

Rabbi's Column

When I was in college, I was assigned jury duty. Back then, being on jury duty was not much different than going to college - I left the house in the morning, came back sometime later, and was incommunicado all day long (unless it was an emergency for me, and then I might call home). I think the assignment of being in the jury pool was for a week, during which time if your number was called you went off and were potentially selected. I was called twice, and in both cases I was among the people not chosen. It was a relatively painless civic duty.

I bring this up because I am on District Court Jury duty March 28 - October 3. The mechanism they use is calling the day before they want you to show up, and leaving a message is considered having contacted you.

The practical ramifications for the congregation are, in my opinion, as follows:

1. I may not receive emergency calls, texts or emails until long after you might have sent them. Thank God, I have not received many of these in the first place, so here is hoping that trend continues.
2. God forbid there is the need for a funeral, and it has been scheduled, I may not be able to be there (I did mention this in my note to the Court, giving them my known conflicts and the judge's response received today was that the individual attorneys could excuse me if they wanted to).
3. Andrea may be contacting those of you who drive for rides to appointments.
4. There will be even more uncertainty about my presence at anything that is already scheduled (everything is already God willing, and this just adds the caveat "and the Courts").

Here's my hope that this is a long half year where I get absolutely no calls at all from the local Court system.

I read somewhere (and it might have been a fantasy novel) that once upon a time, part of the jury's job was to decide if the law itself was a reasonable law (as in, it makes sense to us). If the law was unreasonable, then it was considered as never having existed, and no crime was committed. That could be an interesting kind of jury to be a part of.

In the meantime, Purim is coming.