

Lubavitch of N.C.

Thoughts From The Lubavitcher Rebbe

Tu B'Shevat, New Year for Trees

By Rabbi Yossi Groner

The central focal point of the Hebrew month of Shevat is the New Year for Trees, which brings to mind the very well known Biblical analogy, "Man is like a tree;" an analogy that embraces many aspects, general and particular.

Since this analogy is given by Torah, the Torah of truth, it is certain to be precise in all its aspects, each of which is instructive in a general or particular way, from everyone of us.

To begin with, the essence of a living tree is, above all, that it grows; its growth being the sign of its living. The purpose of a tree is to be — in the words of the Torah — "a fruit tree bearing fruit whose seed is within itself," which is to produce fruit with seeds from which will grow trees and fruits of the same kind. Indeed, the perfection of a tree lies in its ability to produce trees and fruits to all posterity.

To translate the above points in human terms:

A human being must grow and develop continuously, however satisfactory the level may be at any given time. This is also indicated in the expression of our Sages — whose sayings are concise but profoundly meaningful — "holiness should be on the ascendancy."

Similarly in regard to the second point: A human being should produce "fruits" for the benefit of many others beside himself; the kind of benefit which is coupled with delight.

The meaning of "delight" in this context will become clear from the distinction in regard to the seven species of produce with which the Land of Israel is praised in the Torah: "A land

of wheat and barley, and vine and fig, and pomegranate, a land of olive oil and (date) honey." Wheat and barley are basic foods necessary for human sustenance, while the fruits of trees are both sustaining and nourishing as well as enjoyable and delightful.

And the third point: One must strive to produce "fruit-bearing fruits," so that the beneficiary enjoying these fruits should in turn become a fruit-bearing tree like the benefactor.

Needless to say, the fruits of which we are speaking here are those which our Sages specify in saying "the fruits of Tzaddikim — Righteous, which include every Jew, as it is written, "And Thy people are *all* Tzaddikim" — are Mitzvot and good deeds.

These are some of the basic teachings of the New Year for Trees, which have an immediate practical relevance to each and every Jew, man and woman. There is a further allusion to this in the meaningful Jewish custom to eat on this day various kinds of tree fruits.

And when a Jew firmly resolves to proceed from strength to strength in all matters of Torah and Mitzvot, both in regard to himself and in disseminating them in his environment, he has the assurance of realizing his fullest potential — "like a tree planted by streams of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season; its leaf also shall not wither, and whatever he does shall prosper." (Taken from Psalms 1.)

Until the time will be ripe for the fulfillment of the promise, "the tree of the field shall yield its fruit," in the plain sense, meaning that even non-producing fruit trees shall produce fruits. This will be with the coming of our righteous Moshich, for at that time people will reach perfection in a perfect world.

Talmud Torah Classes Stimulate and Motivate Students

By Rabbi Binyomin Weiss

At Lubavitch Talmud Torah it's "business as usual." Our business of course is to provide our students with a thorough Jewish education. As usual means that happy and smiling children are eagerly coming to classes where they are stimulated and motivated by their devoted and talented teachers.

In our Sunday-Tuesday program, taught by Mariashi Groner, Chanie Weiss and Eliza Schoenes, the children are making rapid progress in their Aleph-Bet studies aided by the best available in tapes, videos, work books and arts & crafts. The older children have mastered many of the vowels (Nekudot) and are well on their way towards reading. We may be offering a class for parents who wish to keep up with their children.

Judaica studies are of primary importance and the children are learning as well as experiencing the many exciting facets of Yiddishkeit. Of course, blessed as we are with a holiday-filled



Rabbi Binyomin Weiss teaching a Talmud Torah class.

calendar, each and every child becomes a true holiday expert through seeing, hearing and most important through doing. Hands-on experience is always a must for any subject to be fully understood and appreciated. For Chanukah everyone made a beautiful hand-painted Menorah of many colors. The various laws and customs pertaining to the Menorah all come alive when you actually put it together yourself.

Every Jewish subject studied brings out the creative talents of our children. When learning about Brochos the children

created an innovative Brochos game to help them grasp the concepts as well as to review them in an entertaining way.

Our Tuesday-Thursday Talmud Torah students, with more years of Jewish studies under their belts, are constantly being challenged to learn and do more than ever before. Together with an increase in our Siddur reading, there is a new understanding of the prayers and why we recite them. Using the insights of the Midrash has added a new dimension to the weekly Parsha studies, transforming "stories" into powerful lessons.

Historic Chanukah Celebration Seen in Charlotte

An historic event which linked thousands of participants and millions of viewers, was shown on Charlotte Cablevision during the festival of Chanukah. For the first time in history, communities in Paris, London, Moscow and Jerusalem were linked together by satellite with New York at World Lubavitch Headquarters for a unique Chanukah celebration.

In each of the locations huge crowds gathered to simultaneously kindle a large public Menorah. At Lubavitch Synagogue in New York a major

children's rally was held in honor of Chanukah with the participation of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who spoke to the assembled.

The Rebbe's talk was heard around the world via satellite, in addition to the millions who watched it on Cable Television in North America. Over 18,000 Jews gathered along Champs Elysses in Paris to see and hear the Rebbe at the Chanukah celebration.

Thousands more packed the Western Wall Plaza in Jerusalem and Hyde Park Corner in London, England. At each lo-

cation a giant Menorah was kindled to the view of the television. At the conclusion of the lighting ceremonies in each of the cities, the Rebbe requested they all join in song with the melody "Hanerah Hallolu." What was unique about this program is that for the first time in history Moscow's Jewish community was connected with the rest of the free world, and that the geographic distance was bridged for a Jewish celebration.

"What a sight it was, to see people all over the world join in song and to see it on your screen at home," said one Charlotte viewer.

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