

# MaNews

Shabbat Parshat Toldot:14

## Laws & Customs

Why do we wash our hands in the morning?

A. In the Holy Temple, the priests would wash their hands before their daily service. Every individual is a priest in the temple of his or her home and heart.

B. While the body rests, the soul ascends heavenward to recharge. Only the most basic soul-powers are left in place—those required for basic bodily functions. The resulting void allows for a negative spiritual state called *tumah* (impurity). Upon awakening, we wash our hands to remove the remaining vestiges of that *tumah*.  
C. During the night, the hands often touched private areas; we therefore wash before praying.

1. Before sleep, prepare a cup of water and an empty basin and place it beside your bed (not beneath).
2. When you wake, after reciting the *Modeh Ani*, wash the right hand until the wrist and then the left hand; repeat, and then repeat again. This washing is called *Netilat Yadayim*.
3. Say the blessing: Blessed are you, L rd our G d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us concerning the washing of the hands.
4. Discard the water ASAP.



## Digging Wells

Isaac's wells were then seized by the Philistines. Sometimes even our most well-intentioned efforts or spiritual labor boomerang, actually strengthening the forces that oppose holiness. We learn from Isaac that we should not be discouraged in the face of such unexpected setbacks, but rather to continue our endeavors, which are certain to eventually succeed.

In particular, "digging wells" can mean digging for the goodness within people who appear to be worth nothing more than stones and mud, in order to reveal the fountain of spirituality and holiness buried beneath their soulless exterior. Just as Isaac dug wells despite the opposition of the Philistines, we should not be discouraged from reaching out to those who deliberately, and even sometimes spitefully, oppose holiness. Even if our initial efforts meet with failure—or worse, our actions actually backfire—we, like Isaac, must continue digging until we uncover those hidden wellsprings.

Questions & Comments should be sent to [MaNews@ymail.com](mailto:MaNews@ymail.com)

כ"ה - כ"ט" מרחשוון

**November 5-6 2010**

**Candle Lighting**

**18:15**

**Shabbat Ends**

**19:09**

**In Honor of the  
Arkus Family**

## Passing a Test

One day, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov said to his disciples:

*"In a nearby village lives a Reb Dovid, a simple Jew who is extremely poor. But despite his poverty, Reb Dovid was determined to acquire a top quality etrog(citron) for the Sukos festival, in order to observe the mitzvah of lulav and etrog in the optimum manner. All year he scraped and saved, denying himself his most essential needs. He then made the long, wearisome trip to the city and returned with an etrog which the richest man in town could not match. "Reb Dovid's wife was furious. With barely a crust of bread to put on the table, her husband goes and spends a small fortune on an etrog! In her rage and frustration she grabbed the etrog and bit off its tip, making it invalid for use on the festival. "Reb Dovid held his peace. He saw the incident as a sign that he is unworthy of such a magnificent etrog. How presumptuous of me, he thought, to believe that a simple Jew such as myself could aspire to such an etrog... "Never since the day that Abraham bound Isaac upon the altar," the Baal Shem Tov concluded his story, "has a man withstood a test with such integrity as Reb Dovid displayed in refusing to be angered."*

## Quotable Quote

"If good is good, is better not better!"  
**Rabbi Yosef**