

## Agra d’Pirka Special Programs Highlight Meaningful Chanukah *Shiurim*

### AGRA D’PIRKA STAFF

For some, a legal holiday means a vacation. For Agra d’Pirka, it represents an opportunity.

Agra d’Pirka, the morning *kollel* program that is sweeping the nation, took advantage of last week’s legal holiday by offering special programs to prepare *Klal Yisrael* for Chanukah. Several hundred participants who were eager to hear *divrei chizuk* and practical *halachah* about Chanukah attended the programs in three separate locations. Countless others joined remotely. Programs were held in Brooklyn, Lakewood and Jackson.

Harav Zev Smith opened the program in Brooklyn, speaking on the topic of “Building Worlds With Words.” He quoted a *Gemara* in *Bava Basra* which indicates that one who speaks caringly to another person receives 11 *brachos*. He said that words give life and that a compliment can invigorate a person and give *chiyus*. The resulting warm feelings could last for years.

On a personal note, Rav Smith said he once sent the parents of a student a letter of appreciation for a Chanukah gift. They told him that six months later, they still cherished his letter and reviewed it weekly. He advised that we make it a habit to compliment our *Rebbeim*, our spouses, our children, our employees, our neighbors and everyone with whom we interact. He also suggested that during Chanukah, everyone should attempt to give at least one compliment daily.

Harav Noach Isaac Oelbaum, *shlita*, spoke next about “The Essence of Chanukah.” He began by citing the importance of learning Torah in anticipation of a *chag*. Agra d’Pirka, he said, provides the perfect venue for this.

Rav Oelbaum clarified some important *halachos* pertaining to Chanukah. He discussed the preferred way to light the *menorah* and how to perform the *mitzvah* with all its *hid-durim*. In conclusion, he pointed out that the Chanukah *licht* can only light up the world if there’s a match to ignite them. So too, he said, performing a *mitzvah* is wonderful. But Torah is the match that ignites the *mitzvah* and elevates it to a higher level. This should be our focus during the *chag* of Chanukah.

Harav Aharon Kahn offered a deep and profound interpretation of the *kapitel* of *Tehillim* “*Mizmor Shir Chanukas Habayis L’Dovid*.” If Shlomo Hamelech actually built the Beis HaMikdash, said Rav Kahn, then



Harav Zev Smith delivering a *shiur* at the Agra D’Pirka pre-Chanukah Program



Harav Aharon Kahn at the Agra D’Pirka pre-Chanukah Program.

what was Dovid Hamelech referring to? Most *meforshim* explain that Dovid Hamelech wrote this *kapitel b’nevuah*.

Rav Kahn explored the possibility of whether Dovid Hamelech could have actually built the Beis HaMikdash himself. He concluded that, according to the *Midrash*, the Beis HaMikdash would never have been destroyed if Dovid Hamelech had built it. So the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash was ultimately for the good of *Klal Yisrael*, allowing Hashem to pour His wrath on an object rather than on the Jewish people.

Each of the presentations at the Agra d’Pirka special program was uniquely inspiring, and each one offered new insight into a cherished *chag*. Those who attended were riveted, hardly noticing that the time was passing. The camaraderie among the participants, whether they attend the program regularly or whether they are newcomers to Agra d’Pirka, was truly heartwarming. All were here this morning for a common purpose and goal.

Agra d’Pirka is a year-round program offering engaging Torah learning from Monday to Thursday at 10

different locations. The program is always a treat. But the special programs scheduled on legal holidays are especially timely, meaningful and appreciated. They are the icing on the cake, the topping on the proverbial donut. Agra d’Pirka is what makes legal holidays worth waiting for.

*For more information about Agra d’Pirka and its outstanding programs in Flatbush, Queens, Lakewood, Boro Park, Williamsburg, Baltimore, Monsey, Miami, West Palm Beach and most recently Boca Raton, please call (212) 661-9400 or visit agradpirka.org.*