



CONGREGATION TORAS CHAIM

An intimate space...Grow at your pace.

Sept 1-2, 2017 ■ 11 Elul, 5777 ■ Shabbos Ki Seitzei
Mincha: 7P / Candlelighting: 7:33P ■ Shabbos Ends 8:40P

KIDDUSH this Shabbos is sponsored by Shmuel Rothberg in honor of his 30th birthday. “As it says in Pirke Avos (5:22), ‘A 30 year old acquires (full) strength.’ May I merit to have the strength to fulfill Hashem’s will in my 30s and beyond.” **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, Sept 1st

- » Mincha/Kabbalos Shabbos/Maariv – 7P
- » Candlelighting – 7:33P

Shabbos Day, Sept 2nd

- » Shacharis followed by Kiddush – 8:30A
- » CTC Kids with Tricia Sutkin – 10:15A
- » Chumash Shiur for men & women – 6:20P
- » Mincha/Shalosh Seudos for men (shul) – 7:20P
- » Shalosh Seudos for women & young children (Rich home) – 7:20P
- » Maariv/Shabbos Ends – 8:40P

■ WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

- » Sunday Shacharis – 8A
- » Weekday Shacharis – 6:40A
- » Weekday Mincha/Maariv – 7:30P

■ REFUAH SHELAIMA

Men

- » Dovid Chaim ben Tzippora (Brother-In-Law to Tami Ellis)
- » Aryeh Yisroel ben Chantza Rochel (Rabbi Aryeh Feigenbaum)
- » Menachem Mendel ben Sorah (Travis Katz)
- » Zoosav ben Lipke (Father of Suzanne Luftig)
- » Itai ben Shoshana (Son of Ehoud & Shoshana Wilson)

Women

- » Shoshana Elka bas Ettel Dina (Shoshana Strassman)
- » Fanna Leah bas Shulamis (Mother of Wes Sutkin)
- » Leah Esther bas Yenta Leah (Lori Jarmel)
- » Yenta Leah bas Shayna (Mother of Lori Jarmel)

■ WHAT’S NU

- » **Rabbi Eliyahu Heller Pre-Rosh Hashana Shabbaton:** Shabbos, September 8-9, 2017, Congregation Toras Chaim is proud to present a Shabbaton, Change You Can Live With: A Shabbos of Inspiration Focused on Practical, Down-to-Earth Solutions for Heavenly Growth with Rabbi Eliyahu Heller of DATA. (Shabbaton Sponsorship Available for \$1,000). **Speech Times and Topics:** *Class sponsorships are available for \$250 each.* **Friday night:** Rabbi Heller will be speaking in shul on Rule of Victory: A Deeper Look at One of the Most Perplexing Laws of Rosh Hashanah. (Sponsorship Available) **After Kiddush:** Rabbi Heller will speak for men and women on Shofar Secrets: Inspiring Lasting Growth. (Sponsorship Available) **One hour before Mincha:** Rabbi Heller will speak for the men on Rosh Hashanah: Why Two Days? – A Mystical and Practical Approach. (Sponsorship Available) **During Shalosh Seudos:** Rabbi Heller will speak for the men in shul Growth In a Modern World: Is It Possible? (Sponsorship Available) **Family Lunch in Shul** (Free Online Registration Required) All people/families in attendance for Rabbi Heller’s “after kiddush speech” Shofar Secrets: Inspiring Lasting Growth, are invited (no charge) to eat a delicious lunch in shul. Babysitting (Children up to age 4) is available in shul during the speech before lunch.
- » **Amud Cover Dedication Opportunity:** Dear CTC Members & Friends: We have two beautiful Amudim (wooden podiums) in front of the shul (one for the Shaliach Tzibbur and one for the Rabbi) which remain uncovered. Here is an opportunity for someone to memorialize the names of loved ones on the two new velvet covers we will order for the Amudim, in time for the High Holidays. The cost is just \$3000 each. Pennies really considering the amount of merit received for supporting the shul. There is no more fitting and honorable way to give the neshama an aliyah than by embroidering their names on the Amud cover to be seen

and read by all. Please contact Rabbi Yaakov Rich rabbi@toraschaimdallas.org if interested.

■ HOWEVER LONG IT TAKES: RABBI LABEL LAM

When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out in the army, nor shall he be subjected to anything associated with it. He shall remain free for his home for one year and delight his wife, whom he has taken. (Devarim 24:6)

Let us appreciate that here we have a brilliantly sensible Mitzvah. A new husband and wife-duet need time to get to know each other and to build trust. Therefore the groom is exempt from communal service that might take him away from his bride. What a great opportunity is this Shana Rishona – First Year for newlyweds! Before children arrive and life gets more hectic and expensive and pressurized it is crucial that the couple gets to talk things out in longhand so that later they can communicate in shorthand. What once took hours of discussion can later be summarized in a single glance. Wrong assumptions and misunderstandings need time, plenty of time to be carefully untangled and resolved. Later there may not be sufficient time or patience to unpack messy matters carefully. What a gift by the Almighty for every bride and groom!

Reb Wolbe ZTL writes in his Kuntres HaChasanim, that he asked young men what foundation they wanted to build their marriage upon. The most universal answer was two words, “love and understanding.” He then goes on to explain that it is impossible to build a relationship on “love and understanding” because there is not sufficient understanding yet and since love is a byproduct of giving, the real love bank account is miniscule and superficial to begin with. It turns out that “love and understanding” are not the foundations but rather goals and ideals that are realized over time.

Before I got married, more than 32 years ago, I genuinely thought I was a Tzadik. I would frequently stop on the road and give everyone and anyone a ride just ‘cause they were a fellow Yid. A few weeks into marriage I came to a great realization that while I was running my life with a clock, my wife was using a calendar. I liked getting where I needed to go on time and punctuality did not seem to have the same meaning for her. It was a boiling hot summer morning and it was already too late for me to be on time for my study partner after dropping my bride at her work. I was revving the engine and honking for what seemed like eons. Finally she came out smiling as if nothing was wrong, and got into the car with a casual, “OK”.

I sped away at 70 MPH. I was turning corners on two wheels. I thought if I go faster than the speed of light we’d go back in time. On the last turn up a steep-steep hill, we whisked past an elderly lady with two large shopping bags weighing down her arms. As we were speeding by my wife broke the silence, “Maybe we should give her a ride.” Without a moment of hesitation, I responded, “It’s probably the only exercise she ever gets!” When we arrived at the top of the hill and I opened the door in a huff and there was a gentle toned response waiting for me, “Since when are you concerned about other people’s exercise!?” In that one phrase I was exposed. I did not pick up people when I was in a hurry or not in the mood, but only when it was convenient for me.

A dear friend who was married a year before me, told me about a terrible mistake he made in Shana Rishona. He shared it with me so I would not fall into the same trap and he told me to tell others so they can be saved as well. There is a custom that during that first year a husband gets permission from his wife before he goes out - away from home. This fellow was very dutiful and precise about this all during the year. As the sun set on the first year of marriage and “Shana Rishona” was concluding, he stood by the door and declared, “I don’t have to tell you where I’m going now and when I’ll be back.” He left.

Of course he was joking and he was just going out to pray Maariv. When he came home, he found his wife surrounded by a puddle of tears.

She was saying, “You didn’t want to be here with me this whole year!” He called his Rebbe in a panic wondering what he could do to repair the hurt. The Rebbe told him, “You have to start again and do “Shana Rishona” all over again. (He got left back in Shana Rishona!) It’s not a time period. It’s, whenever and however long it takes.

■ OF ELUL, L'DOVID & GOLEMS: RABBI YEHUDA SPITZ

There is near universal Ashkenazic custom during the month of Elul to recite the Chapter of Tehillim (27) “L’Dovid Hashem Ori” during davening, both every morning and evening, and all the way up to Shmini Atzeres[1], as preparation for the Yomim Noraim. This custom is based on the Midrash Shochar Tov[2] that elucidates that various phrases of this chapter contain allusions to the holidays of the repentance period - Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Sukkos, as well as to the month of Elul itself[3].

The Malbim, in his commentary on Tehillim, offers an alternate explanation. In this chapter, Dovid HaMelech, the author of Tehillim, asked to cleave to Hashem and that all obstacles that block coming close to Him should be removed. The Malbim[4] explains that when we strive to do so, Hashem will attach Himself to us with a higher level of personalized supervision. It is thus quite apropos to recite “L’Dovid” during the month of Elul, whose name hints to the acronym “Ani L’dodi V’dodi Li - I am to my beloved and my beloved is to me”(Shir HaShirim Ch. 6, verse 3). Elul is a month which symbolizes our relationship to Hashem, and one in which proper repentance is more readily accepted[5].

Where’s the source? But, the obvious question is where and when did this minhag start? It is not mentioned in the Gemara, nor in the Rishonim, and not even referenced in the Shulchan Aruch or its main commentaries. It seems a bit odd that such a common custom would not stem from a primary source! Much research has been done and many works have been written to try to find the earliest source for this meaningful minhag[6].

Although many erroneously concluded that the original source of reciting “L’Dovid” throughout the entire month of Elul was the controversial ‘Chemdas Yamim’, first printed in 1731, however, history has since proven that an earlier source has been found. Many now attribute this minhag to the noted Kabbalist and famed author of “Amtachas Binyomin”, Rav Binyomin Beinisch Cohen, in his sefer “Shem Tov Kattan[7]”, first printed in 1706. There he writes that one should be scrupulous with reciting “L’Dovid” daily from Rosh Chodesh Elul until after Simchas Torah, averring that this has the potential to avert and even nullify Heavenly decrees.

Who’s Who? Yet, there is possibly an earlier source. In the sefer “Nezer Hakodesh - Minhagei Beis Ropschitz”[8] a story is told about the Baal Shem Tov, where he mentioned a Tzaddik, known as Rav Eliyahu Baal Shem, who had saved the Jews of a certain town from eviction by successfully promising the childless non-Jewish mayor a son within a year. The Baal Shem Tov mentioned that this Tzaddik who lived in the late 1600s, was the one who established the custom of reciting “L’Dovid” during Elul. However, it is unclear whom exactly he was referring to.

Although much detailed information has been obscured with the passage of time, still history has shown that there were two Tzaddikim known by this name[9]. The better known of the two was Rav Eliyahu Baal Shem of Chelm, a talmid of the great Maharshal, Rav Shlomo Luria, and an ancestor of the luminariescommonly known as the Chacham Tzvi (Rav Tzvi Ashkenazi) and his son, the Ya’avetz (Rav Yaakov Emden).

A Golem as a Tzenter? Here is where it gets interesting. Rav Eliyahu Baal Shem of Chelm was best known for being of such stature that he created a Golem[10]. In fact, both of his aforementioned illustrious descendants have written responsa on the topic of the Golem that their grandfather created. The Chid”a[11], in his encyclopedia of Gedolim throughout Jewish history, ‘Shem Gedolim’ also attested to its existence.

But before our readers decry the supernatural turn this article has taken, they should realize that Golems actually do have a place in the

halachic realm as well. The issue that these Gedolim were debating was whether a Golem can count for a minyan! Although the Chacham Tzvi (Shu”t Chacham Tzvi 93) at first remained undecided, his son, Rav Yaakov Emden (Shu”t Sheilas Ya’avetz vol. 2, 82) ruled unequivocally that a Golem cannot count for a minyan! Apparently not just a theoretical topic, it is even cited and debated by such contemporary authorities as the Mishna Berura (55, 4)[12] and the Chazon Ish (Yoreh Deah 116, 1)!

The Mishna Berura does not actually rule, but rather addresses the issue and concludes that it is a safeik; which is actually the main thrust of the Chacham Tzvi’s teshuva – that he personally was undecided as to the proper halacha. Although the majority consensus is that a Golem would not count for a minyan, there were several other authorities who defended the Chacham Tzvi’s logicallyallowing a Golem able to count for a minyan.

The Chazon Ish, conversely, concluded akin to the Ya’avetz’s position, that a Golem would undeniably not be able to count for a minyan, as it not only would be excluded from the rights and privileges of a Jew, but even from those of a human being. One of Rav Yaakov Emden’s main proofs to this is that we find that in order to be considered having a neshama, a creation needs to have the potential for speech [see, for example the Ramban’s commentary to Parshas Bereishis (Ch. 2, verse 7; based on Targum Onkelus ad loc.)], an ability a Golem sorely lacks.

What is lesser known (and actually seemingly unknown to many later authorities, including the Mishna Berura) is that posthumously, another son of the Chacham Tzvi, Rav Meshulem Ashkenazi, in his responsa, appended and printed a later teshuva from his father (Shu”t Divrei HaRav Meshulem vol. 1, 10 s.v. shayach); in it the Chacham Tzvi actually retracted his original position and ruled strictly as well. Either way, and regardless of what one might want to assume about his fellow mispallelim, the vast majority of poskim rule conclusively that a Golem cannot be counted for a minyan[13].

The Second Rav Eliyahu Back to figuring out who originated the recital of “L’Dovid” in Elul. The other Rav Eliyahu Baal Shem was Rav Eliyahu Luentz, known as a master Kabbalist in the 17th century. He authored a seminal volume on the Zohar titled “Aderes Eliyahu”, and was a disciple of my ancestor and namesake, the renowned Maharal M’Prague, (who, as an intresting side point, and incredible works aside, is regrettably nowadays best ‘known’ for having also created a Golem[14]).

In conclusion, although we are left uncertain as to whom the originator of this powerful minhag was, we can rest assured that it has a reliable source. We can thus appreciate the significance of saying this chapter of Tehillim throughout Elul, as it underscores the major goals of the season of repentance.

Postscript: There are a few communities, including many of Germanic origin, and the Chassidic communities of Sanz, Bobov, and Kamarna, however, who do not recite “L’Dovid” during Elul. See Shu”t Divrei Moshe (34), and sefer Minhagei Kamarna, (printed in the back of Shulchan HaTahor; Elul, 381), as well as Likutei Eliezer (pg. 5, footnotes 30 - 31). The Kamarna Rebbe of Yerushalayim, recently told this author that although in his shul “L’Dovid” is recited, as most of his congregation are not his Chassidim and nearly everyone’s custom is to recite it, nevertheless, he personally does not. It is also known that the Vilna Gaon did not approve of this addition to davening (Maaseh Rav 53) as it possibly constitutes ‘tircha d’tzibura’. The general Sefardi minhag as well is not to recite “L’Dovid” specially during Elul, but many nonetheless recite it all year long as an addition after Shacharis; see Rav Mordechai Eliyahu’s Darchei Halacha glosses to the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (128, footnote 4).

Much of this article is based on Rabbi Eliezer Brodt’s fascinating sefer Likutei Eliezer - Ch. 1.

Good Shabbos

■SHABBOS SCHEDULE

Friday Night, Sept 1st

- » Mincha/Kabbalos Shabbos/Maariv – 7P
- » Candlelighting – 7:33P

Shabbos Day, Sept 2nd

- » Shacharis followed by Kiddush – 8:30A
- » CTC Kids with Tricia Sutkin –10:15A
- » Chumash Shiur for men & women – 6:20P
- » Mincha/Shalosh Seudos for men (shul) – 7:20P
- » Shalosh Seudos for women & young children (Rich home) – 7:20P
- » Maariv/Shabbos Ends–8:40P

■WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

- » Sunday Shacharis–8A

- » Weekday Shacharis–6:40A
- » Weekday Mincha/Maariv–7:30P

■CLASSES

- » Hilchos Niddah for men (Sunday 7-8A)
- » Parenting Chaburah for women (Sunday evenings)
- » Before Shacharis Gemara Yevamos for men (M-Fr, 6-6:40A)
- » Sefer Zos Brisi for men (Monday evenings)
- » Gemara Kesuvos for men (Sunday-Thursday evenings)
- » Learn to Learn Gemara (Tue & Thur evenings)
- » Rabbi Heller on the Parsha (Wed evenings)
- » Chumash for men & women (Shabbos 60 mins before mincha)