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Iton haDora (The Dora Journal)

Heshvan-Kislev-Teveth, 5773

A Message from the Rabbi

Yagdil Torah v'Yadir

We find ourselves in a precarious position, to be trite – like the fiddler on the roof.

A small Jewish community in a proportionately small rural county finds itself with many of its members and potential members coming from backgrounds not as firmly anchored in their Jewish heritage as the residents of proverbial Anatevka. Many of the Jews in the county are nervous about affiliating with a synagogue community at all. Some have asked the question, “Why even try to have a traditional community here?” The implication being that since most of the Jews in Lake County do not tend towards strict Torah Observance and aren’t likely to become completely ‘frum’ (religious) anyway, why even try?

Yagdil Torah v'Yadir – to increase Torah and to glorify it.

One of TCOMD’s fundamental principles is this, that anything Jewish, even something someone might think insignificant, that a Jewish person does, is in fact significant. Any little Torah act increases Torah and glorifies it.

Rabbi Evan Moffic, a Reform rabbi in Illinois, recently wrote an op-ed for the Jewish Ideas Daily. Rabbi Moffic noted that Reform Judaism, with its 1.5 million members is the largest Jewish movement in the US. Rabbi Moffic also noted, taking NY as an example, that the number of Reform Jews has declined both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the Jewish community. A shift has occurred; with now the portion of Jewish children in New York that are Orthodox standing at 74%.

He argues that if Reform Judaism is to survive, it must promote synagogue affiliation, stating, "Synagogue membership is the citizenship card of Jewish life." He notes that in 1969 (Reform) Rabbi Richard Levy wrote that the American Reform synagogue has "defaulted" on all three of its traditional functions: building community, nurturing study, and engaging in meaningful worship.

I find it fascinating that Rabbi Moffic's goal is the survival of a movement that has its origins in 19th Century Germany in an environment that was a precursor to two world wars and the Holocaust.

For the mind and the spirit of the traditional Jew, movement affiliation is irrelevant. One's relationship to our heritage, tradition and Torah, God and fellow Jew is what is important. The rest is mere politics and territorialism.

TCOMD is not in Lake County to save a movement. TCOMD is in Lake County to save Jewish Identity, to increase Torah and to glorify it.

TCOMD does not check movement affiliation cards at the door. No particular level or style of observance is required. Fellowship, growth, simultaneously personal and communal, spiritual and intellectual, are our goals. The traditional functions of the synagogue are our daily objectives.

We are about to enter a season when our county roads, our city streets, and our neighbors' houses will be festooned with decorations for what is a legal national holiday. It would be very easy to let one's Jewish Identity be washed away in the spiritually fatal rip-currents of the yule tide. Instead, light a menorah – say a blessing – sing a song – gather with your community – strengthen your Jewish Identity. Nes Gadol Hayah Po – as the dreidel appears in Israel – a great miracle occurred here – here in Lake County, where we have built a traditional synagogue and established a Jewish Identity for all to see. Every Jewish thing you do – increases Torah and glorifies it, and establishes the foundations of continued Jewish life for the next generation.

Hag Hanukkah Sameah!

A NOTE FROM THE REBBETZIN

With a deep breath and a sigh of relief I watched as the parade of Jewish Holidays pass by. With remorse I realized another year with its own troubles and triumphs had past and a new one had begun. I turned my thoughts away and looked toward ... the holidays?

I went into Big Lots (my favorite store) and costumes for Halloween were staring at me, followed by rows and rows of candy ready to give away. Christmas music was blaring over the store loudspeakers causing a strange sort of confusion. At that point I got felt a weird sort of déjà vu, but then shook myself clear. These are not my holidays, I reminded myself. But the tide of commercialism tugged at my sensibilities leaving the message of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur far behind.

The reality is that the Jewish High Holidays are a quiet sort, filled with thought and redemption, giving and forgiveness. But how could this possibly compare to the glare of scary pagan monsters and a fat man in red who can mysteriously go down chimneys. How can I as a mother of a Jewish child compare our important festivals to the flash and piazzas of the other holidays in America?

And what of this Hanukkah thing? Yes there was a miracle. But do you believe that it would have had a tenth of the notoriety had it not been around the same time as Christmas. The true meaning of Hanukkah is a message against assimilation. So how do we celebrate it? By making it like the other holiday with the presents a Hanukkah bush and the blue and white lights lining our homes. It gives me chest pain just to contemplate.

So what do I want (besides a license to kvetch)? I want each and every one of you to think about your Jewish roots. Think about the messages of the High Holidays and the true message of Hanukkah and keep it close to your hearts. We would not have anything if not for Hashem. He is in everything we do. And with that, and Kosher Chinese food on Dec. 25th we will get through the end of the year with our heads high and proud of our Jewishness.

Rachel

PINEAPPLE CHALLAH SOUFFLE

Challah approx. 8 slices (usually I use the bread left over from the Sabbath before)

Egg beaters 16 oz

2 eggs

2/3 cup splenda or sugar

4 tablespoons honey

1 can crushed pineapple 20oz

- 1.Preheat the oven to 350 F
- 2.Shred by hand or in a food processor the bread to make fine crumbs
- 3.Mix the bread crumbs, eggbeaters, eggs, splenda or sugar, honey and pineapple together. You may need to add more breadcrumbs are the consistency is too watery.
- 4.Pour into a oven safe pan and bake for 45 min or until the top is brown
- 5.Serve warm

Please note this is a finish the leftovers recipe. The amount of bread used will vary depending on how much was left over from the week prior. Adjust the amount of pineapple, egg and sweetener accordingly. Also, this recipe can be used with apple or pear filling instead of pineapple; one must add more liquid (1/2 cup water) when doing so.

Save These Dates!!!!!!
Rabbi Solomon's Lecture Discussing
Regenerating the Mind and Soul
February 7 and February 10
This is a not to be missed event!!

TCOMD

Regular and Special Upcoming Events

The Holiday Gift Shop is now open in the Community Building

**Come to us for all your Hanukkah (and Tchotchke)
needs!**

Shop with us on December 2 and on December 9

Great Selections and prices!!

Annual Hanukkah BBQ at Gilbert Park, Sunday, December 9th.

Bring a wrapped item for the auction.

Write a short description that is relevant, but do not give the identity away.

Ex: flashlight...illuminating!

Hanukkah Program at Mount Dora Library

Monday, December 10th, 4pm

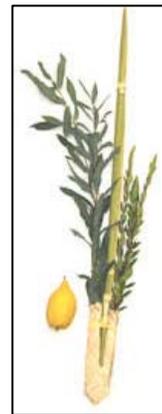
Poker Night at the Shul, 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 7:30pm

All proceeds to Tsedaqah

Reminder: TCOMD Calendars are in!

You can pick them up at the shul

Sukkoth at TCOMD



TCOMD MISSION STATEMENT

We of the Traditional Congregation of Mount Dora are building a Jewish community in the tri-city area, a congregation at once a contributing part of the wider community, while providing opportunities for individuals to express whatever is their Jewish soul to express. Be their needs education, spiritual or social, we strive to provide an amiti venue. Our mission is to bring the greatest possible number of Jews close to their own open-minded, traditional community.

Amiti- genuine, authentic

