt and traveled the desert in order to receive the Torah at Mount Sinai. The children also constructed their own "Aron Kodesh," an ark which holds the Torah. The children also had the opportunity to hold a real Torah and view it.

The afternoon program also dealt with nature as it develops during spring and early summer. Teacher Elka Azelson took the children to the Nature Museum for nature hikes and summer discovery. Under Elka's care, the children learn much about the world around them in the most relaxed and fun way. The children take regular trips to the library, go for nature walks, and participate in gymnastics at the "J."

By the end of the year, the children have learned the Alpha Bet, both English and the Hebrew, and had so much fun learning about life and all its experiences that they are eager to see what's ahead for them next year.