

Henry Laine - The Nine Days

A delightful teacher and storyteller to listen to, Henry Laine opened the program with a focus on the Chabad concept of maximizing the *simcha shel mitzvah* - the inner joy that comes from doing a mitzvah - particularly during the Nine Days as a spiritual opportunity to get closer to HaShem.

Like the flame of a korban being offered in the Bais HaMikdash, whose root letters in Hebrew mean to come close to, so too is there is a spiritual fire burning brightly in every Jew. A synagogue's Ner Tamid, eternal light, that hangs above the Aron Kodesh is symbolic of the Soul's yearning to get ever closer to G-d.

A young man who had turned away from his Jewish upbringing once came to the Lubavitcher Rebbe and asked: Where is G-d?

The Rebbe answered, HaShem can be found in every stone and tree.

The young man answered, But, I already know that.

The Rebbe then said, If so, then you know that HaShem can be found in every person's heart.

Henry reviewed the Halachos pertinent to the Nine Days and related a interesting family story of the time her sister Devonya visited the Rebbe's mother, Rebbitzin Chana, during the Nine Days and was invited to join her for a meat meal the Rebbe insisted his mother partake of to maintain her strength

and well being; before sitting down to eat, Rabbi Junik would come over to make a *siyum* as per Halacha.

After preparing the meal, Rebbitzen Chana asked her which color dish towel she had used. Devonya pointed to the blue one. Rebbitzen Chana then explained that it is an old Jewish custom to use red for meat and blue for dairy.

Henry concluded her talk emphasizing how much we can moderate the Three Weeks and Nine Days' sadness first and foremost by countering the baseless hatred that destroyed the Bais HaMikdash with baseless love, *ahavas chinom*, for each and every Jew simply because they are HaShem's *kinder*.

Giving Tzedaka, anticipating, b'simcha, the rebuilding of the Bais HaMikdash and remembering that, after all is said and done, it's Moshiach's birthday Tisha B'Av afternoon!