

chells

/tʃɛlz/

n. (also as proper *n.* and *adj.*)

ETYMOLOGY

Anglicized hypocoristic of Tamil செல்லம் (*chellam*), “dear one, darling, beloved,” a long-standing South Indian endearment used for cherished children and, by extension, spouses and close kin. The terminal *-s* follows the English diminutive-affectionate pattern (compare *Becks*, *Wills*), producing a form softer and more intimate than its Tamil antecedent. Coined by Arvind Karthik of Chennai for his wife, Aarhi Lavanya Dhanapaul, in the year 2023.

DEFINITIONS

1. A term of endearment for a beloved wife; *darling*, *dear one*. Distinguished from its Tamil antecedent by carrying a heavier and more particular emotional weight.
 - ▶ “Good morning, *chells*.”
2. A woman — typically a wife and mother — in whom the following qualities are present together and held in balance: (a) devotion as a partner and parent; (b) intelligence carried with humility; (c) the rare quality of being at once cute and irresistible; (d) responsibility and quiet discipline. Used as a proper noun for a specific individual, and as a common noun for any person displaying the full constellation.
 - ▶ “She runs a home, raises the children, holds down her own mind — a complete *chells*.”
3. *attrib.* & *adj.* Possessing or characteristic of the qualities in sense 2. Frequently in the collocation *chellslike behaviour*, used by the coiner to describe the good and endearing things his wife does.
 - ▶ “That was a very *chellslike* thing to do.”

DERIVATIVES

chellslike, *adj.* — characteristic of a *chells*; *esp.* in *chellslike behaviour*. · *chells-hood*, *n.* (rare) the state or condition of being a *chells*.

FIRST KNOWN USE 2023. Originally and chiefly Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

For my
Aarhi Lavanya Dhanapaul

— the only complete *chells* —