

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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April 2012

Nissan 5772

SHABBAT TIMES

🕒 Parasha - 🕒 Candle Lighting
🕒 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)
For service times see page 2

6 & 7 April – 15 Nissan
First Day Pesach

🕒 5:43 – 🕒 & 🕒 6:31

13 & 14 April – 22 Nissan
Last Day Pesach

🕒 5:36 – 🕒 6:24

20 & 21 April – 29 Nissan
🕒 Shemini

🕒 5:29 – 🕒 6:18

27 & 28 April – 6 Iyar
🕒 Tazria & Metzora

🕒 5:23 – 🕒 6:12

4 & 5 May – 13 Iyar
🕒 Acharei & Kedoshim

🕒 5:18 – 🕒 6:07

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Help... writers block!!

I really admire journalists (and rabbis) for their ability to write or speak on something new every day. They even have the ability (journalists, and maybe rabbis) to make everything sound exciting and sensational, even the most mundane event. For example, a court case that was postponed because the file was stolen or someone didn't pitch up because they didn't get the memo. In fact, I sometimes feel quite out of breath after listening to the news on the radio. I've thought long and hard on what to write and how to sensationalise news that happens at Oxford... but to no avail.

I thought of writing about Adar that unfortunately seemed a bit more like Av. Our thoughts

go out to everyone who was affected by the tragedies both locally and abroad.

I thought of mentioning the late Dennis Wainer because he was an active Oxford committee member for many years, a stalwart on Shabbos and actively involved in many other committees as well, always with a smile on his face and his finger on the pulse of the Jewish community. We will certainly miss you Dennis.

I thought of writing about our upcoming events like the second night seder. This year we are hosting a small communal seder as it was only a few days ago that we were able to confirm all the logistics that go into a communal seder. Unfortunately by this time most people had already made other plans. If anyone would like to join us on the second night please contact the shul, Rabbi or myself. PG we'll be able to host the big seder, which we all enjoyed last year, again next year. But how does one sensationalise this?

Perhaps I should write about the upcoming choir festival which will see about 10 choirs participating on Saturday night the 9th June (keep it open) or our 70th anniversary Gala dinner planned for August. But I should probably write about those closer to the time.

I thought of writing about Pesach. While the cleaning is a pain, the chag is great but I'm sure the Rabbi will deal with it (and in far more style than what I could do).

Perhaps I should write about Betzael's barmitzvah which was

celebrated on Shabbat Hagadol. The shul was full and Betzael excelled in his Shacharit, Leining, Maftir and Haftarah. His Anim Ze'mirot wasn't too shabby either, not to mention the choir in top form and an amazing, delicious Brocha that followed. I haven't seen the hall that full in a long time either. Mazaltov again to Rabbi, Rivky, and Betzael.

Hmmm, maybe I should write about the barmi... it would be really easy, even for me, to describe it as sensational!!

Wishing you all a chag Pesach kosher v'sameach

Brian Levy

RABBI'S MESSAGE

So we celebrated Betzael's Bar-mitzvah on Shabbat. What an occasion! We thoroughly enjoyed the day and savoured every minute of the festivities. Thanks to you all for making it so special.

One thing about the simcha was bittersweet. Betzael is our youngest boy—so this was our last Bar-Mitzvah. So we made an even bigger effort to celebrate even harder...

And the next day I woke up with a hugely comforting thought: this year, for the first time we have a grandchild old enough to recite Ma Nishtana. Chaya Mushka junior (we have, TG, a daughter and daughter-in-law with the same name) turned three a few months ago and has been learning the words at her nursery school in Brooklyn. Even more exciting is the thought that she will be doing

this at my Seder table this Friday night right here in Johannesburg.

"Zeidy" is a song composed by the Megama Duo back in the 70's that has become a hit in the Jewish world. I am sure you have all heard it at some stage, and remember the catchy refrain, "Who will be the Zeidy of my children, if not me." I have heard the chorus hundreds of times before... but suddenly I realised that the "me" in the song is referring to me.

I like to think of Jewish continuity as a relay race. You're the first runner—you do your best as you run your lap. Then it's time to hand the baton over to the next runner—so you pass it on as you step to the side. But you remain there, watching, cheering, encouraging, worrying and praying for success. Then the second participant hands over this baton to the third and joins you on the sidelines, as the two of you continue cajoling, imploring and egging on. For you know that the race is not won unless every successive runner does their best and reaches the finish line safely.

That's what a Pesach Seder is all about. It is when we "Passover" the baton—when we get together with our successive generations to engage in this process of watching, cheering, encouraging, worrying, cajoling, imploring, egging on and praying for their success.

Thank G-d Chaya Mushka junior will be joined by our own daughter Ita (senior, not to be confused with her niece who goes by the same name) in her rendition of Ma Nishtana. Her Bat-Mitzvah is not until 2014 (PG) and she keeps us young and reminds us that TG we're still in the race—for in this relay you must run and cheer all at once.

Chag Sameach.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

You know those nights when you eventually crawl into bed, and you feel your body sink into the sheets and your bones are weary with exhaustion. While you really want to be asleep, your head is wide awake, your brain is working hard, and sleep is improbable.

Sometimes we feel like that just because of our daily grind – our jobs, our homes, our plans and our families.

Sometimes (G-d forbid) we feel incredibly weighed down by worries – our own or those of friends or family.

Then, thank G-D, there are times we go to bed exhausted by the good and the simchas Hashem has bestowed upon us. We are humbled and eternally grateful to Hashem for our weary bones, for the blessings of simchas and naches that He has showered on us. While our bodies may wish to sleep our heads are wide awake.

טוב להודות לה – It is good to thank Hashem! May we all be blessed with such weary bones...

Wishing you all a kosher and freilichen Pesach

Have a good month

Rivky

DVAR TORAH

ARROGANT BREAD

www.chabad.org

Jews are strictly forbidden to eat any leavened foods on Passover. Bread is replaced by Matzah – flat baked wafers made only of flour and water. Jews all over the world, take scrupulous care to avoid eating even the smallest particle of Chametz.

The characteristic of leavened dough (Chametz) is that it rises and swells, symbolizing pride and boastfulness. A Matzah, on the other hand, is thin and flat, suggesting meekness and humility. Passover teaches us that Chametz – arrogance – is the very antithesis of the ideal of Torah.

When an arrogant man is confronted with the obligation of performing a Mitzvah that demands a measure of self-sacrifice (for example, charity, which involves sharing his possessions with his less fortunate fellow) he avoids fulfilling his obligation. He reasons: "I am wealthy because I deserve it. In fact I am entitled to more than I presently possess, so why should I give some of it away?"

Moreover, the egotism of the arrogant person deprives him of the ability to discern the worthiness of his neighbor and he smugly concludes that the other is truly far below his level.

According to his logic the cause of this neighbor's poverty is readily understood: "That pauper surely does not deserve any better!" "Now," he thinks to himself, "if G-d sees fit, and rightly so, that this man be poor, should I interfere and help him?"

Such egotistical reasoning leads the haughty individual to do more and more evil.

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday and Public Holidays 8:00

Monday to Friday 7:15

Shabbat & Festivals 9:00

06/04 (Erev Pesach): 7:45

08/04 (2nd Day Pesach): 9:00

10-12/04 (Chol Hamoed Pesach): 7:00

13/04 (7th Day Pesach): 9:00

23/04 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Sunday to Friday 5:45

from 15/04 5:30

Shabbat 5:30

from 21/04 5:15

Yet, he will never perceive the evil of his actions and repent of them. For, even when he is forced to concede that his actions are improper, he finds various causes “beyond his control” that prevailed upon him to act as he did.

Moreover, even when he cannot find any excuses to satisfy his conscience, nevertheless, “Self-love covers all transgressions.” He may be a spiteful evil-doer who cannot invent, through any stretch of the imagination, any line of reasoning to justify his behavior, yet self-love blinds his eyes and covers his evil.

The humble man, on the other hand, has quite the reverse attitude, both with regard to his fulfilling the Mitzvot as well as to his repentance of improper acts in the past.

Using the Mitzvah of Tzedakah (charity) once again as an example: the humble man compares himself with his fellow-Jew in the proper light. He thinks to himself: “Am I truthfully better than he? Do I deserve my better fortune?” This analysis, made objectively, rouses him to sympathize with his fellow-Jew and to render him assistance.

Moreover, when the unassuming person acts improperly, he does not attempt to justify his incorrect behavior. On the contrary, his sincere self-analysis prompts him to do Teshuvah,” to honestly repent of his improper actions.

Each year, on Passover, we are commended by the Torah to rid our domain of all traces of Chametz. We must seek to rid ourselves of every particle of the ‘spiritual Chametz’ – arrogance – so that we are able to clearly perceive our own faults and our fellow’s good qualities.

A STORY

THE EXTRA MATZAH

By Rabbi Dovid Silber
(www.innernet.org.il)

Open the newspaper today and it sometimes seems as if selfishness and greed are the social norm. The following story contains layers of inspiration that things don't have to be that way

Rabbi Eliezer Zusia Portugal, affectionately known as the Skulener Rebbe, served as a rabbi in Romania during the time of the two world wars. During this time, there were dire food shortages. This affected the entire population, but especially the Jewish community. Investing time and money, the rabbi was successful in obtaining several hundred kilograms of wheat for the upcoming Pesach holiday. He set up a small matzah bakery to supply the townspeople with matzahs. Two weeks before Pesach he began distributing them, limiting the allocation to one matzah per family, thereby allowing for the maximum number of people to benefit.

Jews from throughout the city gathered daily, and holding firm to his decision, the rabbi distributed no more than one matzah per family. In light of the wartime circumstances, all recipients received their meager supplies eagerly — that is, all except for one.

A young man named Hager reached his turn on the distribution line. As he approached the rabbi, he asked that he be given three matzahs. The rabbi gently informed him that a system was set up whereby each family received just one

matzah so that the limited quantity could supply the maximum number of people. The young man, however, insisted that he had received specific instructions from his father that he not settle for anything less than three matzahs.

In view of the young man's assertiveness and in deference to his father, the rabbi acquiesced, despite the apparent stupefaction of his associates.

On the eve of Pesach, late in the afternoon, a messenger arrived at the home of the rabbi to deliver a package. Upon opening it, the rabbi's family found it to contain two whole matzahs. The messenger explained to the puzzled family members that the man had purposely requested two additional matzahs so that, on the eve of Pesach, he could return two matzahs to the rabbi.

"We're all aware of the rabbi's boundless love for his fellow man," said the messenger. "We felt there is a distinct possibility that in his desire to accommodate every Jew in Chernowitz, he might just hand out the entire stock of matzahs till the very last one. We wanted to make sure that both the rabbi's family as well as his son's family are provided with at least one matzah each. The two enclosed matzahs are intended for that purpose."

The man's demand was indeed insightful. As a master of human nature, he had sized up the situation correctly. If not for his foresight, both the rabbi's family and his son's family would have been deprived of even the barest minimum of matzah for Pesach.

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Millicent Sacks on the birth of a grandson
- Rabbi and Rivky Chaikin on the birth of a granddaughter
- Blima Nudelman on the birth of two great grandsons

BAR/BATMITZVAHS

- Rabbi and Rivky Chaikin on the barmitzvah of their son, Betzalel
- Leah Lurie on the barmitzvah of her grandson in Melbourne
- Sheila Chavkin on the barmitzvah of her grandson

- Lola Futerman on the barmitzvah of her grandson in Israel

ENGAGEMENTS

- Stanley and Jennifer Smidt on the engagement of their son, Wayne, to Batsheva Hadar
- Freda Wolff on the engagement of her granddaughter, Lisa Zaidel, to Stuart Kagan

BIRTHDAYS

- Corinne Flekser on her 60th birthday on 2nd April
- Arthur Aaron on his 80th birthday on 5th April
- Arnold Rapp on his 75th birthday on 9th April
- Irene Salomon on her 65th birthday on 11th April
- Avrielle Metzger on her 65th birthday on 11th April
- Solly Smith on his 90th birthday on 12th April
- Julia Rajak on her 101st birthday on 23rd April

- Gary Stein on his 45th birthday on 25th April

ANNIVERSARIES

- Herbert and Linda Mayer on their 40th anniversary on 9th April

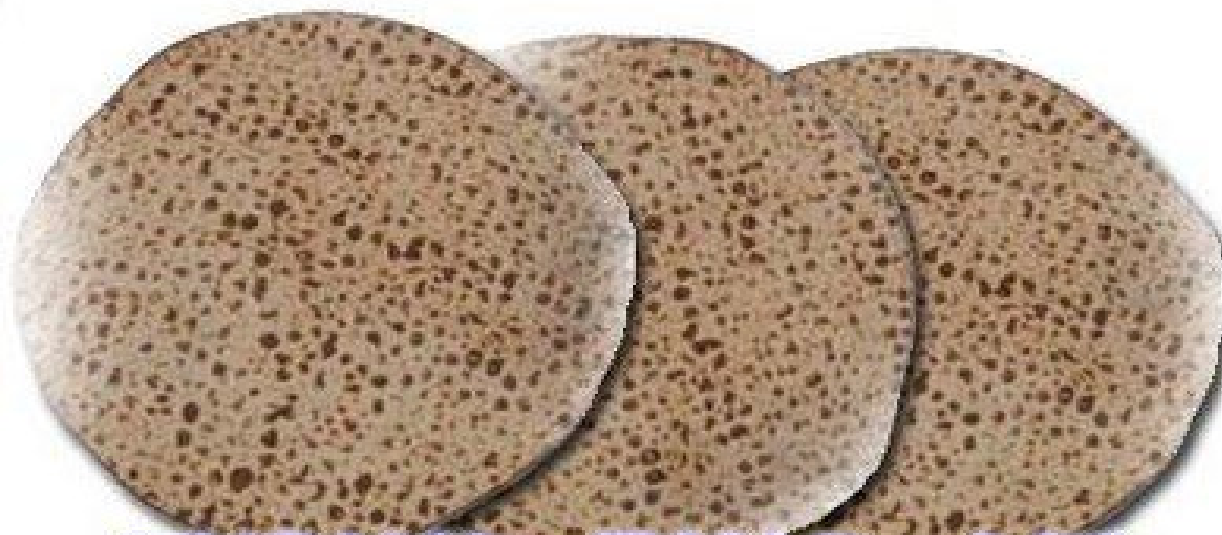
BEREAVEMENTS

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



- Les Wainer and Merle Wainer on the death of their father, Dennis
- Israel Gurwicz on the death of his wife, Ruby
- Stan Solarsh on the death of his mother

May Hashem comfort them and their families among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem and grant them long life.



חג כשר ושמח