



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

12th April 2014 - Volume 6 - Issue 39 - פרשת אחרי מות - י"ב ניסן תשע"ד

## T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Dr & Mrs David Wolfson on the recent Bar Mitzva of their grandson in London.

### Shabbos HaGadol Drosha / Shiur

The Rov's Shabbos HaGadol Drosha follows Mussaf this Shabbos.

The second men's Shiur takes place between Mincha and Motzei Shabbos this week.

### Clean Your Boxes

Please ensure you clean your boxes before Yom Tov.

### Pesach Newsletter

The Pesach newsletter will be sent out Sunday night and includes the full timetable for Yom Tov.

We've had a number of Divrei Torah submitted though space is still available so if you have one, please send it in by Sunday morning.

### מעות חטים

Donations can be made to the Rov for מעות חטים for distribution to needy local families to help cover Pesach expenses.

### מכירת חמץ

The Rov is available for the last minute sale of Chometz either at his home by prior arrangement, or in Shul after Davenning.

## T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

### A Heavenly Difference

Dani Epstein

When you get into your car in the morning, you might run a mental checklist just to be on the safe side. Fuel, check. Engine sounds normal, check. No weird lights are showing, check. Steering wheel is still firmly attached, check. None of these are a given in my van, so it's always worth going the extra mile in order to avoid going the extra mile, if you get my drift.

Getting into a light aircraft requires a slightly lengthier checklist, because once you are up in the air and discover you are running on fumes, there is no way to pull over and empty that emergency supply of Auchenoschan into the tank in the hope that you make it to the nearest airfield.

Imagine being presented with the checklist for an F-22 Raptor loaded for bear. Aside from the standard flight control surfaces to worry about, there are multiple weapon systems, radars, the weapons themselves and host of other items that have to be dealt with.

When one holds such an extensive checklist in ones hand, not only does it actually feel weighty, but the sheer size of it makes quite an impression in and of itself. It broadcasts the message that whatever this checklist applies to, it's pretty important and very sophisticated. You get the idea that if you do something silly you might just end up taking out the whole airfield.

As we all know, the תורה is not really into lengthy specifications and comprehensive lists. Far from it. With only a few words an entire מוסכתא can be covered, as we find with גיטין for example. Yet when it comes to the topic of עריות - forbidden relationships - the תורה leaves

nothing out. Every possible combination seems to have been listed, some of them that almost defy the imagination. Why all the detail all of a sudden?

All the more mysterious are the introductory verses to the topic. "Tell the בני ישראל that I am Hashem," is the opening instruction. Next comes "לא תעשו - לא תעשו" - Don't do what they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived."

And there is more. "לא תעשו, לא תעשו" - וּכְמַעֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְבִיא אֲתֶכֶם שָׁמָּה, לא תלכו - and don't get up to the sort of thing they do in Canaan, the land I am taking you to, or follow their laws either."

In fact the phrase 'אני' appears three times in the five verses that make up the introduction.

The אור החיים raises numerous questions on this topic.

First of all, we have the instruction from Hashem to משה to tell the בני ישראל that He is Hashem. Having gone through the ten plagues and witnessing - קריעת ים סוף - the tearing of the Reed sea - they were pretty much aware of Hashem. They hardly needed a reminder of His existence. Certainly not three.

Then there is the phrase "Don't do what they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived." This is the sort of thing you might say to someone who has a couple of options open to them, such as: "the goldeneh metzias you are looking for are in the Prestwich Tesco". Since there are two of the aforementioned shops within a short driving distance, it makes sense to specify which one you are talking about.

In our case, however, how many Egypts were there that anyone might have confused one with the other? And for that matter, why add "where you lived"? They were perfectly aware that they had lived there since they had left a short while ago and there was no possibility of confusing this Egypt with any other one; so why specify it in such a way?

The same can be asked of the statement: "And don't get up to the sort of thing they do in Canaan, the land I am taking you to". No doubt geography was not a subject right at the top of the list in the sandy regions of Sinai, but let's face it: there was only one Canaan, and no one was under under the impression that they were being taken to a different land, which also happened to be called Canaan. In which case adding the "the land I am taking you to" is pretty much redundant. They knew exactly where they

### The Week Ahead

פרשת אחרי מות	שבת הגדול
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.30pm
Candle Lighting	No later than 7.47pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.42am
Mincha	2.00pm / 6.00pm / 7.51pm
Rov's Shiur on Inyonei Pesach	following
Motzei Shabbos	8.56pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Sunday Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
ערב פסח	6.45am / 7.10am
Eat Chometz until	9.59am
Burn Chometz until	11.27am
Mincha & Kabbolas Yom Tov	7.52pm
Candle Lighting	7.52pm

were going to.

Then there is the issue of mentioning either countries altogether. When it comes to **כשרות** it's not as if the Torah says something like: "Don't eat pig like they do in China. Don't eat camel like they do in Mongolia. Don't eat shrimp like they do in Tel Aviv." The various **איסורים** are laid out quite plainly and without a geographic reference, which makes the mention of Egypt and Canaan pretty unusual.

To answer all of these questions, we have to consider the subject the introduction precedes, which is that of the **ערייות** forbidden relationships.

The **אור החיים** observes that there are two forces that hold sway in this area: that of sight and that of thought. That is to say that is one wants to achieve any degree of success in preventing oneself succumbing to temptation one needs to guard ones eyes and ones thoughts as well.

Never in the history of mankind have these two simple measures been more relevant. A good friend of mine observed that walking down an average high street today presents us with more challenges than his grandfather had to face in his entire life.

Without working on both those areas – what one sees and what one thinks – it becomes all too easy to fall prey to these temptations.

There is a dichotomy here, though. If one would extend one's caution to the logical extent, then the wise person would steer clear of the whole minefield by having absolute control over himself. The result of this would be quite the opposite than one would expect in that this would result in not getting married either!

As it is, it is impossible for mere mortals to honestly expect to be able to overcome the basic drives that we have programmed into our very DNA, and in fact this idea is really the key to the role the apparent redundancies in the aforementioned **פסוקים** play.

The introduction opens with **אני ה' אלקיכם** to inform us that it is Hashem who made us the way we are; He built these drives and urges into us, and He created the psychology that is programmed into every one of us. So He is perfectly well aware of the score, and is telling us as much.

Next, the **בני ישראל** were warned not to carry out the type of behaviour that they had observed in Egypt – it was behaviour they were forced to witness as a result of being forced to because they lived there, and not because they had gone out themselves to look for that kind of depravity. Hence the phrase **כמעשה ארץ-מצרים אשר ישבתם בה**.

Likewise for Canaan, there the very spirit of depravity dwelled, and therefore they were being warned that they will be spending a considerable amount of time living side-by-side with the then present occupiers of Canaan, and that they could easily fall prey to their way of thinking, hence: **וכמעשה ארץ-כנען אשר אני מביא אתכם שמה**.

Now if they wanted to start arguing and saying: "Well, you are asking to much! There is no way you can expect us to behave like this. In Rome, do as the Romans etc. How can you expect us to behave differently if the whole society around us behaves in this way?"

This is why the whole introduction opens with such an unusual phrase: **אני ה' דבר אל-בני ישראל, ואמרת אליהם** – speak to them and tell them **אני ה' אלקיכם**. What **משה** was instructed to tell them was that there is no point in arguing over this matter. Even if they felt that there was non way a human being could be expected to control themselves in this area, Hashem is saying that nonetheless, He is being **מחייב** them to do so.

The **אור החיים** observes that every nation in the world can argue that the demans being made by Hashem in this area are simply too much to bear. Every nation except for **ישראל**.

With **כלל ישראל**, the opposite is expected solely due to the fact that Hashem is our G-d. As the **פסוק** writes: **אני ה' אלקיכם** I am YOUR G-d. With this added spiritual connection, one can actually overcome our drives and urges.

One might find someone straying across the path of a temptation. If that person wants to cleave to Hashem, but virtue of that fact they have a weapon against the **יצר הרע**. As the medrash says: **הצדיקים לבם מסור** – the righteous have their hearts in hand, and the wicked are in hand of their hearts.

The point being, even if one is tempted by something, one can overcome that intellectually simply by wanting to cleave to Hashem. After all, people fast even though their body is crying out for food.

This is what **לעשות רצונך דוד המלך** meant when he said in **תהילים** that **אלקי חפצתי ותורתך בתוך מעי** – to do your will I desired, and to have your Torah in my innards. What he was saying was that his ultimate ambition was to have his physical existence – his body – to mirror his soul to the point

that even his physical self would react and behave in the same way as his soul.

The **אור החיים** penned an extensive essay on the subject, and it is impossible to cover in such a short column. However, the overall topic is perhaps more relevant today than ever before. For all the technological progress society has achieved since the industrial revolution, its morals have slipped back to the level the the ancient Cannanites practiced. The very foundations of morality have lost their anchorage. The institution of marriage has been made into a mockery in most Western countries. How easy is it for us to let our standards slip even a degree in the face of such depravity.

Not for nothing did the Torah start off the topic with such a strong introduction.

## The Shepherd's Shepherds

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

And you should love your neighbor as yourself... (Vayikra 19:18)

How can the Torah obligate an emotion of love?

Rabbi Moshe Cordovero writes in Tomer Devorah, "This is why all Jews are "guarantors one for another" since each individual actually has a portion of everyone else, so that if one damages himself he damages that portion of himself that is in his friend. It follows that his friend is a guarantor for that portion. Therefore it is fitting for a person to desire the best for his fellow, and view his good fortune benevolently and cherish his friend's honor as his own- for they are actually one in the same! For this reason we are commanded to "love your neighbor as yourself" and it is proper that a person should desire the well-being of his fellow and not speak ill of or wish ill for him."

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch ztl. approaches the same point for an etymological approach. The word for "your neighbor" – "rayechah" finds its root in the same word for shepherd as it says in the famous 23rd Psalm "HASHEM royi" – "HASHEM is my shepherd..." Curious that the Torah chose that category of personage to whom we are obligated to demonstrate our love, Rav Hirsch writes, "Everyone is to find and recognize in everybody else his "mireh" – "the pasturage of his life", the furthering of his own well-being, the conditions for his own well-being in life. Nobody may look at the progress of another as a hindrance to his own progress or look at the downfall of another as the means for his own rising and nobody may rejoice in his own progress if it is at the expense of his neighbor's failure...In exactly the same way and from the same consciousness of duty he directs his love to the well-being of his neighbor, loves him as a being equally a creation of G-d, he proclaims his love of G-d by his love of His creatures."

Every person is our shepherd, as HASHEM is our shepherd. We are all equally vulnerable and inter-dependant economically, socially, spiritually, and emotionally. No man is an island and there are no victimless crimes.

The Tanna D'Bei Yishmael explains why the Jewish People are compared to a sheep. Just as if any single limb of the lamb is smitten all the limbs feel it so it is with all of Israel. He offers the following parable about a group of people traveling on a ship. One passenger takes out a drill and begins to bore a hole beneath his seat. His friends say to him, "Why are you doing this?" He says back to them, "What does it matter to you? I'm only drilling under my seat!" They answer him back, "You are going to cause the whole ship to sink on us!"

I heard once a story about a fellow that climbed to the peak of some great mountain. There he was, with his timberland boots and backpack, alone and aloof from the world. Like an eagle, the paradigm of arrogance according to the Zohar, he reveled in his achievement. He thought to himself, "Who needs other people!? I'm king of the hill!" Just then, his glasses fell from his face and while feeling around for them he stepped on them and crushed them. He was helpless and visionless without his glasses. Within a short while he was curled up in a fetal position awaiting assistance.

We don't make our own clothing or create our own food from scratch daily. An intricate army called economy provides for most of our daily needs. A cup of coffee is an enormously sophisticated accomplishment when we consider from how far coffee beans come and how water is delivered and heat is produced and milk and sugar are processed and shipped. No wonder we make a Brocho, "Shehakol Nehiah B'dvaro" – "Everything comes about through His speech". That's just a coffee. What about all the other grandiose and subtle brands of goodness that we are the beneficiaries of?! To the extent that we can keep an awareness of these myriads of matters big and small, so will we naturally love the Shepherd's shepherds.