



# CONGREGATION TORAS CHAIM

An intimate space...Grow at your pace.

May 1-2, 2015 ▪ 13 Iyar, 5775 ▪ Shabbos Acharei Mos - Kedoshim, 28<sup>th</sup> Omer  
Candlelighting: 7:51P (Preferably light by 7:25P) ▪ Shabbos Ends 9:00P

Kiddush this Shabbos is sponsored by the members of the Guarantee Kiddush Club: Wes & Tricia Sutkin, Yaakov & Susan Rich, Ben & Lauren Nise, Charlotte Day, David Fisher, Ari & Naomi Goldberg & Eli Goldberg. 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, May 1<sup>st</sup>

- » Mincha/Kabbalos Shabbos/Maariv-7:00P
- » Candlelighting-7:51P (Preferably light by 7:25P)

### Shabbos Day, May 2<sup>nd</sup>

- » Shacharis-8:30A
- » Junior Congregation for boys-9:30A
- » Chumash Shiur (for men & women)-6:40P
- » Pirchei for Boys (ages 8 and up) with Mr. Yehuda Harper-6:40P
- » Mincha/Shalosh Seudos for men-7:40P at shul
- » Shalosh Seudos for women-7:40P at Rich home
- » Shabbos Ends-9:00P

## ■ WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

- » Sunday Shacharis-8A
- » Weekday Shacharis-6:40A
- » Mincha-6:00P / Maariv-9:00P (Sunday-Thursday)

## ■ REFUAH SHELAIMA

### MEN

- » Yechiel Mordechai ben Devorah (Brother of Ken Jarmel)
- » Itai ben Shoshana (Son of Ehoud & Shoshana Wilson)
- » Michael ben Shoshana Gittel (Michael Medved)
- » Yoseif Yitzchok ben Yehudis Chaya (Brother in Law of Yoseif Meir Rich)
- » Mattisyahu Chaim ben Ettel (HaRav Mattisyahu Solomon)

### WOMEN

- » Brocha bas Sora (Mother of Hadassah Klug)
- » Yenta Leah bas Shayna (Mother of Lori Jarmel)

## ■ WHAT'S NU AT CTC

- » **2015 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. Thursday, May 7, 2015, 5:30 – 7:30 PM at the Rich family home, 7119 Bremerton Ct., Dallas, TX 75252. Highlights include: Hamburgers, Hotdogs, salads and more. Pairs Horseshoe Tournament for all ages. Thursday, May 7, 2015, from 5:30 – 7:30 PM
  - In Advance: \$30 Family Max. \$10 Per Person
  - At the door: \$35 Family Max. \$15 per person.
- » **New Shul Configuration:** We are actively getting bids to build out a beautiful Ezras Nashim by opening up the wall in the back of the shul. This includes knocking down the wall that separates the coat room and the Junior Congregation room, and installing a new floor. These are exciting times. We will need everyone's physical, emotional and financial support. Please share any questions, concerns or excitement you may have with Rabbi Rich or Ben Nise.
- » **Upcoming Shabbaton with Rabbi Lazer Brody:** May 15-16, 2015. You may enjoy a private dinner with Rabbi Brody at the Rich home for a donation of \$100/person or \$250/family. Sponsors will be publicly recognized for their great generosity. The Oneg Shabbos/Shiur for men and women will be at the Ekshtut home following dinner.

## ■ OR DOES IT EXPLODE? RABBI LABEL LAM

...and you should love your neighbor as yourself... (Vayikra 19:18)

Few words are more universally recognized and ring more true! However, what does it mean and how is it to be fulfilled exactly? That is a bigger subject but not necessarily more complex.

A Russian peasant farmer who had never left the small and parochial surroundings of his town had occasion to come to the big city of Moscow. He arrived at the elegant hotel with mud on his boots and overalls, looking completely disheveled. The man at the desk assigned him to a room on the top floor and treated him as any other paying customer. With key in hand and he started the long climb to the hotel room.

On the first landing there was a full-length mirror. The man, who had never seen himself before, was suddenly startled and frightened by the imposing image before him. He growled and barked to scare him away only to find that the image in the mirror threatened and shouted back the same. He ran to the next floor and confronted the fearsome giant, again exchanging harsh looks, and almost coming to blows. On the third floor they stood nose to nose and exchanged simultaneous insults as a deepening

war-like attitude was taking root in 'both of them'.

Realizing that he could not escape this ugly beast-like fellow who was aggressively stalking him in the hotel, he ran quickly back to the lobby and the front desk to file a complaint. After having been given a detailed description of the perpetrator, the man at the desk understood that he had met the enemy and it was the man in the mirror. So as to save the face of his guest and to disengage the hostility he offered simple advice. "The fellow whom you confronted is here to protect people. He is really quite harmless. Trust me. If you will show him a harsh and angry countenance he will do the same. However if when you see him you just smile pleasantly and continue on your way he will nod and smile at you as well. Enjoy the rest of your stay." That's what he did and perhaps not so remarkably it worked.

It may be the very same idea of the wisest man, King Solomon, "Like the reflection of a face to a face in water so is the heart of one man to another."

An idea occurred to me that has broad and practical implications, and it may just explain loads of human phenomena on open display today. The Commandment - "Love your neighbor as yourself!" is not only a mandate to do but a simple fact of life. You can only love another to the extent you love yourself. If you witness a person, or a segment of society, or an entire culture destroying and afflicting willful harm, it is a grand projection of a profound lack of self-love, and perhaps even a deep self-loathing. After all, life is self-portrait! Learning to appreciate ourselves therefore, is a primary responsibility we have not just for ourselves but for the benefit of others as well.

A clever Rabbi said, "If someone does not love themselves, then I don't want them to love me!" I asked a famous psychologist why people who have been abused have a perverse tendency to abuse in turn. He quoted a phrase, "Hurt people hurt people!" What is the biggest hurt of all? Sometimes it is a self-afflicted wound of passivity and early resignation. The whole gauntlet of the world was created to avoid what the Zohar calls the "Bread of Shame". A person should receive even the ultra-delights of the Next World for nothing! Earning with legitimate effort is the sweetest fruit. Nothing beats living out our positive purpose on the planet. Taking with no hope to return is the ultimate corruption of the soul and the biggest hurt. The first obligation in loving a neighbor therefore is to love your- self! To love our self is to be active and effortful in developing your G-d given potential and enjoying the sweet feeling of real accomplishment.

When potential is unused does it soundly sleep or turn on the world with hostility? The poet Langston Hughes writes, "What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore-- And then run? Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over-- like a syrupy sweet? Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it explode?"

There is a widespread myth, especially among secular American Jews, that a Jew with a tattoo may not be buried in a Jewish cemetery. This prevalent belief, whose origin possibly lies with Jewish Bubbies wanting to ensure that their grandchildren did not stray too far from the proper path, is truly nothing more than a common misconception with absolutely no basis in Jewish law. Jewish burial is not dependant on whether or not one violated Torah law, and tattooing is no different in this matter than any other Biblical prohibition.

## ■ THE TATTOO TABOO AND PERMANENT MAKEUP TOO: RABBI YEHUDA SPITZ

This mistaken belief was personally hammered home to this author several years back, when my chavrusa, the indefatigable Rabbi Jeff Seidel, requested our hosting several secular youth for a Rosh Hashana meal. One stood out in particular, due both to his gargantuan buff size, as well as his every movement screaming military. This former U.S. soldier, in Jerusalem discovering his roots after returning from a tour of duty in Afghanistan, sported a few tattoos. Our four year-old daughter stared fascinated at the artwork along his arms and asked innocently why he had colored on himself. He replied, (as he dipped his challah into sugar), that it was a "mistake", but she shouldn't worry because he was going to get them taken off since he wanted to be buried in a Jewish cemetery.

**The Source** The Torah states, "You shall not etch a tattoo on yourselves, I am Hashem". This prohibition only applies if the individual performs a two-step process, perforating the skin and filling the resulting hole(s) with ink, causing the mark to become (at least semi-) permanent.

The Mishna and Gemara clarify that the Torah attached the extra “I am Hashem” to this proscription, demonstrating the significance that is inherent in this prohibition, as tattooing is connected to idolatry. The Rambam, Sefer Hachinuch, and Tur explain that this prohibition originated as a Jewish response to idol worship and paganism, as it was common practice for them to tattoo themselves, essentially branding themselves publicly as idolaters, enslaved to whichever god they served. Judaism prohibited tattoos entirely, in order to completely disassociate itself from other religions.

**Micro-pigmentation** Micro-pigmentation, also known as derma-pigmentation or permanent make-up, is a recent development in the world of beauty aids. This process entails a needle depositing colored pigments into the skin's dermal layer, the layer between the permanent base layer (where full tattoos are done, making them permanent) and the constantly changing outer layer, the epidermis. This procedure, usually done on the lips and around the eyes, giving a “just made-up” look, eliminates the need for tedious daily make-up application, and is semi-permanent, lasting between three to five years. The question becomes, is derma-pigmentation permitted by Torah law, or is it intrinsically just another form of prohibited tattooing?

The answer is based on understanding several nuances in the Biblical prohibition.

**What is Writing?** The term used by the Torah to refer to tattooing, is “Kesoves ka’ka”, literally “writing incisions”. The fact that the Torah calls tattooing a form of writing leads many Rishonim to infer that the Biblical prohibition expressly refers to writing at least one actual letter. Others do not accept this conjecture, and maintain that all tattooing is assur min HaTorah. However, all agree any other type of tattoo such as a picture or shape would still be forbidden, at least Rabbinically.

**Pondering Permanence** One of a proper tattoo's hallmarks is its permanence, with a lifetime guarantee. This is due to ink being injected deep in the subcutaneous dermis, and showing through the epidermis (outer layer of skin). Many Rishonim therefore conclude that the Biblical prohibition specifically refers to a permanent tattoo which will last a lifetime; all other tattoos involving skin piercing would only be prohibited Rabbinically. However, it must be noted that other Rishonim make no mention of such a condition of permanence in the original Biblical prohibition.

**Idolrous Intent** Additionally, it is possible that one violates the prohibition of tattooing on a Biblical level only if his intention is for idolatry. As mentioned previously, one of the purposes of this commandment was to noticeably keep the Jews separate from their pagan and idolatrous neighbors. Several authorities, including the Chasam Sofer, surmise that if one would tattoo himself for an entirely different purpose, he would have violated a Rabbinic injunction against tattooing and not the full Biblical one. Yet, other authorities are hesitant to recognize this supposition and maintain that intent is irrelevant; all tattooing is assur min HaTorah.

**Managing Micro-pigmentation** So where does that leave us with micro-pigmentation? It would seem that at the very least it would fall under the Rabbinic prohibition of tattooing, if not the full Biblical one. Yet, dependant on how the Rishonim understood the Biblical prohibition, there are some mitigating factors. First of all, cosmetic tattooing of permanent make-up is not “written” in letters, nor is it actually permanent, instead lasting for several years. Additionally, since there is no idolatrous intent, rather its being performed in the name of beauty, has led several authorities to permit its use. However, the vast majority of contemporary authorities reject such leniency, with the near unanimous view forbidding such procedures, maintaining that even with such rationales, derma-pigmentation would still, at the very least, fall under the Rabbinic prohibition of tattooing.

Yet, in case of extraordinary circumstances, such as pressing medical need, or preserving human dignity (Kavod Habrios) such as scar removal or blemish correction, many contemporary authorities are inclined to permit such procedures, as according to most Rishonim cosmetic tattooing would merely violate a Rabbinic injunction, and the

Gemara states “one may violate a Rabbinic prohibition to preserve human dignity”. This would be similar to undergoing elective cosmetic corrective surgery, which would be permitted, even though there is a prohibition against inflicting a wound upon oneself. However, the consensus is that “just for the sake of beauty” does not seem to be enough of a reason to allow a halachic dispensation for cosmetic tattooing.

To sum up the Torah perspective on the matter, I quote the words of mv”r Rabbi Yonason Wiener in a related interview with the Jerusalem Post, “The ancient Greeks worshipped their bodies and tried to annihilate the small Jewish minority who saw man as more than muscle and flesh. This was a battle of superficiality against spiritually. Tattooing represents the Greek ideal that beauty is skin deep. We won the battle of Chanuka but the war continues to this day. The Jewish religion is more than skin deep!!”

#### ■ PARSHA Q&A: ACHAREI MOS-KEDOSHIM

##### ACHAREI MOS

1. Why does the Torah emphasize that Parshas Acharei Mos was taught after the death of Aaron's sons? 16:1 - To strengthen the warning not to enter the Kodesh Kodashim except on Yom Kippur.
2. What is the punishment for a Kohen Gadol who inappropriately enters the Kodesh Kodashim? 16:2 - Death.
3. How long did the first Beis Hamikdash exist? 16:3 - 410 years.
4. What did the Kohen Gadol wear when he entered the Kodesh Kodashim? 16:4 - Only the four linen garments worn by an ordinary Kohen.
5. How many times did the Kohen Gadol change his clothing and immerse in the mikveh on Yom Kippur? 16:4 - Five times.
6. How many times did he wash his hands and feet from the Kiyor (copper laver)? 16:4 - Ten times.
7. The Kohen Gadol offered a bull Chatas to atone for himself and his household. Who paid for it? 16:6 - The Kohen Gadol.
8. One of the goats that was chosen by lot went to Azazel. What is Azazel? 16:8 - A jagged cliff.

##### KEDOSHIM

9. Why was Parshat Kedoshim said in front of all the Jewish People? 19:2 - Because the fundamental teachings of the Torah are contained in this Parsha.
10. Why does the Torah mention the duty to honor one's father before it mentions the duty to honor one's mother? 19:3 - Since it is more natural to honor one's mother, the Torah stresses the obligation to honor one's father.
11. Why is the command to fear one's parents followed by the command to keep Shabbat? 19:3 - To teach that one must not violate Torah law even at the command of one's parents.
12. Why does Shabbat observance supersede honoring parents? 19:3 - Because the parents are also commanded by Hashem to observe Shabbat. Parents deserve great honor, but not at the “expense” of Hashem's honor.
13. What is “leket?” 19:9 - “Leket” is one or two stalks of grain accidentally dropped while harvesting. They are left for the poor.
14. In Shemot 20:13, the Torah commands “Do not steal.” What does the Torah add when it commands in Vayikra 19:11 “Do not steal?” 19:11 - The Torah in Vayikra prohibits monetary theft. In Shemot it prohibits kidnapping.
15. “Do not do wrong to your neighbor” (19:13). To what “wrong” is the Torah referring? 19:13 - Withholding wages from a worker.
16. By when must you pay someone who worked for you during the day? 19:13 - Before the following dawn.

# Good Shabbos

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#### ■ WEEKLY CLASSES (see website for more detail)

- » Before Shacharis Gemara Rosh Hashana for men (M-Fr, 6-6:35A)
- » NQ Daf HaYomi Succah for men (Sunday-Thursdays 8-9P)
- » Chumash for men & women (Shabbos one hr before mincha)
- » Hilchos Taaruvos for men (Sunday 7:00-8:00A)
- » Supercharge Your Sundays for men (Sunday after Shacharis for 45 mins. with R' Noach Klug)
- » Marriage Chaburah for men (Monday 7:15-8:00P)
- » Marriage Chaburah for women (Tuesday 7:15-8:00P)