The past inspires the future

Nearly 200 members of the Federation of Synagogues Chevra Kadisha, as well as many choshuve Rabbonim and distinguished members of the kehilla, marked Zayin Adar with a celebratory seudah at the Od Yosef Chai hall in Hendon

THE 7th of Adar, the birthdate and the yohrzeit of Moshe Rabbeinu, is the date traditionally observed by Chevra Kadisha members for fasting (as a means of atonement), and for feasting, celebrating with a siyum and a seudah at the conclusion of the day.

The date this year was particularly auspicious for the Federation, as 5775 marks the 125th anniversary of the consecration of Edmonton Federation Beis Hakevoros, a cemetery where many Gedolim of yesteryear were laid to rest and which continues to function to this day.

Following Mincha, Rabbi Eliezer Schneebalg, Rov of Machzikei Hadass Edgware, gave a drosho after which, at the Seudah itself, guests were welcomed by Federation Trustee, Mr Menachem Gertner, who praised the intrinsic *chesed shel emes* of the Chevra. He went on to emphasise one of the defining features of Klal Yisroel - its ability to build for the future by always keeping an eye on the rear-view mirror. It is the past which sets the tone for our future. This, he explained, is the goal of the Trustees of the Federation. The organisation laid the foundations over a century ago for contemporary Yiddishkeit in this country and is now looking to expand its infrastructure, build new communities and continue supporting Torah life in the UK.

Later in the evening, Rosh Beis Din of the Federation Dayan Yisroel Yaakov Lichtenstein welcomed many of the guests, including Dayan Eckstein, a longstanding member of the Chevra and a close associate of the Federation.

Dayan Lichtenstein commented that in 26 years, he had never heard a word of complaint about the Chevra Kadisha. They have the constant opportunity to witness what is the *sof shel kol ho'odom*, he said, and truly understand the importance of achieving a '*menucha nechona*' in life; a *menucha* that allows us to reflect on what it means to live as a Yied.

The guest speaker for the evening was Rav Avrohom Chaim Feuer, who had flown in from Eretz Yisroel especially for the occasion with his wife. Rebbetzin Luba Feuer is a daughter of Rav Mordechai Gifter ztl and a great-great-granddaughter of Rav Eliezer Gordon, the Telzer Rov, who is buried in Edmonton.

Rav Feuer began his divrei chizuk with a story that illustrated the importance of minhagei Yisroel. '*Minhag oker din*', he explained – minhag has the ability to uproot din. The Chevra Kadisha, Rav Feuer expounded, is itself *oker din*, because so many of its practices are based on minhagim. The Chevra is our best protection, and in these troubled times far more effective and important than any guards or guns.

Rav Feuer continued by explaining that 7 Adar is a propitious date for all of us, because every single Yied has a *pintele* Moshe Rabbeinu in his *neshoma*. Our mission in life, what Rav Feuer termed our 'magnificent obsession', is to remember that our *neshomos* were carved from the *Kisei Hakovod* and to paint a masterpiece with our mitzvos that will fill our space on the *Kisei* – we must, he said, be 'mini Moshes and maxi-masterpieces'.

Rav Feuer concluded by referring to the Kehilla Kedosha of the Federation, speaking of the 'palpable energy, exhilaration and passion' he had sensed in the organisation – it was, he said 'an excitement centre'.

At the end of the evening, Federation Trustee Mr Moshe Winegarten gave the vote of thanks, particularly mentioning Rabbi Feldman, Emeritus Rov of the GGBH, who had graced the evening with his presence. Rav Feldman's father ztl was a Federation Rov and is buried in Edmonton close to Rav Gordon.

Finally, he juxtaposed the commemoration of Edmonton with the work that is now being carried out by the Federation at the site of its new cemetery in Edgware. In this way he echoed Mr Gertner's opening words, highlighting that the Federation is an organisation which looks to its *choshuve* past to inspire an equally auspicious future.

Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer

Dayan Yisroel Yaakov Lichtenstein

Mr Andrew Cohen, Federation President, and Rabbi Chaim Pearlman

Rabbi Chaim Feldman and Rabbi Feuer

Federation Trustees Mr Moshe Winegarten and Mr Menachem Gertner

CEO Mr Avi Lazarus with Rabbi Dovid Roberts of Netzach and Rabbi Malcolm Herman of Seed

Dayan Binyomin Eckstein and Rabbi Eliezer Schneebalg and Rabbi Dovid Tugendhaft

L-R, Rabbi Eli Salasnik, Rabbi Feldman, Dayan Lichtenstein

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