



# CONGREGATION TORAS CHAIM

An intimate space... Grow at your pace.

December 27-28, 2013 ■ 25 Teves, 5774 ■ Shabbos Parshas Vaeira, Shabbos Mevorchim  
Candlelighting: 5:10P ■ Shabbos Ends 6:18P

Kiddush this Shabbos is sponsored by Wes and Tricia Sutkin in memory of Wes' maternal grandfather, Gedalia ben Dovid, who was niftar 24 Kislev 5774. May his neshama have an aliyah. Shalosh Seudos this Shabbos is sponsored by the shul. Please contact Rabbi Yaakov Rich at 972-835-6016 if you are interested in sponsoring kiddush or shalosh seudos in the future.

## ■ SHABBOS SCHEDULE

### Friday Night, December 27<sup>th</sup>

- » Mincha/Kabbalos Shabbos/Maariv-5:10P
- » Candlelighting-5:10P

### Shabbos Day, December 28<sup>th</sup>

- » Shacharis followed by Kiddush-8:30A
- » Junior Congregation for boys (in shul this week)-9:30A
- » **Coffee Club for all women in the Bloomenstiel home.-9:45-10:45A**
- » Shabbos Chassidus Chaburah (at Bloomenstiel home)-3:50P
- » Chumash Shiur (for men & women)-4:00P
- » Mincha/Shalosh Seudos (men in shul, women at Rich home)-5:00P
- » Shabbos Ends-6:18P
- » Avos u'Banim-7:35P

## ■ WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

- » Shacharis Sunday-8:00A
- » Shacharis Monday-6:40A
- » **Maariv-9:00P** (throughout the winter)
- » Beis Medrash-every night at 9:15P

## ■ WHAT'S NU AT CTC

- » **Mazel Tov** to the Akiva Meir & Chana Rivka on the completing of their geirus this past Sunday and on their wedding this past Monday evening. May you and your wonderful children, Yeshaya Morderchai and Nechama Tikva go from strength to strength. We are all proud of your incredible accomplishment and overjoyed to be able to call you our brother and sister.
- » **Thank you:** This past Tuesday night was the Fifth Annual Non-Holiday Party. Over 30 people attended and seven paintings were sold and ordered. Overall everything was a huge success, and we owe a big debt of gratitude to Yehudah and Raizel Palmer for sponsoring and organizing the event, and to Aaron Boardman for his delicious Chinese cuisine.
- » **CTC Art Sale:** Seven paintings were sold this past week. Brand new will soon adorn our walls. Speak to Avi Harpaz, our art ninja, if you are interested in purchasing one or more paintings, (818) 445-1941 or harpazinc@gmail.com. Thank you for your interest.
- » **CTC End-Of-Year Doorbuster Deal:** If you have a balance due to the shul, and you pay by the end of the year, you are entitled to one of the following fantastic deals . . . you get to sponsor a:
  - Kiddush of your choice for only \$100 (Good deal: normal price \$150)
  - or, a Kiddush and Shalosh Seudos of your choice for only \$125 (Best deal: normal price \$200).
 But we have to have money in hand by the end of the year . . . sorry no promises for this one. Plus, it counts as a tax exemption for 2013. So, don't delay, contact Josh today at (214) 223-0055, or email josh@red-stonefoods.com.
- » **Rabbi's Reflections:** CTC Winter Speaker Series: A Bi-Weekly Conversation with Leading Dallas Rabbonim. Listen to the insights and outlooks of our local Torah scholars as they share with us the Talmudic wisdom necessary to build a vibrant, strong and growing Jewish community.
  - **Wednesday, January 8, 2014: Rabbi Aryeh Rodin, shlit"a, Rav, Congregation Ohev Shalom - Connecting to the Past, Looking to the Future.** Hear from the pioneer of Torah True Judaism in Dallas, TX, including what went into the building of the Far North Eruv, and how the rich heritage of Yeshivas Chofetz Chaim helped shape and will shape our Jewish community.
  - **Wednesday, January 22, 2014: Rabbi Ranaan Broderick, shlit"a - Shechita: Business or Avodas HaKodesh (Holy Service).** An insider's view of the world of shechita, including a show-and-tell of real specimens. Rabbi Broderick, who is a practicing shochet, is known as a serious Talmid Chacham and a real cut-up!
  - **Wednesday, February 5, 2014: Rabbi Yerachmiel Fried, shlit"a, Rosh Kollel, DATA - From Jerusalem with Love.** Rabbi Yerachmiel Fried, a student of the greatest Roshei Yeshivah of our generation, including the venerable Gadol HaDor, HaRav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l, began DATA as a center of outreach and inreach, including teaching the next generation of rabbis at the highest level of Torah scholarship. Talmud Torah combined with love of every Jew has made DATA into one of the primary engines that drives the growth of Juda-

ism in our community.

. . . more speakers on the horizon

- Wednesday evenings (see dates), 8-9 PM (Except Rabbi Fried's talk will be 7:30-8:30 PM)
- For men and women
- No charge
- Congregation Toras Chaim, 7103 Mumford Ct., Dallas, TX 75252
- » **Tanya: Likutei Amarim - "Collected Discourses":** Discover the inner resource that could help you resolve the most troubling, vexing and intimate human dilemmas: Why is life such a struggle, a constant challenge? Why is my inner life so full of contradictions? How does one deal with anger, anxiety, unwholesome desires, jealousies, stress and emotional, mental and spiritual blockages? What is the secret to developing loving and lasting personal relationships? How does one attain genuine joy, satisfaction, and a general sense of wholeness?

The Tanya (aka Likutei Amarim - "Collected Discourses") was authored by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi 5505-5573 (1745-1812), Founder of the Chabad-Lubavitch Chassidic Movement.

Rabbi Peretz Shapiro will illuminate this enigmatic work and teach practical lessons for real personal growth and spiritual development.

- Taught by: Rabbi Peretz Shapiro
- When: Thursday evenings, 8:00-9:00 PM
- Where: Congregation Toras Chaim, 7103 Mumford Ct., Dallas, TX 75252
- Who: For men and women
- No Charge

## ■ REFUAH SHELAIMA

- » Chaim Yaakov ben Sorah (Bob Day)
- » Masha Hinda bas Gittel (Friend of Kalman Russ)
- » Rafael Chanoch ben Fruma (Friend of Avi Harpaz)
- » Zev Yisrael ben Esther (Friend of Risa Solomon)
- » Malka Shulamis bas Leah (Mother of Ari Goldberg)
- » Yael Miriam bas Chaya (Niece of Hillel & Jill Lichtenstein)
- » Mattisyahu Chaim ben Ettel (HaRav Mattisyahu Solomon)
- » Ella bas Naomi (Cousin of Naomi Goldberg)
- » Baruch Tzadik ben Chava (Relative of Jill Lichtenstein)

## ■ THE DEFINITION OF KIDDUSH HASHEM: RABBI BEREL WEIN

### Rabbi Berel Wein: Jews And X-Mas and Doing The Right Thing

Rabbi Berel Wein was once invited to a meeting with the editor of the Detroit Free Press. After introductions had been made, the editor told him the following story.

His mother, Mary, had immigrated to America from Ireland as an uneducated, 18-year-old peasant girl. She was hired as a domestic maid by an observant family. The head of the house was the president of the neighboring Orthodox shul.

Mary knew nothing about Judaism and had probably never met a Jew before arriving in America. The family went on vacation Mary's first December in America, leaving Mary alone in the house. They were scheduled to return on the night of December 24, and Mary realized that there would be no Christmas tree to greet them when they did. This bothered her greatly, and using the money the family had left her, she went out and purchased not only a Christmas tree but all kinds of festive decorations to hang on the front of the house.

When the family returned from vacation, they saw the Christmas tree through the living room window and the rest of the house festooned with holiday lights. They assumed that they had somehow pulled into the wrong driveway and drove around the block. But alas, it was their address.

The head of the family entered the house contemplating how to explain the Christmas tree and lights to the members of the shul, most of whom walked right past his house on their way to shul. Meanwhile, Mary was eagerly anticipating the family's excitement when they realized that they would not be without a Christmas tree.

After entering the house, the head of the family called Mary into his study. He told her, "In my whole life no one has ever done such a beautiful thing for me as you did." Then he took out a \$100 bill — a very large sum in the middle of the Depression — and gave it to her. Only after that did he

explain that Jews do not have Christmas trees.

When he had finished telling the story, the editor told Rabbi Wein, "And that is why, there has never been an editorial critical of Israel in the Detroit Free Press since I became editor, and never will be as long as I am the editor."

The shul president's reaction to Mary's mistake — sympathy instead of anger — was not because he dreamed that one day her son would be the editor of a major metropolitan paper, and thus in a position to aid Israel. (Israel was not yet born.) He acted as he did because it was the right thing to do.

That's what it means to be a Kiddush Hashem, to sanctify God's Name. It is a goal to which we can all strive.

#### ■ LEAVING LEARNING FOR LEVAYOS: RABBI YEHUDA SPITZ

The recent spate of Levayos (funerals) for Gedolim that engendered a public turnout in the hundreds of thousands of mourners has left even the most jaded of secular pundits speechless. The unfortunate passing of such Gaonim as Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l, Rav Nosson Zvi Finkel zt"l, Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg zt"l, the Vizhnitzer Rebbe zt"l, and most recently, Rav Ovadia Yosef zt"l, has exemplified how much of a priority it is for us to pay our respect and show our esteem and reverence for these luminaries, as testament to their vast accomplishments as Gedolei HaDor.

Their vastly different backgrounds and constituents notwithstanding, each of these giants' Levayos had attendance well into the hundred thousands, consisting of the full spectrum of religious Jewry. There is precedent for this as well, as we find that even the Canaanite Kings, no friends of Bnei Yisrael, nonetheless joined in with the massive levaya for Yaakov Avinu.

Indeed, the rewards for attending a levaya, and not just for Gedolim, are many. In fact, this Gemillas Chessed Shel Emes is referred to as a mitzvah that is 'keren kayemes l'olam haba'ah, an eternal one with rewards both in This World and the World to Come, with no diminished returns.

Yet, we find that according to the Gemara and codified as halacha, although 'Talmud Torah Keneged Kulam, Torah study is the greatest of all Mitzvos, nevertheless, one is obligated to leave his Torah study in order to properly escort one who has passed on.

Although the Gemara qualifies this rule, and asserts that it is relevant only to one who does not have 'kol tzorcho', his required needs, nowadays this is fulfilled with a 'Chevra Kadisha', a Burial Society, and one should not abandon his Torah study to attend a random levaya when basic requirements are being met.

However, continues the Gemara, different people have different needs regarding their levayos. A basic minyan is only deemed sufficient for one who is not learned. Yet, for one who is learned, his basic needs for a levaya is an astounding, attendees, the same amount of those present at Kabbolas HaTorah! This is due to the dictum of 'Netilasah K'Nisinasah'; the same amount present at Kabbolas HaTorah should be present when the Torah departs, meaning when one who is filled with Torah passes away.

Lest one think that thishalacha is referring to a Gadol HaDor or at the very least, a famous Rosh Yeshiva, the Rema explains that, in his time, anyone with at least a rudimentary Jewish education (in Chumash and Mishna) is included in this category! Although the Aruch Hashulchan felt that this was only true in the Rema's time, conversely, the Minchas Elazar of Munkacs remarked that in his day (around years ago) this was certainly true; as "who doesn't sit in shul over Shabbos and recite shnayim mikra v'echad targum?!"

The Gemara concludes that for one who teaches Torah to others, also not only exclusively referring to a Gadol Hador or Rosh Yeshiva, but even a Rebbi, Rav, Posek, Maggid Shiur, or Rosh Chaburah, there is no limit, and everyone is obligated to attend his levaya!

If so, why do we find such numbers of mourners only at Gedolim's levayos? In large cities wouldn't everyone be required to stop their talmud Torah many times a day, simply to escort their fellow man, whom

they may not have ever met, to his eternal rest?

Although there are several approaches and rationales given to answer this question, it is important to note that many Gedolim grappled with this issue, implying that the question is still better than the answer.

The main rationale for leniency is actually based on a machlokes in Even Ha'Ezer regarding attending a Chuppa, where the halacha parallels that of a levayaregarding stopping learning to attend. The Chelkas Mechokek writes that this halacha only applies to one who sees a Chuppa occurring, who must stop his learning to attend the wedding. Yet, if one merely knows about a wedding taking place, he is not obligated to do so. The Beis Shmuel, however, argues, countering that even if one knows about a wedding, one is obligated to attend, even at the cost of his learning.

The famed Netziv, Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, Rosh Yeshiva of Volozhin, maintains that regarding levayos the halacha follows the shitta of the Chelkas Mechokek. He cites proof of this from the words the Gemara in Brachos (and later codified by the Shulchan Aruch) uses referencing levayos that refers to attending one as 'HaRoeh es HaMeis', seeing one who passed away. The Netziv explains this to mean that unless one actually sees a levaya occurring, he is not obligated to stop his learning to attend. Although several authorities seem reluctant to rely upon this, nevertheless, the vast majority of decisors rule this way, that one is not required to attend a levaya and abandon his learning simply because he is aware of one taking place.

Other rationales for leniency include: that only Talmud Torah of an individual needs to be halted for a levaya, not public Talmud Torah; that nowadays many levayos do not start at the appointed time, and one needs only to stop learning and attend when he is certain that the levaya is taking place; and that the halacha was referring to when everyone in the city was part of one unified kehillah. Ergo, nowadays in large cities, where there is a plethora of kehillas, some with no interaction with another, the ruling would not apply.

But one thing is certain. Many Gedolim stress that if one does come across a levaya, he is obligated to stop what he is doing and attend, accompanying the niftar at least four Amos along his final journey.

Another interesting related issue is that the Tur and Shulchan Aruch rule that the only constituency that should never stop its learning for any levaya whatsoever is Tashb"ar, Tinokos Shel Beis Rabban, or cheder school children. Yet, nowadays, it is accepted that for the passing of a Gadol, Talmudei Torah are let out, with the children being urged to participate in the levaya as well. How is this allowed?

Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, when asked this question, replied that the Gedolim of previous generations felt that having children stop learning to attend the levaya of a Gadol was acceptable in order to show honor to the Torah. He added that, anyway, children nowadays have intersession and vacation on other days when they are not learning. If so, paying last respects to a Gadol is certainly no worse than Bein HaZmanim. Others add that it is done purposely so that the children learn to appreciate the greatness of Torah. Moreover, in this case 'bitulo hee kiyuma', this brief break will undoubtedly engender more and greater Torah learning on the children's part.

In the final analysis, if one is attending a levaya, he should not bemoan the fact that he is missing seder. On the contrary, he should focus on the great Mitzva he is performing. By escorting the recently departed to his eternal rest, he is earning his own eternal reward.

# Good Shabbos

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- **WEEKLY CLASSES** (see website for more detail)
- » Morning Gemara Makkos for men (M-Fr, 6-6:35A)
- » Daf HaYomi for men (Sunday-Thursday 8-9P)
- » Shabbos Chassidus Chaburah for men (10 mins before Chumash shiur)
- » Chumash for men & women (Shabbos one hr before mincha)
- » Hilchos Taaruvos for men (Sunday 6:30-8:00A)
- » Back to Basics with Rabbi Bloomenstiel for m&w (Sun 8:45-9:45 AM)
- » Marriage for men (Monday 7:15-8:00P)
- » Marriage for women (Tuesday 7:15-8:00P)
- » Shabbos in Halacha for women with Rabbi Bodenheimer (Wed 7:00-8:00 PM)
- » Tanya for men & women with Rabbi Shapiro (Thur 8:00-9:00P)

All classes at 7103 Mumford Ct., except where indicated