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AROUND THE FIVE TOWNS

Special Days At Rambam

The Night of Broken Glass. In American society, November 10 is just another day on the calendar. There are a select few, however, who commemorate this day in recognition of *Kristallnacht*, "The Night of Broken Glass," November 10, 1938. Rambam Mesivta marked this day that saw unprecedented German persecution of Jews, with an assembly that commemorated our past.

It was fitting that a night motivated by mob-think and group-lust should be combated so many years later by education. Noted Rambam Mesivta history teacher Joel Berkowitz enlightened the students with a PowerPoint lecture on the history of anti-Semitism and how it ultimately culminated in *Kristallnacht* and the Holocaust.

Mr. Berkowitz has spent his life traveling all over the globe preserving the Jewish past by photographing and cataloging numerous synagogues and collecting Judaica. He presented the *talmidim* with an original 1543 copy of Martin Luther's *On the Jews and Their Lies*; one of only 12 copies extant. He also brought with him a number of original *Der Sturmer* newspapers illustrating the stereotypical way in which Jews were portrayed prior to and during the Holocaust.

Rabbi Yotav Eliach concluded the program by stressing the importance of "remembering the mistakes of the past so we are not destined to repeat them." Additionally, Rambam Mesivta has taken the imperative "*zachor*"—remembering—to heart. It is our obligation as Torah Jews to be aware of who our enemies are and

what they did and continue to attempt to do to us. It was truly an informing and inspiring *Kristallnacht* commemoration and reaffirmed the commitment the Rambam students have to understand where they are coming from so that they can confidently move into the future.

Veterans Day. As Jews living in America, honoring Veterans Day is both right and a privilege. On November 11, Rambam Mesivta welcomed and honored Lieutenant (soon to be Captain) Jacob Siegel of the United States Armed Services into their school.

Lt. Siegel spoke of how in the wake of 9/11 he decided to serve his country and preserve the freedom he so loved for others. In the army he is affectionately called a "9/11 Baby" by the career military men and women. He discussed how he was in a position to help others and that by being in Iraq they have helped stop a regime that was publicly executing people for selling ice.

It was truly an honor to welcome a veteran into the school, and Lt. Siegel shared the sentiments. He spoke about an American sense of ennui that allows for



Joel Berkowitz

limited media coverage of the overseas conflict and that "while it might seem obvious to honor veterans on Veterans Day, the reality is that it isn't as common as we might think."

Rabbi Yotav Eliach introduced Rambam Mesivta's "Adopt an American Unit Campaign" following Lt. Siegel's address. The boys at Rambam have committed themselves to sending a number of letters and care packages to American soldiers in Iraq. Lt. Siegel urged the boys to do so and said how he still remembers the names of the schools and people who sent him packages when he was in the army.

Senior Gabriel Kahn and Rabbi Eliach concluded the assembly with the Orthodox Union's *Prayer for United States Soldiers*. It was truly an honor to have Lt. Siegel come to Rambam and it was the school's way of saying thank you for the unprecedented freedom we feel living in America. ❖

"Mitokh Ha-Ohel" Anthology Of Original Essays Is First Project Of New Koren/YU Partnership

Yeshiva University (www.yu.edu) has published a collection of original essays on the weekly *parashiyot*, authored by rabbis and professors from every division of the university. The volume, entitled *Mitokh Ha-Ohel*, has been released by Maggid Books, an imprint of Koren Publishers Jerusalem.

Mitokh Ha-Ohel (literally "from within the tent") brings together a diverse range of scholars and rabbinic thinkers, the multi-faceted voices of Yeshiva University, to elucidate and explore all of the *parashiyot* of the *Chamishah Chumshei Torah* from a wide range of approaches, including textual analysis, homiletic exposition, *halachic* analysis, and academic exploration.

"At Yeshiva University, we aspire to emulate the dwellings and philosophies of our forefathers by creating our own tent through our ideology of *Torah U'madda*, the marriage of Torah and secular knowledge," said Yeshiva University president Richard Joel.

"This truly unique volume showcases the breadth and depth of the 'tent' of Yeshiva University," added President Joel, "and serves as a physical embodiment of Yeshiva University's passion for seeking nuanced wisdom through Torah from multiple sources, and sharing that wisdom with the world."

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