

# Long Life and Halacha: Mexico City Rabbanim are Latest to Benefit from Comprehensive Chayim Aruchim Presentations

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Mexico City Rabbanim and Hatzala representatives at the Chayim Aruchim Conference in Mexico City.

The Mexico City kehillah was the latest on the map to see its landscape transformed with respect to end-of-life issues through the dedicated work of the Chayim Aruchim organization, a division of Agudath Israel of America.

On Wednesday, 11 Elul, Rav Eliezer Gewirtzman *shlit" a*, Member of Machon Chayim Aruchim, was in Mexico City to deliver two major *shiurim* on an array of pertinent end-of-life issues. The first *shiur* was delivered at Kollel Shevet Achim to its *yungerleit*, who are currently learning *sugyos* pertaining to these issues. The second *shiur* was an intricate four-hour presentation at Bet Haknesset Shaare Shalom to nearly two dozen leading Mexico City *rabbanim* and Hatzolah members. Due to the sensitivity and complexity of these life-and-death *halachos*, and to prevent any misunderstanding, a professional interpreter translated the *shiur* to Spanish as it was delivered.



Rabbi Eliezer Gewirtzman, Member, Machon Chayim Aruchim (Left) and Rabbi Yaakov Nakash of the Magen David Community (Right), sponsors of the Chayim Aruchim Conference for local Rabbanim

Rav Gewirtzman detailed intriguing medical realities regarding common life-threatening conditions, such as strokes, heart disease and cancer, and how they affect *halachos* on refusing treatment, life support and the like. Furthermore, Rav Gewirtzman advised the *rabbanim* how to best deal with the prevailing culture in government and the medical profession that prioritizes so-called “quality of life” versus life itself – often squarely at odds with *halacha* and Torah values. “Unfortunately, these *shailos* constantly come up in every community,” Rav Gewirtzman explained. “It is imperative that *rabbanim* are properly equipped to deal with them, as well as that community members should be aware of what *shailos* need to be asked in such instances.”

Mexico City is the latest city in which Chayim Aruchim delivered this vital presentation to local *rabbanim*. Rav Gewirtzman has traveled to communities in the Northeast, as well as to Chicago, Toronto, Los Angeles, and Miami, while answering daily life-and-death *shailos* presented by individuals and *rabbanim* from around the world. Chayim Aruchim is scheduled to visit Dallas and South Africa in the near future, with events in other communities in the works as well.

Rav Mordechai Tussie *shlit”a*, a prominent Rav and Rosh Kollel in Mexico City, relates that his fellow *rabbanim* are extremely appreciative of Chayim Aruchim’s involvement and are determined to work together with the

organization and local medical professionals to deal with any *shailos* that may arise in the future. “The reception has been extremely positive; we’ve never anything like this *shiur* before,” Rav Tussie attests. “We all encounter *shailos* like this all the time and are eager to know more.”

Rabbi Eliyahu Simcha Bamberger, who attended to represent Agudath Israel’s National office, commented, “This was an extraordinary event. Mexico City is a very large and thriving *kehilla*, and the *rabbanim* who represented the *kehilla* paid close attention to everything that Rav Gewirtzman said. It should be of great benefit to them as they guide their *kehillas* on these very sensitive matters.”