

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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April 2016

Nisan 5776

SHABBAT TIMES

🕒 Parasha - 🕒 Candle Lighting

🕒 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)

For service times see pages 2 & 3

15 & 16 April – 8 Nisan

🕒 Metzora (*Shabbat Hagadol*)

🕒 5:33 – 🕒 6:22

22 & 23 April – 15 Nisan

Pesach Day 1

🕒 5:27 – 🕒 6:16

29 & 30 April – 22 Nisan

Pesach Day 8

🕒 5:21 – 🕒 6:10

6 & 7 May – 29 Nisan

🕒 Acharei

🕒 5:16 – 🕒 6:06

13 & 14 May – 6 Iyar

🕒 Kedoshim

🕒 5:12 – 🕒 6:02

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Have you bought a new outfit to wear for Pesach? Why bother with new clothes, I ask you? What is wrong with the suit or dress that you wore at last year's Seder?

"What a naive rabbi," you must be thinking, "does he not know that clothes go out of fashion? Does he not realise that the same attire that made me look absolutely stunning a year ago would now make me look like an absolute idiot in Shul this year? He could perhaps be forgiven for not having noticed that last season's finery would be most unflattering on me today."

All right, I concede, you are entitled to a new outfit for Yomtov.

But, I ask, why are you then content with last year's Seder experience? Other than minor adjustments to the menu, will your Seder not be a virtual duplication of last holiday's? Same songs; same Haggadah readings; same Matzah, Maror, Charoset; same Four Questions asked and same answers given?

Clothes, as we know, enhance a person's appearance. Well-tailored garments can make a person look glamorous. But an outfit only beautifies if it fits. If we wear a suit or dress that we have outgrown, it will make us objects of ridicule rather than of admiration, even if the value of the garment exceeds our charge card's credit limit. As children grow into youths and then into adults, their wardrobe must constantly be upgraded.

The Midrash refers to Mitzvot as the *Garments of the Soul*. Mitzvot enhance and beautify our spiritual appearance. In the same way that our body grows in a physical sense, our Soul grows spiritually.

Our religious growth is an ongoing experience. We never remain at a constant level; we always strive to extend our horizons and to reach greater heights. The clothes that our Soul wore

last year no longer fit. They will not enhance our countenance. They are out of style, too small, too tight, or too loose and make us look sloppy and unkempt.

Last year's Seder is now out of style. Just as you have gone (or will still be going) out shopping for a new outfit to wear, spend time preparing for your spiritual Seder experience. Go out and shop for a new Haggadah with different commentaries and insights. In keeping with the Hagaddah's instructions "that the more one discusses the Exodus from Egypt the more praiseworthy" there are several new editions of this book, with new insights and commentary, published every single year. Read up and discover new dimensions to Pesach that you will share with the other participants. Learn a new song; find a new Pesach related story. Whether you are leading your own Seder or a guest, there will be the opportunity for you to share something novel and fresh.

Yes, same Four Questions and Dayenu and same Matzah and Maror, but in keeping with the fashion of 2016.

Whatever you do, don't just recycle last year's Seder. You will look really funny.

Have a Kosher and Happy Pesach.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

It is a few hours to my birthday and I am standing at my window looking out and reflecting (in).

Yesterday on the way to shul, Ita and I were discussing the change in weather. While we are still wearing summer clothes and the temperatures are still reaching scorching heights, there is an "undercurrent", an ominous chill in the breeze. A definite announcement that winter is on its way. We were discussing how we prefer spring to autumn – and I was left wondering if it's simply because of what spring tells us is coming, and what autumn is announcing.

I have never been one who lies about my age. I feel proud of each year that has passed and wear my age as a badge of honour. I feel young, in fact I am still young. But, like the autumn, there are some little signs that time is marching on multi focals, some creaking joints, dry skin

As I look out of the window I see luscious green grass, trees swaying slightly in the breeze, flowers, a beautiful blue sky and I hear lots of birds and crickets. It is autumn. It is beautiful, it is peaceful, it is nature in its magnificence..... and I continue to wear my age as a badge of honour and pray that as I move forward it will be into an autumn and winter that is most magnificent.

According to tradition on birthdays we have an extra ability to bless and so I use this chance to bless you all with good health and beautiful lives always.

Have a good month

Rivky

DVAR TORAH**THE MYTH OF RELAXATION**

by Shlomo Yaffe (chabad.org)

A recent Wall Street Journal article discussed the results of a fascinating study. People who work under high pressure conditions will often take time off to get away from it all, relax and "decompress"; this, common wisdom assumes, is the way to alleviate the accumulative effects of stress. Alas, the study's findings indicate that a cycle of intense stress followed by utter relaxation does nothing to counter the deleterious physical and mental health effects of chronic stress. The only thing that really helps is learning to respond in effective ways to stress-inducing situations as they arise. Relaxation is not what heals stress, but reshaping our day-to-day behavior in a way that makes for a less stressful life.

Passover is a celebration of our capacity to attain freedom in "every generation" (as the Haggadah challenges us), to leave whichever "Egypt" our souls languish in. Yet when we think of freedom, we usually think in terms of being free of care, worry and the burdens of life - - in other words, freedom equals "relaxation". Passover seems to contradict this with its laws on banishing every crumb of leaven from every nook and cranny of our home, with the requirement to eat precise amounts of matzah and drink a certain measure of wine with each of the "four cups". Religiously speaking -- without eating and drinking the specified amounts, we have not really celebrated the Seder.

Is this focus on detail freedom? Indeed, there is no

other true freedom. We are physical beings living in a world of myriad details and minutia. If we say, "I can only spread my wings and feel uplifted when I transcend the body, the earth, and all its petty details," we are basically saying that G-d cannot be felt here in our world. In this model, G-d is imprisoned in the sublime, and we are imprisoned in the petty. Escaping the petty won't help either -- sooner or later we'll need to return from the vacation, and then we're back to square one.

Passover responds by telling us that if we truly want our spirits to soar, we must find G-d in the details of the world we live in -- in the same way that stress is not eliminated by escaping our life-frameworks, but by remaining within them and transforming them from within. At the Passover Seder, the ordinary act of eating embodies the will of the infinite, packaged in a few mouthfuls. G-d is not imprisoned, and neither are we. G-d can be wherever G-d chooses to be, even in the act of eating a piece of matzah or the sounds of a small child asking the Four Questions. And we, too, are set free, as we discover the transcendent in the stuff of everyday life.

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday and Public Holidays 8:00

Monday to Friday 7:15

22/04 (Erev Pesach): 7:00

09/08 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00

Shabbat & Festivals 9:00

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Sunday to Friday 5:45

from 17/04 5:30

from 01/05 5:15

For Pesach service times see page 3

PESACH 5776 TIMETABLE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SHABBAT
17 April 9 Nissan	18 April 10 Nissan	19 April 11 Nissan	20 April 12 Nissan	21 April 13 Nissan	22 April 14 Nissan	23 April 15 Nissan
Shacharit: 8:00 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m.	Shacharit: 7:15 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m.	Shacharit: 7:15 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m.	Shacharit: 7:15 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m.	Shacharit: 7:15 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m. <i>Last day to sell Chametz Checking for Chametz in the evening</i>	EREV PESACH Shacharit: 7:00 a.m. <i>Siyum after the Service</i> <i>Eat Chametz until 9:45 a.m. - Burn & Annul Chametz before 10:45 a.m.</i> Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m. <i>First Seder in the evening</i> ⌚ 5:27 p.m.	1st DAY PESACH Shacharit: 9:00 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:15 p.m. <i>Second Seder in the evening</i> ⌚ 6:16 p.m.*
24 April 16 Nissan	25 April 17 Nissan	26 April 18 Nissan	27 April 19 Nissan	28 April 20 Nissan	29 April 21 Nissan	30 April 22 Nissan
2nd DAY PESACH Shacharit: 9:00 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m. ⌚ 6:15 p.m.	First Day Chol Hamoed Shacharit: 7:00 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m.	Second Day Chol Hamoed Shacharit: 7:00 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m.	Third Day Chol Hamoed <i>Public Holiday</i> Shacharit: 8:00 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m.	Fourth Day Chol Hamoed Shacharit: 7:00 a.m. <i>Eruv Tavshilin</i> Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m. ⌚ 5:22 p.m.	7th DAY PESACH Shacharit: 9:00 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m. ⌚ 5:21 p.m.*	8th DAY PESACH Shacharit: 9:00 a.m. Yizkor: 10:15 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:15 p.m. ⌚ 6:10 p.m.
⌚ Candle Lighting -- * Light from pre-existing flame – ⌚ Shabbat or Chag ends (Havdalah)						

WHAT TO DO, AND HOW TO DO IT

★ **Sale of Chametz (Must be completed before Friday 22 April at 8:30 a.m.)**

During the eight days of Pesach one may neither eat nor own any Chametz (leavened food). It is not practical to consume or to physically get rid of all Chametz before the onset of Pesach. One may however sell all Chametz to a non-Jewish person - if the sale is valid according to Jewish law then the Chametz is not 'owned' during Pesach.

The technical details of this sale are involved because the goods do not physically change hands. It is highly recommended that you appoint a rabbi as your proxy to sell your Chametz before Pesach. The rabbi will also re-purchase your Chametz from the Gentile at the completion of Pesach

★ **Bedikat Chametz (Thursday 21 April in the evening)**

This is the traditional search for Chametz (leaven and leavened products), using a candle, wooden spoon and feather. It is customary to hide ten pieces of bread around the house. These are then "found" when the search is performed.

Before starting recite the following Bracha

BARUCH ATA ADO-NAI ELO-HEINU MELECH HA-OLAM ASHER KIDESHANU BEMITZVOTAV VETZIVANU AL BI-UR CHAMETZ.

When the search is complete, recite the following formula to annul any Chametz that you have not found (original Aramaic text can be found in the first pages of most Haggadot):

ANY FORM OF LEAVEN THAT IS IN MY POSSESSION WHICH I HAVE NOT SEEN OR HAVE NOT REMOVED, OR HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF, SHALL BE NULL AND DISOWNED AS THE DUST OF THE EARTH.

★ **Siyum (Friday 22 April after the morning service)**

All male first-born are obligated to fast on the day before Pesach to commemorate the miracle of their salvation from the plague of Death of the First Born. There is one way that this obligation is waived: if the first-born takes part in a festive Mitzvah-meal, such as the meal after a Bris, or after a Siyum (the completion of a tractate of the Talmud). A Siyum will be made in Shul after the morning service.

★ **Burning of Chametz (Friday 22 April before 10:45 a.m.)**

Any Chametz found in the course of the previous evening's search and any other leftover Chametz is burnt at this stage.

There will be a fire available at the Shul's service entrance (North Avenue side) for burning of Chametz between 10:15 and 11:45 a.m.

★ **Annulment of Chametz (Friday 22 April before 10:45 a.m.)**

The second formula for annulling the Chametz is recited after the Chametz has been burnt (Here again the original Aramaic text can be found in the first pages of most Haggadot.)

ANY FORM OF LEAVEN THAT IS IN MY POSSESSION WHICH I HAVE SEEN OR HAVE NOT SEEN, WHICH I HAVE REMOVED OR HAVE NOT REMOVED, SHALL BE NULL AND DISOWNED AS THE DUST OF THE EARTH.

★ **Eruv Tavshilin (Thursday 28 April before 5:30 p.m.)**

It is forbidden to cook on a Festival for the next day. When a Festival occurs on a Friday we are allowed to prepare food for Shabbat provided the preparations begin before the Festival. For this purpose we make an Eruv Tavshilin (literally "mingling of the foods") on the day preceding the Festival.

An Eruv Tavshilin consists of a challah roll or matzah, along with any other cooked food (e.g. meat, fish or egg), that we set aside before the Festival begins and then eat on Shabbat.

The Eruv foods are taken in the hand and the Bracha is made, followed by this declaration:

BA-RUCH A-TA ADO-NAI E-LO-HEI-NU ME-LECH HA-OLAM A-SHER KI-DE-SHA-NU BE-MITZ-VO-TAV VE-TZI-VA-NU AL MITZVAT ERUV.

THROUGH THIS IT SHALL BE PERMISSIBLE FOR US TO BAKE, TO COOK, TO PUT AWAY [A DISH TO PRESERVE ITS HEAT], TO KINDLE A LIGHT, AND TO PREPARE AND DO ON THE FESTIVAL ALL THAT IS NECESSARY FOR THE SHABBAT.

The Eruv is eaten at one of the Shabbat meals.

MAZALTOV**BARMITZVAH**

- Mazeltov to Arnold and Marion Rapp on the Bar-Mitzvah of their grandson, David.

ENGAGEMENTS

- Mazeltov to Ivan & Jo-An Epstein on the engagement of their daughter Saige to Michael Davar in London.

MARRIAGES

- Mazeltov to Phillip and Rilla Jacobson on the marriage of Ariel Flax to Tali Laing.

BIRTHDAYS

- Solly Smith who celebrates his 94th birthday on 12th April.
- Auriel Wittert who celebrates her 80th birthday on 19th April.
- Robert Soicher who celebrates his 50th birthday on 28th April.

REFUAH SHLEIMA

We wish a Speedy Recovery to

- Sylvia Jossel

**BEREAVEMENTS**

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



- Ronald Goldberg on the death of his wife, Henriette
- Joe Pollack on the death of his son, Lawrence.



Let all who are HUNGRY come and eat

It is an old and widespread custom to give Tzedakah during the first part of the month of Nisan to enable the less fortunate to celebrate Pesach in an adequate and dignified manner. This is in keeping with the declaration we make at the beginning of the Seder, "all who are hungry, let them come in and eat." Collections are thus taken up by our welfare organisations, and in particular by the Chevra Kadisha, specifically for this purpose. To assist those in need within our community, now is a good time to make a contribution to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund. This can be sent to the Shul office or deposited directly into ABSA account 38043260534 (Branch code 632005)

**OXFORD'S HALL OF REMEMBRANCE**

The plaques in the Hall of Remembrance record the names and the date of death of departed loved ones. The lights on the plaques are lit on the Yartzeit and also whenever Yizkor is recited. A special Hazkara memorial prayer is also recited during Yizkor.

Cost of a plaque is R540 for the first plaque ordered, R360 for subsequent plaques. Order your plaque before 20 April to ensure it is up before Yizkor on the last day of Pesach, 30 April

DELEGATION OF POWER FOR SALE OF CHAMETZ

I, the undersigned, fully empower and permit Rabbi Chaikin to act in my place and stead, and on my behalf to sell all Chametz possessed by me, knowingly or unknowingly as defined by the Torah and Rabbinic Law (e.g. Chametz, possible Chametz, and all kinds of Chametz mixtures).

Also Chametz that tends to harden and adhere to inside surfaces of pans, pots, or cooking utensils, the utensils themselves, and all kinds of live animals and pets that have been eating Chametz and mixtures thereof.

Rabbi Chaikin is also empowered to lease all places wherein the Chametz owned by me may be found, particularly at the address/es listed below, and elsewhere.

Rabbi Chaikin has full right to appoint any agent or substitute in his stead and said substitute shall have full right to sell and lease as provided herein.

Rabbi Chaikin also has the full power and right to act as he deems fit and proper in accordance with all the details of the Bill of Sale used in the transaction to sell all my Chametz, Chametz mixtures, etc., as provided herein.

This power is in conformity with all Torah, Rabbinic and Civil laws.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address/es:

Sale of Chametz can be done:

- In person (ideal method) - present completed form to Rabbi Chaikin
- By post: ☐ P.O. Box 87406, Houghton, 2041 (post early!)
- By fax: ☐ 011-486-2214 or by email ☐ info@oxfordshul.com
- By telephone (emergencies only): ☐ 011-646-6020

This form must reach Rabbi Chaikin by Friday 22 April at 8:30 a.m.