

attention as he talked about the importance of Nefesh Dovid and how he has never seen anything quite like this before—the inspiration, the beauty, and the complete *mesiras nefesh* that goes into every *talmid* who comes to the yeshiva. Everyone left with tears in their eyes and smiles on their faces, and the *chizuk* they received from the event will stay with them for weeks to come.

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Rabbi Reichman Addresses Rambam Mesivta On Asarah B'Teves

Rabbi Tzvi Reichman, a *rosh yeshiva* at REITS, spoke to the *talmidim* at Rambam on Asarah B'Teves. He cited three reasons for which we commemorate the day by fasting: the siege that was placed on Jerusalem, the death of Ezra the Scribe, and the forced translation of the Torah into a foreign language by Ptolemy. He focused on the practical lessons to be



Rabbi Tzvi Reichman

extrapolated from the last two incidents. “What was so tragic about the death of Ezra for which we establish a fast?” he asked, “After all, we do not have a fast that marks the death of other great Torah leaders such as Moshe, Aharon, etc.”

Rabbi Reichman explained that the tragedy of Ezra was his unfulfilled mission and the lack of response of the Jewish community at a time to rise to the occasion and participate in the building of the second *Beis HaMikdash*. According to Rabbi Reichman, “There were probably close to one million Jews living in Babylonia at the time, of which [only a tiny minority] followed Ezra to *Eretz Yisrael* to build the *Mikdash*. We as a nation had the opportunity to fully participate and only responded by sending in donations, instead of taking the challenge, leaving the *galus*, and moving back to where we belong. In today’s times as

well, we have the opportunity to participate in the rebuilding of Torah in our own land after 2,000 years. We fast on this day to remind us of the obligation we have as a community not to get too comfortable in *galus*, and that our ultimate destiny as a people will be realized in *Eretz Yisrael*.”

In discussing the reason we fast for the writing of the Septuagint, Rabbi Reichman asked, “How did this differ from other translations which were accepted?” In the case of the 70 sages, they were placed in separate rooms by

Ptolemy, and “they translated under duress.” Our sages teach us that all of them made the same changes in the translation in order to avoid any misunderstanding by those that would have read the Torah literally in its original form. These changes, although made for good reason, did not accurately reflect what the Torah was saying. The message to be derived, according to Rabbi Reichman, “Was that we have to be 100% precise and loyal to our *mesorah*.” Changes that are made, even in a subtle way, undermine the veracity of the Torah.

The *talmidim* in Rambam “were fortunate,” he said, to have *rebbeim* that were meticulous and exacting in transmitting the *mesorah*, should internalize what they learn, and hopefully transmit it to the next generation.

The *shiur* then focused on some of the practical *halachos* of the day, and Rabbi Reichman spoke about the importance of recognizing that all fast days be days of *teshuvah*.

Rabbi Reichman’s words clearly res-

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onated with the *talmidim* and gave them a lot to think about. It is fitting that a *shiur* that focused on the essence and significance of every word in the Torah culminated in *tefillas Minchah*. ❖

Friendship Circle Recent Events

Volunteer Chanukah Party. It's a wrap! As part of Friendship Circle of Chabad of the Five Towns' annual Chanukah gift exchange, Friendship Circle volunteers get together to create a unique and personalized gift for their special friend for Chanukah. The teens wrap and deliver the handmade presents

to their friends' homes, who eagerly await these cherished surprises. In the past, the volunteers stuffed and dressed a pet animal/doll. Last year, they brought out rolls of duct tape and got really creative—making hair accessories and wallets. This year's annual Chanukah wrap was like no other: the teens created an all edible 3D chocolate *menorah*, thanks to the help of Rina Friedman of Chocolate Parties. Using molds of all shapes and sizes, along with a large selection of delicious candy, the volunteers put together a one-of-a-kind masterpiece that is sure to be the center of attention in each child's home. The volunteers delicately wrapped each *menorah* and attached a handwritten card



Rabbi and Mrs. Wolowik present a plaque to hosts Ari and Ruthy Jungreis at "An Evening of Elegance" to benefit the Friendship Circle at Chabad of the Five Towns.

and some Chanukah *gelt* to their prized gifts.

The teens had an enjoyable

evening out with a tasty salad bar, soup, doughnuts, and more.

The school presidents put

together a sensitivity training workshop, where the volunteers had the chance to experience what a child with special needs may feel like. Some were trying to walk through an obstacle course blindfolded, while others were using a glove filled with shaving cream to try and identify an object. The teens also heard from a wonderful speaker, Mrs. Cindy Adler, who not only has a child with special needs but is a therapist in the field as well. She was able to give a personal account of what a family may go through as well as some practical ideas and advice. Each volunteer left the evening feeling more empowered and motivated in their volunteer work.

The Friendship Circle winter camp will be taking place **February 22-24**. An action-packed, out-of-this-world, forever thrilling day camp, creating memories that will last a lifetime. For this much-anticipated fun-filled week, the children, together with their volunteers, will enjoy trips around town, Jewish activities, and lots of laughter. To learn more or to join the Jean Fischman Chabad Center's Friendship Circle, visit www.fc5towns.com, e-mail Batsheva@chabad5towns.com, or call Batsheva at 516-295-2478, ext. 13.

An Evening Of Elegance. On December 18, Ari and Ruthy Jungreis opened up their home and their hearts to help children with special needs by hosting an elegant evening to benefit the Friendship Circle at the Jean Fischman Chabad Center of the Five Towns.

The turnout was incredible. The Five Towns community came together to show their support for an organization that helps their neighbors or friends who have a child with special needs. Friendship Circle shares all of the facets of children with special needs—the joys and the sorrows, the laughs and the cries, and especially the proud moments.

The evening was one marked by elegance and sophistication and punctuated with inspira-



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