



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

אלול תשפ"א | שופטים – 14th August 2021 - Volume 14 - Issue 7

## News This Week

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to David and Eunice Wolfson on the recent birth of a granddaughter to Ben and Nechama Rapport in Israel  
Nati and Sharon Sebbag invite the Kehilla to the engagement of Chaya to Yishai Lister, son of Rabbi David and Rachie Lister from Edgware. The Vort takes place this Sunday, 15th August in the shul hall from 4-6pm

### Chaim Aruchim

We regret to inform of the petira of Mrs Shula Wainer ז"ל mother of Shirley Dinowitz. The Shiva takes place in Israel and ends Sunday morning.

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrzeit this week:

Tues, 9th Elul - Helen Braunold for her father  
Wed, 10th Elul - Helen Braunold for her mother  
Wed, 10th Elul - Bernard Levey for his mother  
Thurs, 11th Elul - Rabbi YY Katz for his brother  
Fri, 12th Elul - Debbie Davis for her father

### Shul Seating

As we are reverting back to the regular seating arrangements in Shul, any member who either does not have a seat or is looking to change seats should let us know by email - office@ohryerushalayim.org.uk. We cannot guarantee all requests, however we will try and accommodate them as much as possible.

### Left & Right

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

In an era when political opinions are so clearly aggrandized — one is pigeonholed as liberal or conservative, a rightist or leftist — this week's portion shines a new perspective on right and wrong, and even left and right.

In describing the importance of following the advice of our sages, the Torah uses an interesting expression. "Do not stray from the path of their counsel, neither to the left or to the right." The Talmud espouses the faith we are to have in the wisdom of the sages by explaining: "Even if they tell you that left is right and right is left, and surely when they tell you that right is right and left is left."

I was always puzzled by the interpretation. Theological insights into events are subject to interpretations as varied as the eye-colors of the viewers. Even rabbinical conjectures can be objectively understood from varied perspectives and lifestyles. But direction? How can we misconstrue directional accuracy? Either something is right or it is left.

Back in the old country, a notorious miser was castigated by members of his community, for his lack of involvement in charitable endeavors. He was urged to begin inviting the poor to his home. He was even advised of how good the mitzvah would make him feel.

Reluctantly, the next Friday afternoon he gave his son a few coins and told him to buy the cheapest piece of fish. He warned him not to spend more than an amount that would buy the lowest quality fish. He also cautioned him to buy it just before the shop was to close for the Sabbath when the price was sure to be at it's lowest. He was not to worry about freshness or appearance, just size and price. The son did

exactly as he was told and brought back an excellent bargain: a large fish, thoroughly rancid.

Pleased with his purchase, the miser went to synagogue that evening and was proud to invite a pauper to his home. For the first time in memory he had a stranger actually eat with him. True to what he had been told, he really did feel wonderful. The beggar didn't. His weak stomach could not take the putrid fish and he became seriously ill.

That Monday, the miser went with his son to visit the ailing beggar in the community ward of the local hospital. When the poor soul died of food poisoning, he proudly attended the funeral. He even paid his respects to the relatives who sat shiva at their hovel.

Upon leaving the home of the mourners, the miser remarked proudly to his son, "Isn't it wonderful that we got involved with this beggar? Look how many mitzvos we have already performed. And it didn't even cost us more than a few pennies!"

Often, perceptions of right and wrong are discerned, formulated, and executed according to a warped sense of justice. Personal perspectives, attitudes, and experiences greatly influence our Torah-values and attitudes. Political correctness often hampers proper rebuke. Is it that we would not want to offend an overt transgressor or do we just not want to get involved? Does overzealous rebuke stem from our concern for the word of Hashem? Or are we just upset at the individual because we have a debt to settle with him?

When we see a definitive right and left, perhaps we are looking from the wrong angle. It may very well be that our right is the Torah's left, and the same is true of the reverse.

We are told to follow our sages whether they tell us that right is left and left is right. In a confusing world, they may be the only ones who really know which way is east.

### Express Yourself

Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)

I would once again like to apologize for not having written the past few weeks. I was running a boys sleep-a-way camp and my family and I were also sleeping away – far away from my computer! I'd like to share some of the experiences that I had there as they somewhat relate to the parsha and very strongly relate to life.

This week we read the parsha of Shoftim. "Shoftim v'shotrim teeten l'cho b'chol sh'a'recha [Appoint for you judges and officers at all of your gates] [16:18]."

The S'forno explains that the Torah first commanded the mitzvos which

## Davening Times

### פרשת שופטים

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.00pm
Candle Lighting	7.08pm-7.25pm
Hashkomo	7.30am
Shacharis	9.30am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.30am
Mincha	2.00pm / 6.00pm / 8.31pm
Motzei Shabbos	9.36pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.20pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

apply to the individual and then commanded those which apply to society at large. These include our judges, leaders, kings, kohanim {priests} and prophets.

Our parsha opens this second set of commandments with the obligation of setting up a proper judicial system in each of our cities. This system includes the shoftim {judges} who pass judgment on the different controversies and the shotrim {officers} who enforce the judge's decision. Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l points out that the word: "lecho {for you}," seems superfluous and disjointed. This 'society-type' commandment could have simply stated "appoint judges and officers"! Why did the Torah add the word: "lecho"?

He explains that the Torah is teaching us a very fundamental concept. In addition to the need for society at large to have these shoftim and shotrim, each individual must be both a judge and officer over himself. "Lecho – for you." Over you. Constantly overseeing your own action and making sure that they are what they should be.

The Mishna [Avos 2:18] states: "Al t'hee rosho bifnei atz'm'cho," literally, don't be evil before yourself. The Rambam explains this to mean that we shouldn't judge ourselves as being wicked. Our behavior is greatly influenced by our self-image. One of the basic precepts in discipline is to condemn the behavior and not the child. You are not bad! You did something bad... If I'm wicked then I'll act in a wicked way. The Mishna therefore teaches us not to judge ourselves as being wicked. It very well might turn into a self fulfilling prophecy.

Another explanation provides a totally different angle. Al t'hee rosho bifnei atz'm'cho – don't be evil before yourself. Others might give you a lot of honor and speak very highly of you... They might view you as a role model and aspire to be like you... But you know the truth!!! You are very painfully aware of your shortcomings and your lapses. You know who and what you really are. Don't allow yourself to be blinded by their praises. Al t'hee rosho bifnei atz'm'cho – don't be evil before yourself, because you know the truth about yourself.

Therefore, as Rav Moshe wrote, we must be judges and officers over ourselves.

Where should these judges sit? "B'chol sh'a'recha {In all of your gates}." The Shla"h Hakodesh writes that a person has seven gates: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and a mouth. The way that these gates are used will either build or destroy the person. A person must appoint shoftim and shotrim to control the flow through these gates.

Guarding our tongues from lashon harah (derogatory speech) is a very worthwhile topic but I'd like to discuss a very different problem. Of the almost one hundred boys in camp there were two, very opposite boys, who in my opinion stuck out.

One of them was one of two twins. This was the twin's second summer in the camp. They both have learning disabilities, and encountered difficulties fitting in and 'making it' in a camp with 'normal' kids. One was very homesick throughout. The staff spent many hours with him trying to help him adjust and reach the point where he'd want to stay. He had constant ups and downs swinging from "I love it here" to "I'm out of here". It was decided that since he had 'stuck it out' for a serious amount of time and still wanted to leave that we'd send him home but make him feel like a hero for lasting as long as he did and not like a failure for leaving early.

His twin brother was very different. A bit more socially adept and determined, he wanted camp to last forever. He too had his difficult moments but some added attention was all he needed. At one point when he needed a boost, I handed him a whistle and appointed him to be my assistant. Everyone took it lightly besides him. To him, being in charge of a camp was very serious business. He would run from field to field to make sure that all was running smoothly and then proudly report back to me that all was well.

At the end of camp, many campers feel emotions but most are too inhibited to openly express them. This boy became the speaker for the camp. "My heart, my heart, my heart is aching," he'd say to me. "My heart aches that camp is ending. My heart, my heart, my heart is aching!"

At the far other end of the spectrum was another boy. He had suffered a personal loss in his life a few years back and was having difficulty adjusting. This translated into difficulties in getting along with others and sometimes destructive behavior. I was biding my time, hoping that at some point during the short camp season I'd be able to have

a meaningful discussion with him besides the disciplining that my position demanded of me.

On an overnight, just a few nights before camp was going to end, he was caught with toothpaste in hand about to 'raid' another camper who, deep in his sleep, had no intention at that time of brushing his teeth and no constructive use for toothpaste. I was awakened by his angry yells at the staff member who had the audacity to thwart his plans by confiscating his toothpaste.

I spoke to him for a little while about his pain and anger and about the destructive and self-defeating way he was expressing it. I then told him that I understand that he's angry about life in general and asked if he'd like to go for a walk and talk a bit. I was shocked when he said he would. We went off to the side and I began to ask him questions about his loss. I got him to discuss it but only in a detached manner. I tried so hard to open him up and get him to express some real feelings but I couldn't break that wall he had erected around him. During the course of our conversation it became clear to me that he really had no one with whom he was able to discuss his loss and cry together with.

The contrast still startles me. One camper, mildly retarded, with almost no inhibitions, able to unabashedly express exactly what he was feeling. Expressing it, coming to terms with it and able to move on. Another camper, 'normal', with a fortress built around him, unable to unload, unable to deal with himself and his environment.

"Shoftim v'shotrim teeten l'cho b'chol sh'a'recha {Appoint for you judges and officers at all of your gates} [16:18]." We must judge and guard ourselves. We also must find those whose guards are working overtime, suffocating and stifling their need to express their pain in an honest and constructive manner and help free them from those shackles.

### **In The Shadow Of Hashem** Rabbi Yochanan Zweig (Torah.org)

"You shall observe the festival of Sukkos...Judges and officers you shall appoint..." (16:13,18)

Although Ezra the Scribe divided the Torah into the weekly portions as we know them, there is another system which is used to divide the Torah, that of "pesuchos" and "stumos", literally "open" and "closed". A pesucha is roughly translated as a new chapter and a stumahas a new paragraph. A pesucha begins as a new line, while a stumah begins on the same line. The section of the laws of judges is a parsha stumah, a new paragraph, but not a new chapter. Therefore, there must be a significant connection between these laws and the laws of Sukkos, which concludes last week's parsha.

The judicial system in Israel requires that every city contain a minor Sanhedrin consisting of twenty-three judges. The Talmud teaches that a city must be populated with a minimum of one hundred twenty people to warrant a judicial system. Each judge has two understudies. What is the rationale for requiring a city of one hundred twenty people to have sixty-nine judges? Why the need for so many courts throughout the land?

The function of the Jewish court system is not only to dispense justice and restore order; a judge is the conduit for the word of Hashem and must create a society where Hashem's presence is felt. A Jewish law-abiding citizen must observe the law, not due to a fear of retribution, but a fear of sin. A system which is predicated upon the notion that people will not violate the law due to their fear of the consequences cannot succeed. The reason for this is as follows: If a person perceives the rewards for violating the law to be worth the risk of being caught, he will violate the law. The only effective system is one where a person perceives that it is intrinsically wrong to violate the law. This can only be achieved if people feel the presence of Hashem in their midst. The function of the judge is to create this atmosphere. If the purpose of the judicial system were to create fear of punishment, there would be no need for so many judges. Bolstering the police force would be more effective. Since the purpose of the judge is to create a society where Hashem's presence is tangible, we understand the need for such a large number of judges.

A major theme pertaining to the festival of Sukkos is that we leave our houses in order to go into the "shadow of Hashem". The Sukkah is a place where Hashem's presence manifests itself. Therefore, the connection between the festival of Sukkos and the judicial system is clear. The judicial system serves to create the same atmosphere throughout society, which is found in the Sukkah.