



CONGREGATION TORAS CHAIM

An intimate space... Grow at your pace.

October 30-31, 2015 ■ 18 Cheshvan, 5776 ■ Shabbos Vayeira
Candlelighting: 6:20P ■ Shabbos Ends 7:27P

Kiddush this Shabbos is sponsored by the members of the Guarantee Kiddush Club: Wes & Tricia Sutkin, Yaakov & Susan Rich, Ben & Lauren Nise, Chana Esther 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, October 30th

- » Mincha/Kabbalos Shabbos/Maariv-6:20P
- » Candlelighting-6:20P

Shabbos Day, October 31st

- » Shacharis-8:30A
- » Junior Congregation for boys in shul-9:30A
- » Chumas class for men & women -5:05P
- » Pirchei for Boys (ages 8 and up) with Mr. Yehuda Harper in shul-5:05P
- » Mincha/Shalosh Seudos for men in shul-6:05P
- » Shalosh Seudos for women at the Rich home-6:05P
- » Maariv/Shabbos Ends-7:27P
- » Fall Back: Move clocks back one hour-2A

■ WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

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

■ REFUAH SHELAIMA

MEN

- » Dovid Aharon ben Devorah (David Wills)
- » Yisroel Michoel ben Shulamis (Father of Chani Tkatch)
- » Yechiel Mordechai ben Devorah (Brother of Ken Jarmel)
- » Itai ben Shoshana (Son of Ehoud & Shoshana Wilson)
- » 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

- » **Lots of Nu's at CTC:** The Pool is filled and landscaped, the tree is trimmed, and construction has started on our new Mommy & Me/ Kiddush Extension Room. In Texas (or at least at CTC, when it rains, it pours!) Looking forward to scheduling our first outdoor event in amazingly beautiful backyard.
- » **New Class Announcement:** The results of our online poll are in. Overwhelmingly the consensus is to have the shiur Wednesdays, 11:30 AM -12:15 PM. So beginning Wednesday, November 4, 2015, 11:30 AM -12:15 PM, Congregation Toras Chaim will hold a weekly, in-depth Hilchos Shabbos shiur for women, open to the community. We will stop just in time for TSDS carpool. The shiur will be given by Rabbi Yaakov Rich, at Congregation Toras Chaim, 7103 Mumford Ct., Dallas, TX 75252. Looking forward.
- » **Bnos at CTC:** As part of our Year of the Family initiative CTC announces Bnos Yisrael, a new program for girls ages Pre-K and up, which began last Shabbos, October 24, 2015. Each month, we will have a special activity for girls...and any mothers who want to join. We hope to see you.

Tentative Schedule:

- Shabbos, October 24 – Shalosh Seudos at Rich home at 6:15 PM
- Sunday, November 22 – Bake Chanukah Cookies for Shabbos Chanuka Kiddush at Shul at 10 AM
- Friday, December 25 – Challah baking at Rich home at 10 AM
- Motzai Shabbos, January 17 – Melave Malka with craft project at Rich home
- Sunday, February 21 – Park or Indoor Exercise at Shul at 1:30 PM
- Sunday, March 20 – Purim Project at Shul at 10 AM
- Sunday, April 10 – Clean Shul for Pesach 10 AM
- Shabbos, May 21 – Shalosh Seudos at Rich home, Time TBA
- » **Back By Popular Demand:** The Dallas Mahjong Tournament to benefit Yad Eliezer. The tournament will take place on Sunday, Nov. 15, 2015, at Congregation Ohev Shalom, 6821 McCallum Blvd., Dallas, TX 75252 (NW corner of McCallum and Hillcrest) This includes a catered lunch, a tax receipt, a small gift (for everyone!) and a chance to win great prizes! - not to mention an incredible feeling of knowing that you just helped feed a hungry child in Israel! For a nominal fee, we are offering babysitting this year. There will also be an optional Chinese auction after the tournament. We will be playing according to American Mahjong standards. We

ask that all participants arrive no later than 11:30. Lunch will be served at 1 PM. We look forward to greeting you there. For more information, please contact: Chayamiria Taurog at 972-735-0274, chayamiriam@yadeliezer.org. Please make sure that each playing participant registers separately. Please indicate in the comment box whether you are a beginner or not. Deadline for registration (with payment) - Nov.10, 2015

■ WORTH CELEBRATING: RABBI LABEL LAM

And the child (Yitzchok) grew and was (vayigmal) weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Yizchok was (higamel) weaned. (Breishis 21:8)

Why did Avraham make such a great celebration to honor the day that Yitzchok did not need to nurse from his mother Sara? Why does the Holy Torah record it? Why did Avraham not make a party or a feast upon successfully feeding guests? That was certainly a great accomplishment! What was insufficient about that?

The key may be found in the second Mishne in Pirke Avos. There it is recorded there that Shimon HaTzadik was from the remnant of the Men of the Great Assembly and he used to say: "On three things the world stands on Torah, Service (Avodah), and Acts of Kindliness (Gemilas Chassadim)." What is "Gemilas Chassadim"? How is it different from just plain "Chessed"? Why not one word?

To understand "Gemilas Chassadim" we need to know what the word "gemilas" adds to the equation. The root word is "Gimel", "Mem" and "Lamed".

A clue to a letters value and meaning is to be found in the first time a word in Torah begins with that letter (discounting of course the prefix). "Gimel" is found in reference to the "meoros hagedolim- the great lights" and then the taninim hagedolim- the great sea monsters. Gimel implies growth, expansion- GADOL! Therefore words beginning with "Gimel" will likely have to do with growing great in size or number, quantity or quality.

The word "Gimel" – the name of the letter is another hint. The second part of the word "Mal" (after gimel) means to cut, as we use in reference to the procedure of the circumcision. How do the concepts of growing and cutting teach us about the word GIMEL?

GIMEL is also made of the same consonants that spell "Gamal" – a camel. What is the specialty of a camel? We all know that a camel is best suited to travel across arid lands because he can drink and store large amounts of water and remain for long periods of time removed from his source. He fuels up and is then able to be cut or dislocated from his source.

A tree holds its fruit no longer than is necessary. When it is ripe and ready to reproduce it is released. This perhaps is the model of "Gemilas Chassadim" Similarly a parent and a teacher hope that the child will one day walk on their own passing on what they have received. It is neither a business deal with a quid pro quo nor a power play to hold others in a position of permanent dependency. That's no ideal!

Gemilas Chassadim is a complete program to bring another to maturity, with the ability to give in kind. We take with the hope to give and give in order to create a generation of givers. It's no mistake that the first time that the word with the root GIMAL-MEM-LAMED is found is: "And the child (Yitzchok) grew and was (vayigmal) weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Yizchok was (higamel) weaned." What's the big deal? This is a primary example of Gemilas Chassadim!

Like the Chinese proverb that says, "Give a man a fish and he has fish for a day! Teach him to fish and he has fish for a lifetime!" Avraham was portrayed earlier as the pillar of Chessed- kindness reaching out to the world, but this was not good enough.

Feeding people is not the ultimate good. To raise a child, a student, or a nation to become independent- capable givers themselves is Gemilas Chassadim. That's the stuff on which the world stands and it's worth celebrating.

■ MAYIM ACHRONIM CHOVA: RABBI YEHUDA SPITZ

In Parshas Lech Lecha, we are introduced to an interesting personality named Bera, Melech S'dom, the King of S'dom. While he was certainly not known for his morality and impeccable character, nonetheless, his title, as well as the destruction of his home town using salt, described in

Parshas Vayera, seemingly references a catalyst to a Mitzvah that many are wholly unfamiliar with: its homonym, 'Melach S'domis' or S'dom Salt. The Mitzva I am referring to is Mayim Acharonim, the handwashing before Birchas HaMazon.

Mitzva?! I am sure that many readers are shaking their heads in disbelief, wondering how I can call this known chumra a Mitzva. This common, but slightly mistaken, belief was made evident to this author when a neighborhood housewife recently asked an interesting sheilah. Apparently, after hosting several friends and relatives for a Shabbos Seudah, she washed Mayim Acharonim along with the men, earning her much scorn and ridicule. The incredulous men commented that their washing Mayim Acharonim was only a chumra, and there obviously was no basis for a woman to do it as well. Our distraught domestic denizen wanted to know who acted correctly, and was astounded when I replied that technically speaking they both were.

A Bit of Background Mayim Acharonim has an interesting background, as it actually has two entirely different sources and rationales mandating it. The first, in Gemara Brachos, discussing the source for ritual handwashing, explains that one can not make a bracha with dirty hands, and cites the pasuk in Parshas Kedoshim "V'hiskadeeshtem, V'heyisem Kedoshim", "And you shall sanctify yourselves, and be holy". The Gemara clarifies that "And you shall sanctify yourselves" refers to washing the hands before the meal, Mayim Rishonim, and "and be holy" refers to washing the hands after the meal, Mayim Acharonim. In other words, by washing our hands before making a bracha (in this case before Bentching), we are properly sanctifying ourselves.

The second source, Gemara Chullin, on the other hand, refers to Mayim Acharonim as a "chova", an outright obligation. The Gemara elucidates that there is a certain type of salt in the world, called 'Melach S'domis', (actually one of the additions needed to make the Ketores properly) that is so caustic, that if it gets into a person's eyes, it can cause blindness^rl. Since one is supposed to have salt at his table at every meal, Chazal were worried that this specific type of salt may have found its way onto our tables and consequently could cause someone to become blind if he rubs his eyes after eating. Therefore, as a way to mitigate this salt's potentially devastating effects, they mandated handwashing after eating, known colloquially as Mayim Acharonim.

In fact, the Gemara's words are codified as halacha by the Tur and Shulchan Aruch, stating simply "Mayim Acharonim Chova". The Rambam as well, writes that it is an obligation due to the potential Sakana involved. As an aside, the Ben Ish Chai posits that when eating, one should say this three word formula, and that way fulfill the halacha of speaking Divrei Torah at a meal.

Chova? Well, if the Gemara, and even the Shulchan Aruch, consider washing Mayim Acharonim an actual obligation, then why do many treat it as a mere stringency? Furthermore, there are those (many of Germanic origin) who claim that their custom is to specifically not wash Mayim Acharonim! Additionally, if it is a binding halacha, why don't women generally observe this washing?

The answer lies in the commentary of the Ba'alei Tosafos to both aforementioned Gemaras. Tosafos comments that 'nowadays, that 'Melach S'domis' is no longer found amongst us, we no longer are accustomed to washing Mayim Acharonim, and one may Bentch without first washing his hands'. In other words, Tosafos maintains that although washing Mayim Acharonim used to be an obligation, since the problematic S'dom Salt was no longer prevalent already in their days, one is no longer required to wash Mayim Acharonim. In fact, not washing for Mayim Acharonim is cited as the common minhag by several Ashkenazic Rishonim, as well as the Levush and the Rema.

An additional rationale for leniency is put forward by the famed Rav Yaakov Emden. He points out that ever since the advent of cutlery, most civilized people (hopefully) do not do the bulk of their eating with

their hands, rather with a fork and spoon. Therefore, he explains, one who eats with silverware (or even plasticware) and did not actually touch his food, has no need to wash Mayim Acharonim.

Interestingly, the Shulchan Aruch cites Tosafos' lenient view as well, at the end of the very same siman where he rules that "Mayim Acharonim Chova"! Several authorities explain his seemingly contradictory intent that indeed nowadays one is no longer mandated to wash Mayim Acharonim. Yet, the Shulchan Aruch is telling us that nevertheless, we still should strive to do this important Mitzvah.

This view is cited by many halachic decisors including the Chayei Adam, Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, Aruch Hashulchan, and Mishna Berura, who relate that although Mayim Acharonim may no longer be obligated by the strict letter of the law, nonetheless, one still should be very stringent with its adherence. Other authorities cite Kabbalistic reasons to be strict with its observance. The Vilna Gaon was known to be extremely makpid on this halacha, referring to it as both, a "Chova" and a "Mitzva", even nowadays.

Wash This Way! Interestingly, authorities debate the proper way to perform washing Mayim Acharonim. One machlokes involves how much water to use. The basic halacha is that this handwashing has no set limit or minimum, rather even a small amount of water is sufficient. However, the Kabbalistic approach mandates only using a small amount of water. Conversely, the Vilna Gaon was makpid to use a full Reviis of water, as he considered Mayim Acharonim a full washing, akin to the Netillas Yadayim required before eating bread (Mayim Rishonim).

Another machlokes revolves around how much of the hand must be washed by Mayim Acharonim. Although the basic halacha only requires from the finger tips to the second knuckle, nevertheless, Kabbalistically speaking, one should wash the entire fingers. A third opinion, that of the Vilna Gaon, is that the whole hand should be washed, as he considered Mayim Acharonim a full Netillas Yadayim. The unifying thread of these disparate shittos is their mandating adherence to the strict performance of Mayim Acharonim.

Women's Role Yet, so far, none of this explains why women commonly do not wash Mayim Acharonim. This "custom" seems to be an anomaly, as technically, women and men share the same obligation in this Mitzvah, and we do not find a halachic codifier making such a distinction.

Several contemporary authorities, including Rav Shmuel HaLevi Wosner and Rav Moshe Sternbuch offer a possible justification. They explain that although women and men were both equally obligated in this Mitzvah, nevertheless, since it is no longer mandated as a strict requirement due to the dearth of 'Melach S'domis', but rather as a proper "minhag", it is entirely possible that women collectively never accepted this stringency upon themselves. Therefore, nowadays they are not required to wash Mayim Acharonim. Indeed, Rav Yonah Mertzbach (Rosh Yeshivas Kol Torah) was quoted as stating that the common minhag for women in Ashkenaz, even among 'Chareidim L'Dvar Hashem', was not to wash Mayim Acharonim.

However, many other contemporary halachic decisors, including Rav Yosef Chaim Zonnenfeld, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg, Rav Ovadia Yosef, Rav Mordechai Eliyahu, Rav Moshe Sternbuch, the Rivevos Efraim, and the Shevet HaKehasi, all rule that regardless of the rationale, women still should be vigilant with washing Mayim Acharonim.

To Wash or Not to Wash? Back to our dilemma. This background is why I informed that harried housewife that technically speaking both she and her relatives were correct. She undeniably had what to rely upon not to wash Mayim Acharonim. Yet, she was definitely correct in making sure to do so anyway. As the Pele Yoetz explains, even if there no longer is a danger posed from salt that blinds our eyes, nevertheless, we still have an obligation to listen to the words of our Chachamim, and not blind ourselves to their wisdom.

Good Shabbos

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■ WEEKLY CLASSES (see website for more detail)

» Before Shacharis Gemara Taanis for men (M-Fr, 6-6:35A)

» NQ Daf HaYomi Moed Kattan for men (Sunday-Thursday 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 women (Tuesday 7:15-8:00P)

» In-Depth Hilchos Shabbos for women (Wed, 11:30-12:15P)