



CONGREGATION TORAS CHAIM

An intimate space...Grow at your pace.

May 16–17, 2014 ▪ 17 Iyar, 5774 ▪ Shabbos Parshas B'Chukosai, 32nd of Omer
Candlelighting: 8:02P ▪ Shabbos Ends 9:11P

Kiddush and Shalosh Seudos this Shabbos are sponsored by the members of the Guarantee Kiddush & Shalosh Seudos Club: Shimshon Cook, Wes & Tricia Sutkin, Yaakov & Susan Rich, Ben & Lauren Nise, Bob & Charlotte Day, David Fisher, Joe & Eliana Higginbotham, Yitzchok & Tami Ellis, Ari & Naomi Goldberg, Eli Goldberg, & Rebecca Bodoff. 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, May 16th

- » Mincha/Kabbalos Shabbos/Maariv–7:00P
- » Candlelighting–8:02P

Shabbos Day, May 17th

- » Shacharis–8:30A
- » Junior Congregation for boys–9:30A
- » Mommy & Me (at Rich home)–9:45-10:45A
- » Chassidus Chaburah (for men at Bloomenstiel home)–6:40P
- » Chumash Shiur (for men & women)–6:50P
- » Mincha–7:50P
- » Shabbos Ends–9:11P

■ WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

- » Shacharis Sunday–8:00A
- » Mincha–6:00P / Maariv–9:00P (Sunday–Thursday)
- » Beis Medrash–every night at 9:15P

■ WHAT'S NU AT CTC

- » **2014 CTC Lag B'Omer Family BBQ & Horseshoe Tournament:** Congregation Toras Chaim invites you to enjoy a delicious barbecue dinner with all the trimmings, activities, and lots of fun for children and adults. Sunday, May 18, 2014, 3:00 – 5:30 PM at the Rich family home, 7119 Bremerton Ct., Dallas, TX 75252.

Highlights include:

- Hamburgers, Hotdogs, salads and more.
- Face painting and balloon making for the kids (Two hours straight)
- Pairs Horseshoe Tournament for all ages
- Sunday, May 18, 2014, from 3:00 – 5:30 PM
- Purchase tickets online for a discount. \$25 Family Max. \$5 per person. At the door: \$35 Family Max, \$10 per person
- » **Congregation Toras Chaim Children's Garden & Playground:** On April 10, 2014, with tremendous Heavenly help and the the assistance of our legal team, the congregation successfully defended itself in a court of law. Now It's Time to Play. Become a partner with the shul in the new Congregation Toras Chaim Children's Garden & Playground. The children need your help. The total amount we need to raise in order to fill the swimming pool, purchase the playground equipment, and the make the environment safe and secure for our children is \$25,000. Your donation will have an immediate impact on the lives of so many. Please give generously and make a difference today! Donate Online Securely
- » **NEW CTC Lost & Found,** inside the CTC Coat Room. Thank you to Ayelet Penrod for initiating this effort.

■ REFUAH SHELAIMA

MEN

- » Eliyahu Lipman bas Leah (Father of Suri Rosenblatt)
- » Yoseif Yitzchok ben Yehudis Chaya (Brother in Law of Yoseif Meir Rich)
- » Mattisyahu Chaim ben Ettel (HaRav Mattisyahu Solomon)

WOMEN

- » Ella bas Naomi (Cousin of Naomi Goldberg)

■ THAT DEMANDS EFFORT: RABBI LABEL LAM

If you will go in My decrees and keep My Mitzvos and perform them; then I will provide rains in their time, and the land will give its produce and the tree of the field will give its fruit. (Vayikra 26:3)
If you will go in My decrees...If you follow My decrees by engaging in intensive Torah study, with the intention that such study will lead you to observe ... (Rashi: Sifri)

I have always wondered how going in the ways of My decrees translates to engaging in intensive Torah learning. Going means going; "Telechu" not studying! If it means keeping and doing Mitzvos that is mentioned in the second part of the verse. Why is "going" equated with "intensive learning"?

The word for Jewish Law is called "Halacha" which comes from the root word, "holech" which means "go". Why is Jewish Law called "Halacha"? What does it have to do with going? We might mistakenly think of as ridged and dogmatic. Just the opposite is true. Life is ever changing

and conditions are always in flux. Two situations although similar are never exactly the same. Man is called a "holech" as he goes from station to station but is anything but stationary. He is not a static being.

There are three general dimensions that are always varying; 1) Olam –Space 2) Shana-Time 3) Nefesh –Person. These three are always shifting in every scene in life. Even if the same two people meet in the same place, the time has changed, and therefore perhaps the application of Hallacha. One minute before Shabbos is a different reality than one minute after the onset of Shabbos. There is nothing monolithic about Hallacha. It is as dynamic as life is active. Therefore the study of Torah with intensity is really an expression of the desire to know with precision what HASHEM-The Creator optimally expects from us in a given moment.

It's the art and science of calibrating the balance point between all the competing values and principles, between man and G-d and between man and man. I need to wash my hands in morning and ideally not walk 4 cubits without washed hands. I dare not take another's cup and inconvenience him. What if I can replace it before he awakes?! What do you say Rabbi? Every piece of life requires toil and mental rigor just to do or to be prepared to do the right thing.

The Chovos HaLevavos in Shaar Cheshbon HaNefesh, the Gates of Introspection provides a suggested list of 30 things a person could and should contemplate regularly. Here is #5: To bring oneself to an accounting for delaying coming to understand the book of G-d's Torah, and his being contented not to grasp its matters. And one would not do this for a book that was sent to him from a king. If he had a doubt as to its meaning due to its unclear handwriting or words, or due to the depth of its matter, or its subtlety, or confusing mix of subjects or its enigmatic words. Rather, he would apply his whole heart and mind to understand its meaning, and would greatly pain himself until he understood its intent.

If he does this to understand the words of a weak, mortal man like himself, how much is it his duty to do many times more than this until he understands the book of G-d, which is his life and his salvation (from eternal death), as written "For it is your life and the length of your days" (Devarim 30:20). How did you permit yourself, my brother, to hide from it, and to content yourself from it with that which is readily familiar of its matter and revealed of its surface meaning, and you were lenient with (knowing) the rest.

If we had that kind of clarity and we understood that we were engaged in the book of granted to us by HASHEM it would drive us to another type of clarity. We wouldn't sleep till we discover what is it exactly that HASHEM expects from us now, and that demands effort!

■ UNKNOWN DAYS OF JEWISH CALENDAR: RABBI YEHUDA SPITZ

This week, an unsuspecting person wishing to catch a minyan, who walks into a random shul in many places around the world, might be in for a surprise. After the Shemoneh Esrei prayer on Monday there was Selichos; on Wednesday there was no Tachanun; and on Sunday again there won't be Tachanun! Why would this be? No Tachanun generally signifies that it is a festive day; yet, no other observances are readily noticeable. As for the reciting of Selichos on Monday, they are usually reserved for a fast day; yet no one seems to be fasting! What is going on?

The answer is that three separate specific "Unknown Days" happen to fall out on during this apparently chock-full week.

BeHa"B: This past Monday was the third and final day of a semi - annual period that many do not even realize exists: a series of "Days of Tefilla" colloquially known as BeHa"B. This acronym stands for Monday (Beis - 2nd day of the week), Thursday (Hei - 5th day of the week), and the following Monday (Beis). These days are observed on the first Monday, Thursday, and Monday following the earliest Rosh Chodesh after Pesach (Rosh Chodesh Iyar), and likewise after Sukkos (Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan).

The custom of utilizing these specific days for Prayer and supplication is already mentioned almost 900 years ago by the Baalei Tosafos, its importance reiterated by the Tur (who refers to BeHa"B as a French-German custom) and unbeknownst to many, actually codified in Halacha by the Shulchan Aruch as a proper minhag!

Whose Minhag Is It, Anyway? Although both the Tur and Rema call BeHa"B a German-French custom, and the Shulchan Gavoa (cited

Imaaseh by the Kaf Hachaim) writes that this was not the minhag in Spain, implying that Sefardim are not beholden to keep BeHa”B, nevertheless, it must be noted that the Shulchan Aruch himself must have felt strongly about this minhag of BeHa”B, as aside for spending a whole siman on it – Orach Chaim 492, he also refers to it and its importance in at least two other locations – Orach Chaim 429, 2 and 566, 2 - 4.

Later Sefardic authorities as well, including the Knesses HaGedolah, Pri Chadash and Chida (ad loc.) also discuss its importance. Therefore, this author finds it interesting that the general Sefardic minhag is not say BeHa”B. In fact, the Siman referring to BeHa”B - O.C. 492, is noticeably absent from the Yalkut Yosef’s Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, implying that it is not relevant to the average Sefardi.

And it is not just the general Sefardi populace who do not say BeHa”B. Already in his time, the Taz noted that even among Ashkenazic communities BeHa”B observance was not widespread. More recently, Rav Menashe Klein, in a side point to the issue being addressed in a teshuva, maintains that one who does not observe BeHa”B is not considered “Poresh Min HaTzibbur”, as even nowadays its observance is not prevalent. But, among many Yeshiva communities, and especially in Eretz Yisrael, reciting BeHa”B twice a year is de rigueur.

Why Now? The reason most commonly mentioned by the Poskim why these days of prayer are following the holidays of Pesach and Sukkos, is that over the extended holidays, when there is a mitzvah of feasting and simcha, it is more likely that people may have stumbled in some area due to improper behavior and inadvertent sin, and BeHa”B is meant to help rectify any possible offense. This idea is based on Iyov (Ch. 1, verse 5) who would bring Korbanos after “Y’mei Mishteh”, or “Days of Feasting”. These sins might be due to a variety of probable offenses including: mingling - at a festive meal or even at a Drasha in the Shul (!), Yom Tov and Chol Hamoed related transgressions, Chilul Hashem, or overabundance of merriment and gastronomical pleasures.

Other explanations offered to explain why BeHa”B was established include: To entreat Hashem to strengthen our bodies especially at the time of changing seasons when many are likely to get sick.

To beseech Hashem that we should have abundant harvests after Pesach and plentiful rains after Sukkos. To commemorate Queen Esther’s original 3-day fast (which actually was Pesach time, and not Purim time). This is pushed off until the first opportunity after Chodesh Nissan. [The Ta’anis Esther that we fast before Purim is not really due to Esther’s actual fast as recorded in the Megillah, but rather to commemorate that when the Jews went to war against the anti-Semites of their day, they fasted]. Yet, interestingly, although BeHa”B is traditionally meant to be a fast day, still, very few actually do fast, as in our generations people are considered weaker. This rationale is found in many sefarim, including the Chavos Yair, Aruch Hashulchan, and Mishna Berura.

In addition, since BeHa”B is based on a minhag and not an actual Biblical source, many make do with Selichos instead, with the majority also reciting Avinu Malkeinu. That is why our fellow walking in would not see any other traditional signs of a fast day.

Monday, Thursday, Prayer Days... Monday and Thursday are considered especially potent days for prayer, as Moshe Rabbeinu climbed Har Sinai to receive the Torah on a Thursday and returned with it on a Monday. A mnemonic to showcase this is the first pasuk read on a public fast day Haftara (Yeshaya Ch. 55, verse 6) “Dirshu Hashem B’H imatzo” - “Seek out Hashem when He is to be found”. The letters Beis and Hei show that an auspicious time when Hashem may be found is on Monday and Thursday; therefore Mondays and Thursdays are preferable for fasting and prayer. For whichever reason BeHa”B was established, we shouldn’t let this golden opportunity for tefillah to pass us by!

Pesach Sheini: Wednesday, the 14th of Iyar, is dubbed ‘Pesach Sheini’, which commemorates the day when those who were unable to bring the annual Korban Pesach (special Pesach sacrifice - Pascal lamb) at its

proper time (Erev Pesach), were given a second chance to offer this unique Korban. Although technically not considered a real holiday, and despite the fact that it is (astonishingly!) not listed in the traditional Halachic sources as one of the days that Tachanun is not said, nevertheless, the custom for many is not to say Tachanun on Pesach Sheini, in order to ‘tap into’ the merit that this particular day had during the times of the Beis HaMikdash. Although the Pri Megadim maintains that Tachanun should be said on Pesach Sheini - as the original day it is commemorating was only meant for individuals in unique circumstances, and its absence of mention in the traditional Halachic sources as one of the days that Tachanun is not said speaks volumes, nevertheless, most Poskim rule that one should not say Tachanun on this day.

There is a common custom associated with Pesach Sheini - eating Matzah; but that is not noticeable in shul! Another interesting fact about Pesach Sheini is that it is the Yahrzeit of Rabi Meir Ba’al HaNeis and many visit his grave on that day.

Lag B’Omer: The third of these ‘Unknown Days’ with no other obvious observances during davening except the omission of Tachanun on Sunday, is Lag B’Omer [18th of Iyar]. There are several reasons offered for why Tachanun is not said on Lag B’Omer, including:

- It’s the day when Rabbi Akiva’s 24,000 students stopped dying.
- It’s the day when the Mann (manna) started to fall, feeding Bnei Yisrael in the Midbar.
- It is the day when Rabi Shimon bar Yochai and his son, Rabi Elazar came out of the cave they hid in for 13 years.
- It is Rabi Shimon bar Yochai’s Yahrzeit; however, it is important to note that this understanding might actually be based on a simple printing mistake, and many authorities including the Chida and Ben Ish Chai, maintain that Lag B’Omer is not truly his Yahrzeit!
- It is the day when Rabi Akiva gave Semicha to his remaining five students (including Rabi Shimon bar Yochai) after 24,000 died, allowing the Torah’s mesorah to perpetuate.
- It is the day when Rabi Shimon bar Yochai’s hidden Torah, the Zohar, became revealed to the world
- In Eretz Yisrael, this quasi-holiday is widely celebrated, with over half-a million people converging on the sleepy mountaintop town of Meron to visit, daven, and dance at the grave of Rabi Shimon Bar Yochai, as well as tens of thousands visiting the grave of Shimon HaTzaddik in Yerushalayim.

With enormous bonfires (mostly built by neighborhood children!) seemingly on almost every street corner, Lag B’Omer in Eretz Yisrael has unfortunately become a pyromaniac’s delight and the firefighters’ and asthmatics’ nightmare.

Other locales have a different sort of custom, such as the one in Krakow, Poland to visit the illustrious Rema’s grave on Lag B’Omer, as it is his Yahrzeit as well. Yet, in most of Chu”tz La’aretz, there is no other real commemoration or observances of this special day, unless one counts the “traditional” game of baseball and subsequent barbeque. So, it is quite possible that our clueless colleague might just wonder about the omission of Tachanun on Lag B’Omer.

Hopefully, by showcasing these relatively “Unknown Days”, this article should help raise awareness and appreciation of them and their customs. Incredibly, as we are climbing upwards in this unique time period of Sefiras HaOmer, in anticipation of Kabbalas HaTorah, Hashem has given us an opportunity to observe a few special yemei tefilla. May we be zocheh to utilize them to their utmost!

Good Shabbos

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■ WEEKLY CLASSES (see website for more detail)

- » Morning Gemara Makkos for men (M-Fr, 6-6:35A)
- » Gemara for Dummies for men (M-Thurs, 6:15-7P)
- » 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 Made in Heaven for men (Monday 7:15-8:00P)
- » Marriage Made in Heaven for women (Tuesday 7:15-8:00P)
- » Shabbos in Halacha for women with Rabbi Bodenheimer (Wed 7-8 PM)
- » Tanya for men & women with Rabbi Shapiro (Thur 8:00-9:00P)

All classes at 7103 Mumford Ct., except where indicated