



CONGREGATION TORAS CHAIM

An intimate space... Grow at your pace.

Aug 8-9, 2014 ■ 13 Av, 5774 ■ Shabbos Parshas Vaeschanan, Nachamu
Candlelighting: 8:01P ■ Shabbos Ends 9:08P

Kiddush this Shabbos is sponsored by the shul. 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, Aug 8th

- » Mincha/Kabbalos Shabbos/Maariv-7:00P
- » Candlelighting-8:01P

Shabbos Day, Aug 9th

- » Shacharis-8:30A
- » Mommy & Me at Sutkin Home (BYOS)-9:45 AM
- » Chumash Shiur (for men & women)-6:50P
- » Mincha-7:50P
- » Shabbos Ends-9:08P

■ WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

- » Shacharis Sunday-8:00A
- » **Mincha-6:00P / Maariv-9:00P (Sunday-Thursday)**
- » Mesilas Yesharim (Path of the Just)-every night at 9:15P

■ REFUAH SHELAIMA

MEN

- » Yitzchok ben Klara (Mechutan to Sandy Kadish)
- » Chaim Yaakov ben Soroh (Bob Day)
- » Yoseif Yitzchok ben Yehudis Chaya (Brother in Law of Yoseif Meir Rich)
- » Mattisyahu Chaim ben Ettl (HaRav Mattisyahu Solomon)

WOMEN

- » Yenta Leah bas Shayna (Mother of Lori Jarmel)
- » Chava Fruma bas Bryna (Mother in Law of Sandy Kadish)
- » Ella bas Naomi (Cousin of Naomi Goldberg)

■ WHAT'S NU AT CTC

- » **SEED BBQ for Entire Family:** Save The Date (and your appetite): This Sunday, August 10, 2014 for a family friendly SEED BBQ Dinner & Siyum, 5:30 PM at the Rich home, 7119 Bremerton Ct., Dallas, TX 75252, for the whole mishpacha. \$10/person, \$36 family max. Please let us know if you plan on attending.
- » **Mommy & Me Restarted:** Please join us on Shabbos morning at the Sutkin Home, 7335 Briarnoll Dr., Dallas, TX 75252, at 9:45 AM, to relax, chat, and watch the kids play in a warm and welcoming environment! For mothers and children of all ages, including toddlers and infants. BYOS! (Bring Your Own Snacks).

■ HOW IRONIC? RABBI LABEL LAM

For what great nation is there that has G-d so near to it, as HASHEM our G-d is at all times that we call upon Him? (Devarim 4:8) Now I know that HASHEM has delivered His anointed. He will answer him from His Holy Heavens, with the mighty deliverance of His right hand. Some rely on chariots and some upon horses, but as for us, the name of HASHEM our G-d we call. (Tehillim 20:7-8)

That Talmud Brochos expresses curiosity about the above verse. When is the time that when HASHEM is near to us? It offers the answer that is at the time when the congregation gathers and prays together. There's something about that group activity that excites Divine involvement. Sometimes though, what the community cries out for with all sincerity seems thwarted. What happens to those prayers? Was it an exercise in futility, G-d forbid! No! We know that no prayer goes unanswered. There have been a lot of gathering together and an intense focus on prayer these past few weeks. Not everyone is in the seat to see results. Sometimes, though, someone in a unique position is offered a clear window into how the power of the many, praying as one, manifests in the real world, and in ways that might otherwise go unnoticed. This all may be pure conjecture but it is certainly compelling and encouraging news for believing hearts. It is more than worthy of telling and retelling.

Here is a true and amazing story told by Ohad Shaked: I received a phone call on Sunday from "A," one of the Iron Dome commanders who was a student of mine about 6 years ago. I was glad he called. "Where can a person learn Torah in Ramat Gan?" He asked me leaving me baffled being that he was far from Torah and Mitzvot. "I'm going to be released in a couple of months, and I want to learn in a Yeshiva - I saw the Almighty with my own eyes!" He said, "Nothing more and nothing less."

"What happened?" I asked him. "A Missile was fired from Gaza. The Iron Dome can detect where the missile is going to fall within a 200

meter radius. This particular Missile was heading to the Azrieli Towers (the equivalent of the Pentagon in the USA), or to the busy railroad tracks. Either way, hundreds could have paid with their lives!

We sent the first "dome" and it missed. Then the second as well as the third dome missed, this is a very rare occurrence. To date, only two other such cases occurred. I was in shock! We had four seconds until there is no way back and the missile would hit. We had already informed and dispatched emergency services, the police and the fire department, to the location." Then the commander spoke excitedly as I kept on listening. "Suddenly, without any preliminary design from the Iron Dome system (which calculates the possible wind currents, etc.) a strong eastern wind blew - a wind that we have no idea where it came from and cast the missile right into the sea. We were all in shock!!! I stood up and started screaming "There is a G-d!" "There is a G-d!" "There is a G-d!!!! I saw this miracle with my own eyes. No one told me about it. It was not reported to me. I saw the Hand of HASHEM fling the missile into the sea!

Of course this was not reported for security reasons, but it's enough to witness the miracles with our own eyes to know there is HASHEM (G-d). I ran to one of the religious soldiers and asked him to help me put on Tefillin. I took it upon myself to keep Shabbat, and that was the very best Shabbat I have ever had." This is what he told me. I was so excited that it even brought a tear to my eye. "Ashrecha" (praiseworthy are you) I said to him, "that you merited to witness this incident and to understand that it's from HASHEM (G-d)!"

Just in case we thought it was the iron dome alone that was protecting our people, now we find out that we have a supernal partner. "U' Mi Doma Lach!?" Who is like You!? Who can be compared to You!? That may be the hidden meaning of the iron dome. How ironic!

■ SMOKING IN HALACHA: RABBI YEHUDA SPITZ

The question of how smoking is viewed through the lens of halacha is not a new one. In fact, there is abundant halachic literature dating back to seventeenth and eighteenth centuries related to the permissibility of smoking. Far from discussing the health issues later associated with this habit, the poskim of the time actually address whether or not one may smoke on Tisha B'Av or other fast days and whether non-kosher ingredients contained in a cigarette are of halachic concern. But the main area where we find smoking discussed is by the Halachos of Yom Tov, where poskim debate whether smoking on Yom Tov is permitted, prohibited, or actually fulfilling a Mitzvah.

It is well-known that on Yom Tov, as opposed to Shabbos, we are allowed to light a fire, provided that it is only kindled by transferring from a preexisting flame, and not by creating a new flame. The Gemara (Beitzah 22b - 23a) discusses whether placing incense on coals, and its by-product, the smoke it causes, are permitted on Yom Tov, due to the kindling and extinguishing issues involved. Many Acharonim drew a parallel from the Gemara's scenario to what must have been a burning issue of the day (and still is): smoking cigarettes on Yom Tov.

The Magen Avraham, as well as the Elya Rabba, Korban Nesanel, Chavos Yair and Chayei Adam, all maintain that smoking is not a 'davar sheshaveh lachol nefesh', 'something that is equally enjoyed by all', a necessary provision to allow dispensation for a Melacha on Yom Tov. Therefore, they all rule that smoking on Yom Tov is prohibited.

However, several other poskim, including the Darchei Noam, and the Chida, disagree with their assessment, averring that smoking does indeed fit this criterion, for several reasons: 1. They deem smoking to be in the category of 'ochel nefesh', (generally used to describe acts related to food preparation) which is permitted on Yom Tov regardless of whether or not it is enjoyed by all. 2. Since the vast majority of people enjoy smoking, it is still considered a 'davar sheshaveh lachol nefesh'.

The famed Pnei Yehoshua (Rav Yaakov Yehoshua Falk), Rav Yaakov Emden, and Rav Yonason Eibeshutz, all raise an additional point to allow smoking on Yom Tov. Astonishingly, they extol the health benefits of smoking! They write that smoking aids digestion, whets the appetite, and improves the body's general wellbeing. Therefore, they conclude that even if some do not actually enjoy smoking, it is nevertheless still considered 'shaveh lachol nefesh'. Rav Yaakov Emden adds that his father, the renowned Chacham Tzvi, restarted smoking on Yom Tov, because otherwise he felt

that he was not properly fulfilling the Mitzvah of Oneg Yom Tov!

Although many poskim argued on all of these points, including the Beis Meir and Zera Emes, other later authorities, including the Pri Megadim, Ben Ish Chai, and Aruch Hashulchan, concurred wholeheartedly. In fact, the Mishna Berura cites a summary of this discussion with no clear cut psak, and concludes simply that 'one may not object to those who smoke on Yom Tov', with a provision to be careful regarding extinguishing the cigarette.

However, in the words of Rav Asher Weiss shlit"א, nowadays the real question is not whether or not smoking is permitted on Yom Tov; it is whether or not smoking is permitted at all!

In 1964, the United States Surgeon General released his initial report stating the health risks associated with smoking. Since then, there have been thousands of scientific studies and reports detailing the hazards of smoking. The Center for Disease Control estimates that one out of every five deaths in America each year is caused by smoking. Other reports estimate that 15% of smokers eventually die of lung cancer. Compounded with the elevated risk of emphysema, stroke and coronary disease, studies indicate that smokers face a much higher mortality rate.

Now that we are aware of the true "health benefits" of smoking, the question is whether or not there remains a hetter to engage in this socially acceptable self-destructive behavior.

The Gadol HaDor, Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l, in a brief teshuva dated several months after the Surgeon General's initial report, wrote that although it is certainly appropriate to abstain from smoking, nevertheless, one cannot say that smoking is outright assur, as there are many people that smoke. Therefore, smokers fit into the category of 'shomer pesaim Hashem', 'Hashem watches over fools.' Rav Moshe adds that especially since many Gedolim smoked, it is impossible to say that such an act is truly forbidden. This responsum seems to be the primary justification for many a smoker.

Several other contemporary authorities wrote similarly, explaining that although it may not be proper to smoke, it still is not truly prohibited by halacha. Yet, subsequently, and as the knowledge of the health risks associated with smoking became more widespread and universally acknowledged, and the number of smokers starting dropping, many of these poskim changed their psak to reflect the emerging reality, using extremely harsh terms to decry smoking, with many authorities outright forbidding it.

These contemporary authorities include Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l, the Tzitz Eliezer, Rav Ben Tzion Abba Shaul zt"l, and Rav Ovadia Yosef zt"l, who, contrary to their earlier psakim, in their later rulings all came out strongly against smoking. Other poskim, including Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l, the Debreciner Rav zt"l, Rav Shmuel HaLevi Vosner, Rav Chaim Kanievsky, Rav Moshe Sternbuch, the Rivevos Efraim zt"l, and Rav Asher Weiss, wrote unequivocally about the dangers of smoking and how it is not permitted, with some even referring to smoking as 'suicidal'.

In fact, many Gedolim, including Rav Elyashiv zt"l, Rav Aharon Yehuda Leib Steinman, Rav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz zt"l, Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro zt"l, Rav Nissim Karelitz, and Rav Shmuel Auerbach, recently (in Av 2004) signed a Kol Koreh against smoking, even imploring those who do smoke to do everything in their power to stop.

Although it is known that many Gedolim smoked (and do smoke), it is highly probable that they started before the risks were known, and now simply cannot quit, due to their nicotine addiction. If they would be able to do so, they certainly would. Anecdotally, this author's Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Leib Bakst zt"l, quit cold turkey after a doctor personally explained the health risks of smoking to him. Even mv"r Rav Yaakov Blau zt"l (of the Eida Chareidis), a tremendous Gaon and quintessential old-time Yerushalmi (heavy smoker), and the Dejer Rebbe of Miami, Rav Yehuda Paneth zt"l, both attempted to cut down in their later years.

In fact, even Rav Moshe himself, in subsequent teshuvos dated

1981, took a much stronger stance against smoking due to the health risks involved. Although he still would not call smoking outright assur, he nonetheless rules that due to the dangers of second-hand smoke, it is forbidden to smoke where it will bother others (a psak later echoed by other authorities), and concludes with an exhortation that everyone, especially Bnei Torah, should not begin to smoke due to the chashash sakana, adding that it is assur to 'get addicted'. It may be interesting to note that many Bnei Yeshiva, who would never dream of relying on Rav Moshe's hetter regarding Chalav Stam, paradoxically seemingly have no qualms relying on his hetter for 'lighting up', even though the wording of his halachic dispensation is quite similar.

Over a hundred years ago, the Chofetz Chaim expressed his dismay that 'weak' people smoked, even though the doctors of the time clearly informed them of the great health risk involved. He strongly condemned smoking where it was found to be injurious to health.

Additionally, the Rambam writes that one should distance himself from any activity that can cause his body harm. Furthermore, while addressing the requirement of avoiding dangerous activities due to the dictum of 'chamira sakanta m'issura' (matters of danger are to be treated more stringently than prohibitions), the Rema stresses that we should be further concerned with a possible danger (safek) above and beyond a possible prohibition. All of the above would certainly apply to smoking.

Although with many apparently suffering from 'ostrich syndrome', and others claiming to follow the Pnei Yehoshua since he predated the Surgeon General by several centuries, nowadays, with medical science conclusively proving the dangers of smoking, and with so many prominent authorities having issued rulings forbidding it, one who embarks on a smoking 'career' does not seem to actually have the staunch halachic backing he might assume he does. 'Venishmartem Me'od L'Nafshoseichem' does not apply exclusively to others.

■ PARSHA Q&A: VAESCHANAN

1. "And I prayed to Hashem at that time." Why "at that time"? 3:23 - Defeating Sichon and Og, whose lands were part of Eretz Canaan, Moshe thought perhaps Hashem had annulled the vow against his entering the Land.
2. What characteristic trait is represented by Hashem's "strong hand"? 3:24 - His willingness to forgive.
3. What is ha'levanon? 3:25 - Ha'levanon means the Beit Hamikdash, which makes "white" (lavan), i.e., atones for, the Jewish People.
4. What did Hashem tell Yehoshua after the battle of Ai? 3:28 - Yehoshua must lead the army into battle.
5. What will happen if the Jewish People fail to keep the mitzvot properly? 4:9 - The non-Jewish world will regard them as foolish.
6. How did the decree that Moshe not enter the Land affect him even in death? 4:22 - Even his remains weren't buried in the Land.
7. What is hinted by the word v'noshantem? 4:25 - The gematria of v'noshantem, 852, hints at the number of years until the first exile.
8. Why were the Jewish People exiled two years earlier than indicated by Moshe's prophecy? 4:25 - So that the rest of the prophecy "that you shall utterly perish" would not be fulfilled.
9. "You'll serve man-made gods." Is this literal? 4:28 - No. It means you'll serve others who serve idols.
10. Why is east called mizrach? 4:41 - It's the direction from which the sun shines (mizrach means shining).
11. "Keep the Shabbat day as I have commanded you." When had Hashem previously commanded us to keep Shabbat? 5:13 - Before Matan Torah, at Marah. (Shmot 15:25)
12. Where did the Jewish People first receive the command to honor parents? 5:16 - At Marah. (Shmot 15:25).

Good Shabbos

■ SHABBOS SCHEDULE

Friday Night, Aug 8th

» Mincha/Kabbalos Shabbos/Maariv-7:00P

» Candlelighting-8:01P

Shabbos Day, Aug 9th

» Shacharis-8:30A

» Mommy & Me at Sutkin Home (BYOS)-9:45 AM

» Chumash Shiur (for men & women)-6:50P

» Mincha-7:50P

» Shabbos Ends-9:08P

■ WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

» Shacharis Sunday-8:00A

» **Mincha-6:00P / Maariv-9:00P (Sunday-Thursday)**

» Mesilas Yesharim (Path of the Just)-every night at 9:15P

■ 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)

» Chumash for men & women (Shabbos one hr before mincha)

» Hilchos Taaruvos for men (Sunday 6:30-8:00A)

» Marriage Made in Heaven for men (Monday 7:15-8:00P)

» Marriage Made in Heaven for women (Tuesday 7:15-8:00P)

All classes at 7103 Mumford Ct., except where indicated