



Ohr Yerushalayim News

כ"ח תמוז תשע"ד – פרשת מסעי – 26th July 2014 - Volume 7 - Issue 3

T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

Kiddush This Shabbos

There is a farewell Kiddush this week for Family Keller who will be making Aliya after Tisho b'Av. On behalf of Shul we wish them much Hatzlocho with their move.

Early Minyan For Kabolos Shabbos Next Week

The early Minyan resumes next week at 7.10, the second Minyan next week will be at the slightly later time of 7.45.

Appeal For Families In Southern Israel

An unique organisation has been set up to find temporary accommodation away from the line of fire for tens of thousands of residents from the South of Israel. The organisation has experience dealing with such situations from the war 2 years ago and the Lebanese War in the North.

The trustees of Friends of Ateres Moshe (Registered Charity No. 1150855) have kindly offered to receive and distribute funds received for this purpose. The appeal is headed by Rabbi Naftoli Tirhoiz of Modiin Illit and Rabbi Zvi Goldblum from Jerusalem (originally Golders Green, London) and endorsed by Rav Charoz from Ashdod and Rabbi Meir Rapoport, Rov of Imrei Shefer Shul in Golders Green.

Funds can be deposited directly via HSBC account 'Friends of Ateres Moshe' A/C number 21664913; sort code 400311, please make sure to quote ref "Pleitim Fund".

Alternatively donations can be given to either Ari Kornbluth 07731 577 931 or Avi Stern 07813 326 423.

Unity In The Community – Inter-Shul 6-a-side Competition

Last Sunday, two teams from the Shul took part in a Manchester Inter-Shul football tournament which was organised to raise funds for Zaka and the Shabbos Project and to show unity in the community. It was a wonderful Kiddush Hashem with families and friends turning out in support, enjoying the good weather, fun and Achdus.

The teams were drawn in separate groups playing three 15 minute games each against the other Shuls. In the sapping heat, neither of our teams was able to qualify for the knockout stages although special mentions must go to Mark Jacobson who scored a volleyed wonder goal and David Levine, who as goalkeeper made some saves that would not have looked out of place at the recent World Cup.

Many thanks to all the participants and attendees from the Shul, and to Simon Kaye for arranging what was a thoroughly enjoyable family afternoon.



T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

Run for your life

Dani Epstein

It was the the lawyer-poet John Godfrey Saxe who, back in 1869, coined the pithy adage: "Laws, like sausages, cease to inspire respect in proportion as we know how they are made."

Despite the rather abstruse and archaic wording, this aphorism holds true today as it did then, when we have seen our lawmakers with their snouts in their trough and major supermarkets supplying minced meat products whose content are objectionable to everyone except for the French.

What inspired Mr Saxe to observe this parallelism might be lost to history, but today more than ever we can see how the common and legislative law is mighty fickle; what is legal today could be illegal tomorrow, and vice-a-horribly-versa.

I remember many years ago when I were but a lad – quelle surprise – and operating Citizen's Band radios were subject to obtaining a suitable licence, which was conveyed to its recipient after an eye-watering sum of money was transferred to Her Majesty's coffers. Additional requirements deterred the average honest citizen from acquiring one of the nefarious devices despite it being called "Citizen's Band".

One of my friends had parents who were running a minicab company under what were probably dubious circumstances, one of whose questionable practices being the operation of a CB radio without the requisite licence. They were quite aware that what they were doing was a bit naughty, and consequently lived in the constant fear of getting hauled up in front of the beak for this heinous crime.

The day came when the rozzers paid them a visit. Since they were constantly on the lookout, they were thoroughly prepared for the event. Even before the phrase "open the door in the name of the law" was enunciated in a suitably pompous bellow, they had disposed of the offending device by employing the simple expediency of hurling it out of their third-floor-flat window into the primeval forest below that they amusingly referred to as "the garden".

The Week Ahead

פרשת מסעי

Mincha	7.30pm
Candle Lighting	7.37 - 7.55pm
Seider HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.14am
Mincha	2.00pm / 6.00pm / 9.16pm
Rov's Mishnayos Shiur	following
Motzei Shabbos	10.21pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
ראש חודש Monday	6.30am / 7.00am
Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am
Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.10pm
Mincha & Maariv Next Shabbos	7.10 / 7.45pm

Rather ironically, it was not many years later that the CB radio spectrum was opened to one and all, and with the advent of cheap mobile calls this technology has become the purview of small children, shop assistants and the sort of people one would ordinarily not allow into one's house unless it was on fire and you were hoping that they would be consumed in the conflagration.

This brief anecdote serves to illustrate rather handily the nature of the law, in that the goalposts are forever shifting. There are no sacred cows, no immutable constants; everything is up for renegotiation. This week euthanasia is murder, next week frowned upon, the week after legal and before you turn around it's mamish a mitzvah.

Let us examine this from a different perspective. One day, Reuvein runs out of his house in a blazing fury toting an AK74 (no, that was not a typo – the AK74 succeeded the AKM which in turn was a refined version of the ever-popular Ak47), runs across the road to his neighbour Shimon, who conveniently is cleaning his car. All the neighbours are in the street for whatever reason and as they see Reuvein on the hoof they yell out to him.

“Don't do it or Beis Din will kill you!”

Sadly that proves to be a deterrent which lacks sufficiency and they all watch in horror as Reuvein empties the entire clip into Shimon, who falls to the floor thoroughly dead.

Reuvein throws down the gun and hot-foots it. But to where? Fortunately we have purchased a autonomous tracking drone which we target the killer with, and watch on our smartphones as he jumps into his car and drives really quickly somewhere.

Within a short while he is approaching a small town that looks like a jewel in the desert. Although the surroundings are arid, our protagonist is now driving slowly through carefully tended orchards, and as he looks around him there are a couple of elderly gentlemen with refined features pottering around with shears and gardening gloves, smiling and chatting to each other.

As Reuvein continues, the orchards give way to ornamental gardens and green open spaces dotted with benches here and there, a beautiful green belt surrounding a small walled town. Strolling round the grounds are people dressed in what appears to be a uniform of white linen with a purple sash. A small group are sitting on one of the lawns listening to one of these priestly men presenting what looks like an agricultural lecture; he has a basket of fruits from which he removes samples and shows them to the crowd.

Reuvein parks his car right near the gates and hurries in. As he enters, we can see our protagonist heaving a sigh of relief. Now he is safe.

Where is he? In an Ir Miklot – a Refuge City. Surrounded by gardens and open space, then orchards, the Ir Miklot was filled with Kohanim and Leviim in their “out of service” uniform, the refined and dignified clothes particular to the officiants of the Beis Hamikdosh when they were not on duty.

No doubt they were engaged in tending their gardens and orchards in the green belt that surrounded their city, and the occasional house repair and so on, but the bulk of their time was directed towards teaching their fellow Yieden Torah if they were not serving in the Beis Hamikdosh.

A day later, Reuvein is brought to Beis Din when his case is judged. As it turns out, this was a shogeg killing. He was being stalked by someone who had attempted to kill him on several previous occasions, and every time he escaped by the skin of his teeth. Reuvein was absolutely convinced that his stalker was Shimon – and he would be able to justify murdering him. Sadly it turned out not to be the case, and Reuvein had erroneously killed Shimon who was completely innocent.

Now Reuvein is returned to the Ir Miklot, accompanied by two Talmidei Chachomim whose job it is to pacify the Goel Hadom should he attempt to kill Reuvein in the brief time it takes to travel from the Beis Din to the Ir Miklot, where the murderer will live until the death of the incumbent Kohen Godol or a Kohen Godol emeritus.

Is he in jail? Who are his jailers? Is there some kind of rehabilitation regime? Hard labour?

The answer to all of these questions are quite simply no. He does not sit on the public purse under lock and key, and there are no programs to rehabilitate him. There is no hard labour. There are no jailers. Should he choose to do so, he could walk out of the gates and take his life into his own hands.

In which case, what could he possibly gain by being committed to the Ir Miklot? To answer this we really need to address what he is doing there in the first place. You could say he was there simply because he murdered an innocent man, albeit under rather confused circumstances. However, this is not how Rashi explains it.

In Mishpotim, Rashi writes: “Two people, one who has murdered unintentionally and the other intentionally, and there were no witnesses for either incident; the latter was not killed (in Beis Din) and the former did not go to golus (Ir Miklot). Hashem brings them to one inn, the intentional murderer sits under a ladder, and the one who killed unintentionally falls on the deliberate murderer and kills him, and there are witnesses observing.”

So there is an element of divine intervention here. And the rehabilitation of this man takes place simply by being forced to seek protection inside a town whose inhabitants are dedicated from birth to the service of Hashem, and of whom the entire nation expects and demands the very highest moral, ethical and interpersonal behaviour.

Every day is spent amongst the teachers of Klal Yisroel, watching and observing how they live normal lives, who laugh and cry, rejoice and mourn, who cultivate their gardens and wash their cars, fix the occasional broken window or loose table leg, but whose behaviour, comportment and thoughts elevates these every-day mundane things to a higher plane.

Simply by osmosis this man is forced to alter his behaviour, perhaps even without him realising that this change is taking place. The Ir Miklot is a city of refuge, true, but it is also a city whose physical and spiritual beauty and whose inhabitants provide the finest rehabilitation process one could hope for, simply by going about their ordinary business at the highest spiritual altitude.

All the complex laws of the various matnos kehunah and levi'im, whether they be ma'asros, chozeh v'shoik, or the spoils of war, all of these serve to promote the physical existence of the Kohanim and Levi'im. These in turn make the Orei Miklot a financial reality which in turn provide a critical service to the general public in the form of a core of teachers, officiants in the Beis Hamikdosh and so on.

In this way, the seamless and intertwined nature of the Torah Laws have effects that ripple outward from every law to touch every other law.

A fundamental aspect of Torah Law is exposed through the Ir Miklot. Within Torah Law there is no separation of civil, legislative and religious law. They all form one seamless corpus, and every aspect of this tremendous and infinitely comprehensive system is interconnected with every other part.

Since these laws are of divine authorship they are non-negotiable, they are not open to “consultation” and their fundamental nature is not open to debate. If euthanasia is illegal this week, it is illegal next week. If alternative lifestyles are deviant this week, then all the legislation, debate and argumentation in the world will not change that fact next week.

What is more, we can sit and learn Torah, read about the debate between Abaye and Rovoh as to what the law actually is, observe the arguments between Hillel and Shammai, and act as spectators to the pitched battle between R' Eliezer and the Chachomim over an oven split into slices which resulted in the uprooting of a carob tree, a stream of water flowing backwards and the walls of the Beis Hamedrash prevented at the last moment from collapsing inwards (Bovo Mezi'a 59b), confident in the knowledge that the underlying principles are immutable into eternity and that it's beef, and not horse meat, that fills your sausages.