

AGRA D'PIRKA SIYUM ON KOHELES CELEBRATES 200 SHIURIM

By Chaim Fuhrer

Close to 100 people attended a *siyum* in Flatbush on *Rosh Chodesh Sivan*, celebrating the culmination of Agra D'Pirka *shiurim* on *Sefer Koheles* by Rav Aharon Kahn of Knesses Bais Avigdor. Despite the Covid challenges of learning by phone, the *shiur* was well attended — a testament to the dedication of the participants, and the presentation of the *maggid shiur*.

The *siyum* also heralded a new phase for Agra D'Pirka. The program, held virtually during the past 15 months, is once again opening to in-person learning. The *siyum* also paid tribute to Rav Kahn, who, together with the program's founder R' Ezra Klein, established Agra D'Pirka and turned it into a major force of Torah learning.

The *siyum* was dedicated to the 45 *kedoshim* who perished in Meron, and to R' Ezra's grandfather-in-law, R' Shlomo Yehuda *ben* Mi-choel, killed by the Nazis 77 years ago.

Those who attended the *siyum* were gifted with a flash drive with *shiurim*, and an Agra D'Pirka *sefer* on *Koheles*. A plaque was presented to Rav Kahn, expressing gratitude for his leadership and his *shiurim*.

"Every Agra D'Pirka *siyum* is a major milestone for the entire Agra D'Pirka family," said R' Chaim Fuhrer, Program Coordinator. "It was a personal *simcha* and a privilege for me to participate in this particular *limud*."

"*Shehecheyonu v'kiyomnu v'higiyonu lazman hazeh*," said R' Ezra, who pointed out that Rav

Kahn already gave over 750 *shiurim* on *Mishlei* and almost 200 *shiurim* on *Koheles*. "We're celebrating close to 1,000 *shiurim*," said R' Ezra. "Each filled with the depth and profundity that Rav Kahn brings to every *shiur*."



Rav Aharon Kahn reciting the Hadran.

R' Ezra praised Rav Kahn for being an exemplary *rov* and also a *rebbe* "who teaches us the *derech hayoshor* — how we should behave, *daven*, learn, talk to our fam-

ily, and how to act like a normal person."

Rav Kahn spoke about the *seforim* published on the *shiurim*, calling them "an unbelievable *otzar*. You can turn to any page and you'll learn something and you'll



At the Agra D'Pirka Koheles siyum.

appreciate it."

"This became a national phenomenon," said Rav Kahn about the Agra D'Pirka. "We can talk about how many *shiurim* and how

many *blatt* and how many pages. We've learned thousands and thousands of words of Torah. We were *mekayem* millions of *mitzvos*. And that's not a small thing."

While *Koheles* was completed, the learning continues. Rav Kahn's *shiur* began learning *Sefer Tehillim* immediately after *Shavuot*, focusing on *kapitlach* that are prominent in *tefillah*. "I'm looking forward to learning *Tehillim* with all of you," said Rav Kahn. "We'll be doing great things together."

Agra D'Pirka locations include Flatbush, Boro Park, Queens, Lakewood, Miami Beach, Williamsburg, Baltimore, Monsey, West Palm Beach, and most recently, Boca Raton. For more information about Agra D'Pirka, call 718 490 9392 or visit agradpirka.org.

BOOK REVIEW

YOU MADE MY LIFE

The Inspiring Life of Rav Shlomo Rothenberg

Rav Shlomo Rothenberg was the ultimate life-builder. He devoted his life to making others' lives, giving them *chiyus*, truly creating people. Whether he was in the *bais medrash*, on the basketball court, in a wedding hall, or in a pool hall, Rav Shlomo stayed true to his mission of making people's lives.

Rav Shlomo loved every Jew, because he saw greatness within each one. Every encounter with Rav Shlomo was life-giving and life-changing. Whether a small child, a kid at risk, or a prominent *rosh yeshiva*, Rav Shlomo treated everyone with the same dignity, concern, devotion, and love. With his sparkling eyes, overflowing *ahavas Yisroel*, passionate and positive personality, and trademark bear-hug, Rav Shlomo won over the hearts of thousands. He knew the right words that would inspire you to realize the greatness that was deep within your *neshomah*.

Formerly known as Stevie, Rav Shlomo grew up in the 1940s in a traditional home. He was a talented teenager who surely could have lived the American dream. A star basketball player for his high-school team, Stevie was instrumental in bringing his team to the championships, which were played to the roar of cheering crowds at Madison Square Garden. He excelled in baseball as well, and competed against some of the most famous athletes of the time, including Yankee manager Joe Torre. Stevie was awarded a scholarship to Long Island University, which would have taken him on the path to become a successful professional athlete.

So what stopped him in his tracks? It was, in fact, his spiritual thirst for the truth. Upon meeting his lifelong *rebbe*, Rav Yehuda Davis, Stevie/Shlomo had the strength of mind to make a total turnaround and develop into the unbelievable Torah personality he became.

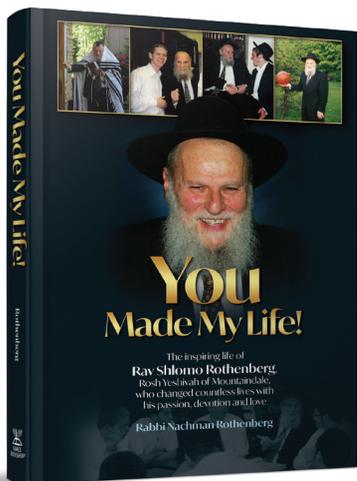
Rav Davis was an outstanding *gadol* who was one of the most influential builders of Torah in America. He was an American who went to learn in Slabodka, and convinced some fifty of his American friends, such as Rav Nosson Wachtfogel and Rav Avigdor Miller, to come along with him. In 1960, he founded the first *kiruv yeshiva* of its kind in America. He took American college boys who knew nothing about learning Torah and transformed them into complete *bonei Torah* and leaders of today's generation.

Rav Shlomo didn't feel a need to hide his past. On the contrary, he used his past as a tool to be *mekarev* so many *Yiddishe neshamos*. He utilized his talent for playing basketball to wow his *talmidim* and on-lookers and give them the feeling that a Torah life is indeed the most enjoyable life to lead.

The unbelievably deep connection that existed between Rav Shlomo and Rav Yehuda Davis was displayed in a most amazing way. Rav Shlomo, who was Rav Davis's *talmid muvhak* and the one to fill his place as *rosh yeshiva* of the Mountain-dale Yeshiva, passed away on the exact day of his dear *rebbe's* *yahrtzeit*.

This rich biography of the inspirational life of Rav Shlomo Rothenberg also includes many unpublished stories about the *Chofetz Chaim*, the Rogatchover Gaon, Rav Elchonon Wasserman, Rav Eizik Sher, Rav Moshe Feinstein, Rav Aharon Kotler, Rav Avigdor Miller, Rav Nosson Wachtfogel, Rav Mordechai Gifter, Rav Shmuel Berenbaum, and Rav Yosef Rosenblum, who was Rav Davis's son-in-law and Rav Shlomo's *mechutan*.

Rav Shlomo was truly a one-of-a-kind person. He was a dedicated, caring father, a loving *rosh yeshiva*, and an exceptionally loyal friend to countless people, each of whom truly feel that Rav Shlomo "made my life!"



CCHF Presents Shalom Summit for Business Community

Everyone wants to live in peace. However, people often feel that they must fight for their fair share of respect, honor, money, power, attention, and so much more.

Nowhere is the competition fiercer and the tactics more aggressive than in the world of business. Therefore, the business world is fertile ground for *machlokes*, and the conflicts that sprout from there spread, entangling *shuls*, communities, and families.

The Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation, in partnership with Cross River, is offering its first-ever Summit on Shalom in Business. Participants will have the opportunity to hear a panel of renowned experts address real-life questions that arise every day in the business world.

The business summit is an outgrowth of CCHF's ongoing campaign to provide tools for building *shalom* in every corner of life.

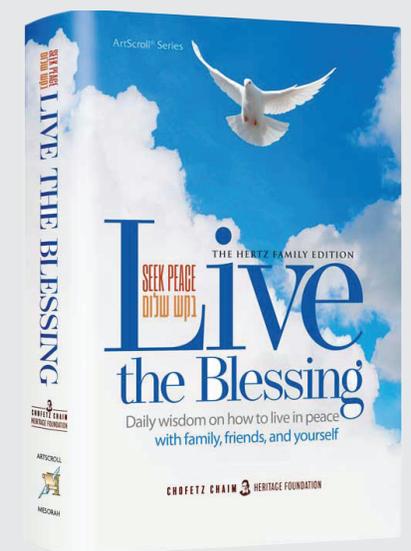
The foundation of the campaign is *Live the Blessing: Daily Lessons on How to Live in Peace*. This book, published last summer, has helped transform the way people who read it view the interpersonal challenges in their lives.

From the book evolved the CCHF's Shalom Challenge, which attracted nearly 20,000 participants in its initial launch and continues to build momentum. This unique initiative offers participants a four-week program of two-minute video clips that provide a complete toolkit for building *shalom* in real life. Topics include getting past hurt feelings, appreciating conflicting or wrong opinions, finding practical solutions for financial disputes, giving and accepting an apology, and more.

Through this summit, CCHF hopes to offer wisdom and new insights that will open new ways of navigating the rough terrain of earning a living: Can partnerships thrive when there are dif-

ferences between the partners? Can they dissolve without rancor? Do competitors have to be adversaries? Is every cause of action worth pursuing in *bais din* or court? How does the Torah want us to interact with employees, customers, vendors, or bosses? All these issues can be a minefield, or they can be a life-long series of lessons in personal growth.

The panelists will address these issues and others, offering clear perspectives based on years of practical experience. The speakers are Rabbi Ari Marburger, *sayan*, Bais Din Maysharim, and author of *Business Halacha* published by Artscroll/Mesorah; Rabbi Chaim Meir Roth, *dayan*, Bais Din Maysharim, and



rov of the Sterling Forest Sfarid Shul in Lakewood; Elliot Lauer, Chairman of the Litigation Department at Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle LLP; and Avi Schick, partner, Troutman, Pepper Curtis, and Former Deputy Attorney General of New York State.

The summit will take place on Tuesday, June 1, at 8 p.m. To join, log onto cchf.global/shalombusiness.