

‘There’s No Vacation’ — Agra D’Pirka Monsey Chapter Celebrates *Siyum Masechta*

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On Motzoei Shabbos, the Monsey *chaburah* of Agra d’Pirka celebrated a *siyum* on *Maseches Brachos*, a heroic achievement considering that the *chaburah* had been learning the *masechta* for close to six years. The *melaveh malkah* took place at the FountainView, the very same venue where the group has been meeting for all these years. It was an outstanding event, celebrating the consistent dedication and unyielding commitment of the Agra d’Pirka participants, who learned the *masechta b’iyun* under all circumstances, four days a week, 50 weeks a year, nonstop.

“We learn the *shiur* in depth,” said Harav Yehoshua Grunfeld, *Maggid Shiur*, “and the *olam* is very much involved. We go through the *sugya sheleimah*, including the Rambam and the *Rishonim* on a very deep level.” Despite the challenges of the pandemic and other unforeseen circumstances, Rav Grunfeld says that members of the *chaburah* have barely missed a *shiur*. And if they ever cannot attend, they will be sure to listen by phone on Kol Haloshon or via a livestream conference call.

“One participant,” says Rav Grunfeld, “is so enthusiastic that he calls his children after the *shiur* and tells it over to them. Another Yid who lives in Eretz Yisrael came to visit his mother in Monsey and decided to join us. He enjoyed the *shiur* so much that he now listens to us back home in Eretz Yisrael on Kol Haloshon.”

“This is a very dedicated group,” observes Reb Rafi Klein, director of the FountainView. “We continued the *shiur* via Zoom during COVID. The *olam* really gets into it; it’s interactive. You get the feeling that everyone is drinking in every word.”

Reb Ari Halpert, who helps coordinate the program, says the *shiur* covers most of the *Rishonim* on the *sugyos*. “It’s extremely in-depth,” says Halpert, “and it’s very timely because it involves day-to-day *Halachah l’maaseh*. There is also a fair amount of give-and-take because there are people here who are well-versed in these issues which they debate significantly.” Reb Halpert says that the program provides a healthy structure to the day. “Even during COVID, we continued over the phone despite the challenges of covering such intricate *shiurim* in that manner.”

The *siyum* was well attended by the *shiur* participants, their wives, their families and Agra d’Pirka *Maggidei Shiur*. It was dedicated *l’iluy nishmas*

Sholom Chaim ben Moshe Hama-da, Avraham Menachem ben Eliezer Peretz Lichtenstein, Dov Ber ben Tzvi Hirsch Bidnick and Asher Anchel ben Moshe Dovid Weissmandel, all members of the original *chaburah* who, sadly, have passed away.

Much of the success of Agra d’Pirka in Monsey is attributed to the generous sponsorship of the Klein family of FountainView, who have been providing the venue all these years as well as a light breakfast *l’iluy nishmas* their beloved parents. Several residents at the FountainView are noted *talmidei chachamim* who join the *shiur*.

Reb Ari Halpert opened the program by quoting a Gra which suggests that those who are *mishtatef* in a *siyum* have the same *chashivus* as those who actually completed the *masechta*.

“We are fortunate that many of our *Maggidei Shiur* are here with us tonight,” said Mr. Halpert, “as this gives us an opportunity to express our heartfelt *hakaras hatov* for all the hard work they put into both preparing and delivering our Agra d’Pirka *shiurim*. May we all continue to see this chapter of Agra d’Pirka in Monsey continue to grow, *iy”H*, and continue to be a very vital part of our day.”

Mr. Halpert also expressed his appreciation to the Klein family, who host the program at their facility, and to Reb Ezra Klein, founder of Agra d’Pirka. “I am constantly amazed to see how the various chapters of Agra d’Pirka continue to spread out all over the United States,” he said. “And that’s a direct result of Ezra and his team’s hard work.”

While being *mesayem Maseches Brachos*, Rav Yehoshua Grunfeld discussed the significance of the *passuk*, “*Talmidei chachamim marbim shalom ba’olam*.” When he completed the *siyum*, the *olam* erupted with a joyous rendition of “*Siman tov u’mazel tov*.” It was a special moment, a significant milestone reflecting years of dedicated Torah learning.

Harav Dovid Rube, *Rosh Yeshivah* of Beis Medrash Ateres Rosh, delivered *divrei chizuk*. He spoke about the need for clarity in *Yiddishkeit*. He said that attending a daily *shiur* for six years in *Maseches Brachos*, such as Rav Grunfeld’s *shiur*, gives you that clarity and vision that we need to live true lives of Judaism.

Reb Ezra Klein thanked Reb Ari Halpert, Reb Yitzchok Rachenbach and Reb Eliezer Goldfisher, the trio who were responsible for organizing the *siyum*. He also thanked Agra d’Pirka Program Coordinator Chaim Fuhrer



Rabbi Grunfeld delivering the Hadran.



Dancing at the *siyum*.

and Reb Rachamim Cooperman. Significantly, he expressed appreciation to the *n’shei chayil* who stood behind their husbands and encouraged them to attend the program.

Reb Ezra quoted the *passuk* in the *parashah* on lighting the *Menorah* “*ad shetehei shalheves*,” until the flame comes up by itself. He quoted Harav Yissocher Frand, who said that this is a reflection of the *Rebbi/talmid* relationship. “The *Rebbi* gives it over to the *talmid* until the *talmid* himself can grow and give over the Torah to others.” Reb Ezra indicated that this perfectly describes the dynamic behind Rav Grunfeld’s *Gemara shiur*.

Finally, Reb Ezra requested one special favor from those who were in attendance. “Tell your friends about us,” he said. “Get others to join by telling them about our great *Maggidei Shiur*. It’s the best advertisement for our program.”

Those who decide to try Agra d’Pir-

ka generally remain committed. The program sells itself. “It’s a wonderful program,” Reb Ari Halpert notes, “because it provides a diverse range of topics that are covered by different *Maggidei Shiur*. Aside from Rav Grunfeld’s *Gemara b’iyun shiur*, which is held between 9:30 and 10:30 a.m., there are also *shiurim* on *hashkafah*, *mussar*, *parashas hashavua*, *minyana hamitzvos*, *divrei chizuk* and *divrei Halachah*, which are held between 10:30 and 11:30. It’s like going to an advanced school of higher learning where different topics are covered in depth. There’s something for everyone here. And there’s no vacation.”

For more information about Agra d’Pirka and its Monsey location, as well as its Boro Park, Flatbush, Williamsburg, Queens, Lakewood, Spring Valley, Baltimore, Miami Beach, Boca Raton, and West Palm Beach locations, please call 212-661-9400 or visit agradpirka.org.