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thousands upon thousands of students have received the light of Torah, was taken from our midst, as was *HaRav HaGaon HaTzaddik* Dov Schwartzman of *Beis HaTalmud* in Jerusalem.

Again, to the average Jew, these names and titles are of little consequence, but know and make no mistake about it, these are the loyal shepherds of our people – the giants in whose merit the world is sustained. And over these past few weeks and months, they have been called home, leaving us vulnerable and challenging us to assume responsibility for ourselves and take upon ourselves a Torah way of life.

But disaster continues to befall us; just last week came the tragic accident in which two outstanding ye-

shiva students – Doniel King, 15, and Eli Schonbrun, 16 – were killed. The boys, together with fellow students, were on their way to their yeshiva in Connecticut when their van skidded off the road. There is no way anyone can comprehend the terrible suffering of their parents.

But even as this catastrophe struck, we learned of the lamentable accidental deaths of babies and toddlers, here as well as in Jerusalem. (And all this is unfolding before we have even begun to recover from the barbaric slaughter of our precious Leiby.)

On the very same week seventy-three years ago, the Nazis set afire Jewish synagogues and homes in Germany and Austria. Jewish businesses were ransacked and destroyed, their windows shattered and the streets paved with thousands of glittering pieces of broken glass.

Some years ago, I spoke in Washington Heights, a community populated by many Jews of German

descent. An elderly gentleman shared some of his Kristallnacht experiences. "My synagogue and my home were torched by the Nazi Youth. I called the fire department, only to be told that it was against the law to put out fires on property that belonged to Jews."

Today, 73 years later, anti-Semitism once again rears its ugly head. In the Jewish neighborhood of Midwood, Brooklyn, cars are set on fire and swastikas and anti-Jewish obscenities are sprayed on sidewalks and benches. Even a blind man would have to see it, but we continue with business as usual.

Coincidence? Accident? What possible connection can there be between the barbaric events of yesterday and those that are befalling us today?

Can it be there is a message behind it all – a message we should ponder?

(To Be Continued)

Government Officials Address Jewish Community Concerns At Agudath Legislative Breakfast

Officials from all three branches of the federal government recently addressed several hundred communal leaders at the second annual Legislative Breakfast of Agudath Israel of America at the Downtown Association in Lower Manhattan. Speaking to the event's theme of "Safety and Security in Our Communities," the officials outlined a variety of areas in which government agencies are acting vigorously to ensure the physical well-being of the greater Jewish community both domestically and overseas.



Ezra Friedlander, CEO of the Friedlander Group; Jarrod Bernstein, director of Jewish outreach at the White House; Rabbi David Zwiebel, Esq., executive vice president of Agudath Israel of America; the Hon. Loretta E. Lynch, United States attorney for the eastern district of New York; Joseph B. Stamm, president and CEO of event sponsor Med Review; Joseph Zelmanovitz, breakfast chairman and partner at Stahl & Zelmanovitz; and Abe Eisner, Chaskel Bennett and Shlomo Werdiger, members of the board of trustees of Agudath Israel of America.

Delivering the keynote address, Loretta E. Lynch, the United States attorney for the eastern district of New York, noted that with New York City continuing to be a major target for potential terrorists, her office has expanded its focus from the aggressive pursuit of terrorist prosecutions to include an emphasis on the prevention of terrorist acts. "We work closely with the FBI and the New York Police Department to immediately investigate any threats of terrorism," Lynch said, highlighting recent cases in which potential attacks on public transportation and other heavily populated sites were thwarted.

Lynch explained that authorities are on the lookout for threats on various fronts: al-Qaeda-mobilized, "lone wolf" individuals who may attempt to commit acts of terror on their own; homegrown, U.S.-based terrorists; and global terror cells which gain strength and adherents through strategic communications via the Internet. Noting that more than 400 terrorists have been convicted in this country over the decade since the 9/11 attacks, Lynch expressed her belief that "our federal court system is a proven and effective method for prosecuting terrorists."

The audience also heard from Jarrod Bernstein, President Obama's recently appointed director of Jewish outreach, who was making his first public appearance in his new role. Bernstein was introduced by Rabbi David Zwiebel, executive vice president of

Agudath Israel, who recounted how, just two days before this past Yom Kippur, he received word that just before *Sukkot* a large shipment of *lulavim* was being held up at the airport due to security-related red tape. After a quick phone call to Bernstein – who was then an official at the Department of Homeland Security – the *lulavim* were released within a few hours.

Speaking on behalf of the president, Bernstein stated that the administration is "working daily to ensure Israel's security." To support that claim, he asserted that Obama has requested from Congress "the largest ever amount of funding for military assistance for Israel," that Obama had spoken resolutely at the UN on behalf of the vitality of Israel, and that he spends a significant amount of time advocating for increased sanctions against Iran.

Reprising his appearance at last year's inaugural Legislative Breakfast, Senator Charles Schumer reiterated Congress's firm support for the security of Israel, specifically with regard to planned attempts to further cut off Iran's banking powers and to fully fund Israel's Iron Dome anti-missile system. Turning to the domestic front, Schumer stated that "Agudath Israel does an amazing job caring for people in need with its social services," and he asserted that, particularly with regard to education and job training programs, "we must cut our budgets carefully" so as not to endanger these vital services. "I have obtained many grants for the security of the community's shuls and yeshivas," the Senator claimed, reaffirming his continuing close relationship with Agudath Israel.

The large audience – which included such dignitaries as New York City Fire Commissioner Sal Casano, State Senator Daniel Squadron, State Assemblymen Alec Brook-Krasny and Rory Lancman, and Councilmen Lew Fidler and Brad Lander – heard remarks from several other members of Congress with close ties to the Jewish community.

Newly elected Congressman Bob Turner spoke about his appointments to the crucial Foreign Affairs and Homeland Security Committees, and crit-



Rabbi David Zwiebel speaking at the Legislative Breakfast. Foreground: Marshall L. Miller, assistant U.S. attorney, deputy chief of the criminal division; Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer; Rabbi Michael Miller, CEO of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York; David Moskovits; Abe Biderman, chairman of Shuvu; Jonathan Schenker; senior adviser to Congressman Bob Turner; and Joseph Zelmanovitz.

icized both the United Nations and Iran for their anti-Israel stances. "We have to work hard to get regime change in Iran," Turner declared.

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney avowed Congress's strong backing of Israel, recalling the unusually enthusiastic response Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu received when he addressed Congress earlier this year.



U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer addressing the Agudath Israel of America Legislative Breakfast. (L-R) Rabbi Shmuel Lefkowitz, Agudath Israel of America's vice president for community services; Rabbi David Zwiebel; Gedaliah Weinberger, chairman of the board; Joseph Zelmanovitz; Joseph B. Stamm; Jonathan Zalisky, senior community relations coordinator of event sponsor Health Plus; Chaskel Bennett; and Congressman Bob Turner.

Commenting on the dismal economy, Congressman Jerrold Nadler spoke against the idea of massive spending cuts by the government, noting that "the community needs housing and food assistance now more than ever." Separately, Nadler called on Obama to criticize Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas for refusing to recognize Israel as a Jewish state. He further insisted that "there is no greater danger in the world today than Iran" due to its nuclear intentions.

The audience also heard from community activist Abe Eisner, who read a message of support for Agudath Israel from New York Governor Andrew Cuomo; Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer; New York City Controller John Liu; and Rabbi Shmuel Lefkowitz, Agudath Israel's vice president for community services, who highlighted the organization's many valuable social programs.

"Agudath Israel of America sponsors a broad range of communal social services affecting the lives of young and old throughout the New York City metropolitan area," said Rabbi Lefkowitz. "[Our] projects include job placement, vocational training and counseling services, housing and neighborhood preservation initiatives, as well as a host of senior citizen and children's welfare projects, including a variety of initiatives specifically directed toward enhancing security and safety."

One community leader seemed to sum up the feelings of those in attendance: "It is important to interact and dialogue with our government officials. That they clearly recognize and admire the importance of our community and Agudath Israel's wide reach is even more impressive."

Dancing In Brooklyn

Merkaz Community Center, a new daycare center in Flatbush (as well as an activity center for children and adults) has teamed up with Happy Feet Dance Studio of Cedarhurst to offer dance and exercise classes.

"Our goal is the harmony of mind and body, and our primary focus is to allow each of our students to grow and achieve their full potential in a safe, caring environment," said Frumi Bornstein, who, along with her husband Zvika, founded Happy Feet Dance Studio.

Both locations offer a variety of classes, such as break dancing, ballet, tap, jazz, lyrical, modern, kosher hip hop, creative dance, creative movement, combo fun, acro, belly dancing, Zumba/Jewmba, Yoga, Pilates, Prenatalflex, amazing abs, crazy cardio, *simcha* dance, circus workshop, and juggling. Many of the classes are also for adults, with separate classes for girls, boys, men and women, and options for private instruction.

"Our classes are kept small to ensure individual at-

tention. The professional, certified instructors and choreographers give each student the personal and attentive classroom experience while encouraging them to fulfill their personal dreams," said Tammy, the studio's director.

"One of our main goals is to also to keep it very affordable and for every budget," said Zvika Bornstein, "especially during these tough economic times."

Registration for the 2011-12 year is taking place this week and next. Visit Happy Feet at 1739 Ocean Avenue, between Avenue L and M, or call 718-705-7770 or e-mail HappyFeetStudio@aol.com.