

Agra D’Pirka of Baltimore

CELEBRATES ITS FIRST SIYUM

By Margie Pensak

It’s hard to believe that it has been three years since Baltimore became the tenth of 11 nationwide locales to host Agra D’Pirka, when Magid Shiur Rabbi Yankel Herskovitz kicked off the exciting learning lineup of Mesechta Sukkah followed by a teshuva/yomim noraim drasha. On Sunday, September 12, the program participants, and their very supportive n’shei chaya, joyously celebrated their accomplishment of completing the Mesechta with a four-course seuda at the Royal Restaurant.

This is but one of numerous siyumim made by the flourishing unique national Monday-Thursday morning Agra D’Pirka Kollel learning program (which includes a light breakfast). The program was the brainchild of its founder, Reb Ezra Klein, who made it his mission 12 years ago – l’zecher nishmas his mother, Pesi Rochel, a”h – to spread morning limud haTorah for baal habatim across the US.

Eli Sofer, manager of the Baltimore program, mentions, “The shiurim - given by the Rabbonim and great talmidei chachomim of our community with great clarity that everyone understands - are so engaging and relevant.”

One of these Rabbonim is Rabbi Dovid Heber, Rav of Khal Ahavas Yisroel Tzemach Tzedek (KAYTT), where the

Baltimore program takes place. At the siyum, he shared divrei bracha by comparing the story at the end of Mesechta Sukka - where the mizbayach is inappropriately kicked - with the story at the beginning of Avoda Zara, which they are about to learn, when the Sukka will be inappropriately kicked. “Unlike the subjects of these Gemoros whose value systems are corrupt, those who go out to learn have a proper focus in their life of Torah and mitzvos. To shteig and learn b’iyun, you properly engage your mind; it changes your whole day and perspective, and you protect the entire community from the many tzaros, r”l, Klal Yisroel faces.”

The Great Women Behind the Great Men

Rochel Mandel, one of the numerous wives who attended the siyum, shared, “My husband was retired 2-1/2 years ago on a Friday and joined the program on Monday. Boruch Hashem, this was existing. The focus of the day is so much different – much better than work.”

Hadasah Juskowicz mentioned, “Our schedule revolves around his learning. All of our appointments are after the shiur or on Friday when the shiur does not meet. He considers it like a job and really loves it. When he comes home from the shiur, he can’t wait to tell me what he learned and what lessons we can learn. He also shares his learning with

others, so it spreads out far beyond the beis medrash walls.”

Toby Pollack expressed, “We are very, very proud of our husbands at this point in their lives – and our lives – that they get up and go to the shiur every morning. All the zechusim for my whole mishpacha come from this.”

Rabbi Herskovitz’s wife, Pesi, said, “It is very gratifying to see an olam of such chashuva people, joining together for a siyum for which they worked so hard the last three years. The men coming, the women supporting, my husband preparing, and it is just a beautiful culmination today to see this nachas. The Ribono shel Olam should send us the yeshuos, the refuos, the brachos for a gmar chasima tova for everyone and we should share many such simchos in the future.”

And one attendee, who wished to remain anonymous, remarked, “I am so



Mazel Tov

to the participants of the daily Gemara shiur of Agra D'pirka of Baltimore upon the completion of Maseches Sukkah

The daily shiur is given by Rav Yankel Herskovitz, shlit'a

We will now begin Maseches Avodah Zarah

All Agra D'pirka shiurim are held daily, Monday through Thursday in KAYTT- Rabbi Heber's shul, 6811 Park Heights Avenue

Gemara Shiur: 9 am- Rabbi Yankel Herskovitz

Guest Speaker Daily Shiur- 10:30 am

Light Refreshments Daily

For more information please call Eli Sofer
917-755-1572 or email agradpirkabaltimore@gmail.com

proud. It really changed my husband and I am very, very grateful for that.”

The Backstory

Rabbi Herskovitz explained, “I retired roughly three years ago, and three weeks later, the hashgacha pratis was I got a call from Reb Ezra in New York to say a shiur. I agreed and told him I preferred to give a yeshiva type of shiur with a lot of iyun and depth. He readily agreed and, Boruch Hashem, there was more hashgacha pratis in getting peo-

ple who were interested in such a shiur and who know how to ask a kasha – they keep me on my toes!”

Program participant Rabbi Moshe Garfinkel concluded, “The Gemorah says that a person doesn’t fully recognize and understand the teachings of his teacher unless 40 years have gone by. It is well over 50 years – maybe closer to 60 years – that we of the shiur were in yeshiva. The type of shiur that Rabbi Herskovitz gives allows us now to appreciate the amount of depth, preparation,

and thought that goes into a shiur. And, only now, because we are so grateful to Rabbi Herskovitz, can we begin to understand how grateful we have to be for our yeshiva education that we received well over a half a century ago. I feel that Agra D’Pirka, in its own way, will hasten the coming of the Moshiach, bimheira b’yomeinu!”

For information about the Baltimore program, contact Eli Sofer, 917-755-1572, or elicsofer@gmail.com. ♦

