

Preparing for Shavuos with the Kollel

It is exceedingly difficult to absorb and connect with a yom tov, a Jewish holiday, without proper preparation. Indeed, the Talmud states that one ought to begin the mental preparations thirty days prior to a holiday! To that end, the Kollel held a pre-Shavuos Shabbaton in the Southeast community ten days before Shavuos, on Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, May 23-24. Six West Side Kollel families were hosted by families of the Southeast community, as they joined the three current Kollel families, along with Kollel alumni families, already living there.

"Spending Shabbos on the Southeast was an uplifting experience," said Kollel Scholar Rabbi Akiva Stern. "The Aish community's focus on growth is striking and inspiring. Their warm, welcoming attitude would make anyone feel at home!"

The Kollel offered classes and talks throughout Shabbos focused on the theme of Shavuos, helping Southeast residents get the information and inspiration vital to preparing for the upcoming holiday that celebrates the Giving of the Torah to the Jewish nation.

Cindy Sonstein expressed her appreciation for the Kollel's commitment to Torah and the community. "Beautiful and insightful words of Torah, inspiration and leadership, love and commitment for the Denver Jewish community - that is what the Denver Community Kollel brought to our pre-Shavuos Southeast Shabbaton!"

On the West Side, Rabbi Shachne Sommers delivered a pre-Shavuos shmuz for the community in the West Side Kollel Beis Medrash the Sunday before Shavuos. Over twenty people came to hear Rabbi

Sommers' words of inspiration, as he discussed the connection the Jewish Nation has with the Torah, comparing it, based on numerous sources, to a marriage. "The Torah wasn't just given to



Rabbi Shachne Sommers making a point at pre-Shavuos talk at West Side Beis Medrash

Klal Yisroel as a book of rules," he said. "The relationship between the Jewish People and the Torah is to unite with the Torah, to become one. That's what the Giving of the Torah was for Klal Yisroel!"

On that same Sunday night, Senior Educator Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher delivered a class to women in the Southeast community on the subject of machlokes (dispute) in Torah, discussing how dispute in Torah law broadens our view and appreciation of the depth and breadth of Torah. Cindy Sonstein thoroughly enjoyed the class. "Rabbi Fleisher has the amazing ability to give a class that appeals to all levels of learning, and provides deep thought and understanding to every topic he presents," she said. "The pre-Shavuos class was a perfect example of this! Combined with his extensive knowledge and ability to be a master teacher (not to mention a great sense of humor), we came away enriched and inspired!"

Waiting Between Meat and Milk on Memorial Day

Okay, so you had parmesan cheese in your salad at lunch. Can you enjoy that sizzling steak at the dinnertime barbecue? If you were at one of three locations where the Kollel held its Legal Holiday learning program on Memorial Day, you should have the answer.

Memorial Day, was Monday, May 26th, a week and change before Shavuos, and that means that the Kollel's Legal Holiday learning program, a fixture in Denver, was in full swing. The Kollel offered learning with Kollel members in three locations, on Denver's West Side, East Side, and Southeast. Preceded by shacharis and a great breakfast, the program offers people the opportunity to start their day off on the right foot with Torah study.

The program attracted nearly thirty participants, and with cheesecake and other dairy delights of Shavuos a few days away, the program focused on the subject



West Side Beis Medrash during Legal Holiday learning program

of waiting between dairy and meat. The material was prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Kollel.

"People always wonder where the various customs of waiting after meat or dairy,

come from," he says. "Where did six hours come from, where did three hours or an hour come from? It was informative and relevant to the time of year, and I'm glad people were able to discover the answers. Knowing why we do things makes it that much more meaningful."

Leslie Illes says he enjoyed, and gained from, the learning. "I had a wonderful time learning with (Kollel Dean) Rabbi Sommers and (Programming Director) Rabbi Heyman. The program enabled me to glean new perspectives on the Torah."

Dr. Daniel Peckman, a Southeast resident who is secular studies principal at Denver's Yeshiva Toras Chaim, appreciated the relevance of the subject matter. "The material we covered was so practical, essential to everyday Jewish life," he said. "And I really appreciated being able to learn with Rabbi Sommers. The depth of Torah knowledge he possesses is truly impressive."

Day After Shavuos Learning with the Kollel

It's the morning after Shavuos, and you're home from school. What are you going to do? If you live in Denver, the answer is simple: you attend the Kollel's Day After Shavuos Learning program. Offered for boys grades 1-8, it provided the opportunity to keep the fire of Torah going strong with a learning program on all three sides of Denver. Sponsored by the M.B. Glassman Foundation, Day After Shavuos learning ran from 9-10:30 in the morning, as Kollel members taught the younger boys while helping the older boys engage in chavrusah learning. Over thirty boys participated in the program, which included, in addition to the learning, nosh, prizes for all attendees as well as a drawing for two grand prizes, and a terrific story.

Kollel Scholar Rabbi Yossi Kaplan, who organized the program, was delighted at the Torah study the program engendered. "It was great to see so many children come together to learn on their day off!" he said.



Kollel Scholar Rabbi Yossi Kaplan teaching on the West Side at Day After Shavuos program; Kollel Scholar Rabbi Dovid Schwartzberg is in the background

Dr. Robert Sahlerabi, whose two sons, Joshua (grade 3) and Gabriel (grade 1) attended the program in EDOS (and brought home one of the grand prizes), says the program stayed with his boys beyond the hour-and-a-half of learning. "My two boys loved the post-Shavuot learning program! When they came home they were talking all day about getting a chance to learn and observe older boys learning Gemara, and winning an awesome prize was the icing on the cake!"

Mental Gymnastics at 3 AM



As Jews throughout Denver spent the entire night of Shavuos immersed in Torah study, the Kollel offered learning on both the West Side at Kahal Zera Avraham and the Southeast at the Kollel Torah Center. With both chavrusah learning and classes throughout the night on the topic of mitzvos tzrichos

kavana (the need for intent when performing mitzvos), as well as a class from Kollel Scholar Rabbi Yossi Kaplan on the West Side on the subject of sheidim (demons) in halacha and aggadah, there was no lack of excitement to help keep Torah learners awake and involved all night, as Ken Levin can testify.

"Even though it was way past midnight and my bedtime, Rabbi Sommers managed to hold my attention and interest in the subject matter," says Ken. "Mental gymnastics at 3 am is something everyone should try at least once a year!"

