



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

ד"א אלול תשע"ד – פרשת כי תצא – 6th September 2014 - Volume 7 - Issue 9

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

### Further Building Work

The second part of the building work takes place in Shul this coming week. The second Shacharis Minyan on Sunday takes place in the Shiur Rooms. From then until Friday, the second Shacharis Minyan together with Mincha & Maariv will take place in the hall.

First Shacharis and the late Maariv Minyanim take place in the Shiur rooms as normal.

### Hilchos Shmitta Shiurim

Rabbi Aryeh Silkin will be giving a series of three Shiurim on the Dinim of Shmitta in Chutz La'Aretz on Shabbos afternoons starting this Shabbos- see back page for further details.

### Mincha & Maariv This Week

Please note that Mincha & Maariv this coming week is at the earlier time of 7.30pm and the next week will be at 7.15pm

### Earlier Davening Next Shabbos

Please note due to timings for next Friday the times of Mincha and Kabbolas Shabbos are earlier at 5.55pm and 7.17pm.

### Keep Up To Date

If you have recently moved house, please email your new address to [office@ohryerushalayim.org.uk](mailto:office@ohryerushalayim.org.uk) so we can update the Shul records.

### Yom Tov Newsletter

As previously we are looking to produce a bumper edition of the newsletter for Succos to include Divrei Torah from members. Please put pen to paper (or finger to keyboard) and email to [dansmithpm@gmail.com](mailto:dansmithpm@gmail.com) no later than Sunday 21st September.

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

### A Rebel By Any Other Name

Dani Epstein

Predating Benjamin Franklin by 63 years, in the The Political History of the Devil published in 1726, Daniel Defoe writes: "Things as certain as Death and Taxes, can be more firmly believ'd". So when the aforementioned president later wrote to Jean-Baptiste Leroy that "in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes", he was in good company.

It is my considered and terribly humble position that today we can expand that phrase to include "and a call to tech support".

For many years I futilely attempted to keep the wolves at bay by providing technical support to computer users of all levels which contributed to elevated blood pressure, stress and early onset male pattern baldness. Allow me to provide you with an example of the sort

of thing I did in order to amuse myself while I whiled the hours away under an onslaught of repetitive and collective ignorance, and in many cases, quite inventive stupidity.

User: "My computer is not working."

Me: "Are there little pictures on the screen with writing underneath?"

User: "Yes."

Me: "In which case, your computer is working. It's just not doing what you want it to do."

The truth is that I am terribly impatient, do not suffer fools gladly or otherwise, and computers are insanely complex. Ask anyone who writes computer code for a living, and they will tell you just how much digital string and chewing gum is employed to hold the internet together.

So, when teaching anyone how to use a computer, I don't bother trying to explain why you have to jump through half a dozen hoops in order to carry out a simple task like printing labels, I just write down the sequence of steps and expect them to follow like sheep.

This enormous complexity means that most people happily approach computing as a total mystery, and simply go through the motions without a clue for why they do any of these things. As long as it works and is not terribly onerous, people will cheerfully do all sorts of weird things to get their computer to obey them and do something useful.

When it comes to shmiras hamitzvos - keeping the mitzvos - we can easily fall into the same trap. Who cares why we wear tefillin? It's tradition!

But that was not the deal. When we said said naashe venishma it meant that we have an equal obligation to understand the import of the mitzvoh, it's purpose and what it should motivate us to achieve, as we do for carrying it out in the first place.

This does not quite apply across the board, however. One of the more puzzling mitzvos is that of Poroh Adumoh, which is well known for the

### The Week Ahead

#### פרשת כי תצא

Mincha 1 / Candle Lighting	6.10pm / Not before 6.26pm
Mincha 2 / Candle Lighting	7.30pm / Not after 7.34pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.46am
Shacharis	9.00am
Mincha	6.00pm / 7.33pm
<b>Hilchos Shmitta Shiur</b>	<b>following</b>
Motzei Shabbos	8.38pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Monday / Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am
Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am
<b>Mincha &amp; Maariv</b>	<b>7.30pm</b>
Late Maariv	10.00pm
<b>Mincha &amp; Maariv Next Shabbos</b>	<b>5.55pm / 7.17pm</b>

contradiction it poses. We can approach it quite simply by acknowledging this mitzvah as a “choyk”, a decree from Hashem, and therefore something that inherently defies explanation. It is a mitzvah we carry out simply because Hashem said we should, and we have no reason or requirement to go beyond that and attempt to rationalise it somehow.

When it comes to the ben sorer umorer - the rebellious son - this idea becomes a little harder to sell. It is certainly not a choyk; on the other hand it is a statistical impossibility.

There is no real chance of anyone ever being judged as a ben sorer umorer since the conditions that have to be satisfied are numerous and as good as impossible to exist simultaneously. Even the single case quoted by the gemoroh has been interpreted as being a “candidate ben sorer umorer”, but someone who nonetheless died of natural causes as opposed to actually having been killed by Beis Din.

So the obvious question has to be asked: why do we have such a mitzvah? What possible motivation could there be for having something so improbable written in the Torah and taught in all its complexity in the Torah shel baal peh, the oral law, when it is purely a theoretical exercise? If it is isn't remotely practical, then why have it altogether? What could we possibly learn from something which has no practical implications?

The gemoroh poses this question in the following beraiso in Sanhedrin 71a:

אמר רבי שמעון: וכי מפני שאכל זה תרטימר בשר ושתה חצי לוג יין האיטלקי אביו ואמו מוציאים אותו לסקלו? אלא, לא היה ולא עתיד להיות. ולמה נכתב? דרוש וקבל שכר! אמר ר' יונתן: אני ראיתיו וישבתי על קברו

Rav Shimon said: “Is it because he ate a [particular measure] of meat and drank a [particular measure] of Italian wine that his father and mother take him out to stone him? It never happened and never will happen. Then why was it written? Expound it and receive reward!” Rav Yonasan said “I saw one (i.e. a ben sorer umoreh) and sat on his grave.”

Now the position of Rav Shimon is quite difficult to understand, since in Pirkei Ovos we read in the third mishnah of the first chapter:

אל תהיו כעבדים המשמשין את הרב על מנת לקבל פרס, אלא הוו כעבדים המשמשין את הרב שלא על מנת לקבל פרס

Do not be like servants who serve the master in order to receive a wage, just be like servants who serve the master not in order to receive a wage.

If one's motivation should be selfless servitude, then it seems improbable that the Torah would provide us with a mitzvah whose only purpose is to provide us with a reward for studying what is essentially a theoretical concept. This surely would be mitigating or flatly contradicting the above principle!

To my mind I think there is a subtlety here that might be easily missed.

The ben sorer umoreh is an exceedingly difficult concept to understand. Conventionally, if someone commits an aveiroh then they only receive a statutory punishment if they are halachically adults, were warned correctly and the deed was witnessed by two or more eligible witnesses. These requirements make the dispensing of corporal or capital punishment very rare indeed, but wholly impossible in the case of the ben sorer umoreh.

Since the child is underage, he is not eligible for either corporal or capital punishment. Although his parents might warn him, they cannot serve as witnesses, and this is therefore another major reason why the ben sorer umoreh is unique in that his death fits no other criterion for punishment that the Torah delineates.

In our modern society, however, we can unfortunately appreciate this mitzvah with a far greater depth of understanding an experience than any previous generation.

This seemingly impossible to understand mitzvah is in fact teaching us the psychology of what is conventionally referred to as the “slippery slope”. This is something I have personally witnessed on more than one

occasion.

Initially, one might find a young person struggling socially, who might try to misbehave in order to garner attention. If this remains unchecked, then this can precipitate worse behaviour. Perhaps the child will be excluded from school.

Now, I'm deliberately not specifying an age, because for the purposes of this narrative, a child is classified as someone who is dependant on their parents for almost everything. Hence, we could be talking about a “child” who is twenty years old.

Again, if this is not dealt with appropriately, then this child can start hanging out with the less salubrious members of society. They in turn might want to provide their new chum with the benefit of their life experiences and introduce him to soft drugs. After dabbling with soft drugs he “upgrades” to hard drugs, and before you know it this child is now a crackhead with an expensive addiction to feed.

At this point this “child” is no longer employable. All the imprecations of his parents have long ceased to have any value to him, and now as they wring their hands of this total deterioration of their child it has no meaning to him at all. They won't provide him with the money he needs to feed his habit, though, so he is forced to find it himself.

Since he cannot find a job, he first turns to petty crime, and as the dragon his habit has become grows ever more terrifying and hungry, he commits more serious and violent crimes in order to feed it. After a few prison sentences he finally succumbs and is found dead in a drug den having overdosed.

Had this progression been checked very early on on his childhood, he would have never come to this terrible end.

Perhaps it is this what Rav Shimon intends, when he say that we receive a “reward” for studying this mitzvah. The reward comes from saving one's child from a sorry end by studying the psychology this mitzvah presents us with, and intervening at an early stage when one sees a child stepping onto the cusp of the “slippery slope”.

בס"ד

קהילה קדושה  
אור ירושלים

Ohr Yerushalayim  
invite to you to  
a series of three Shiurim  
by Rabbi Aryeh Silkin שליט"א

דיני שמיטה בחוץ לארץ  
taking place between  
Mincha & Maariv on Shabbos  
(Mincha an hour and 5 mins before nacht)  
ש"פ כ"ו תצ"א starting on