

# THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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April 2024

Nisan 5784

## SHABBAT TIMES

🔊 Parasha - 🕯 Candle Lighting  
🕯 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)  
For service times see page 2 & 3

19 & 20 April – 12 Nissan  
🔊 Metzora (Shabbat Hagadol)  
🕯 5:29 – 🕯 6:18

26 & 27 April – 19 Nissan  
🔊 Chol Hamoed Pesach  
🕯 5:23 – 🕯 6:13

3 & 4 May – 26 Nissan  
🔊 Acharei Mot  
🕯 5:18 – 🕯 6:08

10 & 11 May – 26 Nissan  
🔊 Kedoshim  
🕯 5:14 – 🕯 6:04

## RABBI'S MESSAGE

There is one passage in our Haggadah that is sure to grab our attention and focus our emotions at this year's Seder, more than ever. It is a short paragraph but one replete with meaning, always, and particularly this year. I am referring to the section of the Haggadah when we lift our glasses and sing Vehi She'amdah. "It is *this* that has stood by our ancestors and us. For not only one has risen up against us to destroy us. In every generation they rise to destroy us. But the Holy One Blessed be He delivers us from their hands."

Many tunes have been composed over the years to these powerful words. In my opinion, the most moving is Yonatan Razel's 2015 release, which gives haunting might to the liturgy. (If you don't know it, make sure to look this up on YouTube.)

But what exactly is *this*? It is vague enough to leave room for varied interpretation and commentary.

From the context it would seem to refer to the previous passage, where mention is made of the Covenant between G-d and Abraham, and Hashem promising salvation for His Chosen People.

The Hebrew word for *this* is Vehi (וְהִיא) with the four letters representing the respective numerical values of 6 sections of the Talmud, 5 books of the Torah, 10 Commandments and 1 G-d. The meaning would thus be that it is our adherence to and study of Torah, and our faith that bring us Divine protection.

This also refers to the glass of wine (the second of four) that we hold up as we sing the beautiful words. For filling it is Kosher for Passover wine which we have purchased for the Four Cups, a symbol of the observance of those ritual laws. The enactment to drink kosher wine was put in to prevent assimilation, to help us remain true to our own values while living among and integrating in the bigger world around us.

And this year when we say *this*, we also think of the soldiers of Tzahal, of Iron Dome and other technologies, of our intelligence and of our allies, all working to ensure that they may rise up against us but that we will not be defeated. So what does *this* actually refer to? Possibly all of the above. It is G-d's promise to us and our own observance of our side of

the Covenant that has preserved us.

In the past, we thought of history as we sang the song. This year, as our hostages linger in Gaza tunnels, our soldiers are mobilised on the front and our brothers and sisters are sitting in fear of Iranian drones and missiles, we are thinking now. But we will prevail. We've got *this*.

Wishing you Chag Pesach Kasher veSameach.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

## FROM THE REBBETZIN

I took the linen off my father's bed today. He isn't coming for Shabbos. I pressed it all across my face and tried to inhale his smell. It was not there anymore.

I got off the telephone with a friend and went to call my father to share the gossip and then I remembered...

I drove on the street of his house and he wasn't home. Just a big hole in my heart.

Over the past few days we have heard over and over of my father's greatness and the impact he made on the world. For me he is just "Daddy."

I am fascinated by human emotions. The capacity we have to live happy and sad at the same time. I was on the telephone talking to a friend when Ita messaged me to say I should watch the video call of my granddaughter making her bat mitzvah speech. At the same time I was being called to urgently go visit my father. In the car to my father's house, we

watched the Bat Mitzvah and I finished the conversation with my friend. Each of the three things took up my whole self. Concerned friend, proud grandmother, and panicked daughter.

I think the short word for all of that is life.

With the loss of my father there will be different emotions too. None will be conflicting. They will go side by side. We will cry and we will laugh. I will think of him as the great community man and then I will think of him just as my father. I will try to internalize his wisdom and advice. I will smile at some of the things that bothered me. I will glow in the love and pride he had for me and my family. I will continue to worry when I do things he didn't like.

So, he will be at my Shabbos table.

He will be cheering me on.

He will be there as I cook and serve the food he loved.

He will be there in my heart, and in the stories and memories we share.

He will be there in the values we uphold.

I will always love him.

While I will miss him so much that it hurts, I will also have him with me constantly.

Wishing you a Chag Pesach Kosher Vesameach.

Have a good month

*Rivky*

## SERVICE TIMES

### SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Monday and Thursday	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00

### MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Friday	5:45
from 26/04	5:30

## DVAR TORAH

### Haggadah Tidbits

*By Tzvi Freeman (chabad.org)*

#### All the Days of Your Life

Here's the whole debate: The Torah says to remember the story of the Exodus not just every day, but "all the days of your life." Ben Zoma says that means it's not enough to remember it in the daytime; you have to mention it at night as well. The rest of the sages disagree. They say you have to mention it only once in the morning. The extra "all" in "all the days of your life" is to tell you that we'll be telling this story even after Moshiach comes.

It turns out that the rabbis are also debating another important point: In the messianic era, will there be any point in recounting the miraculous story of how we left Egypt?

Ben Zoma would tell you, "No way! After seeing the entire world enter an era of wisdom and peace, we will tell that story instead. As for miracles—we will be ever aware of all the amazing miracles constantly surrounding us!"

But the rest of the rabbis disagree. They say that even after all the incredible miracles when we leave this final exile—way beyond the miracles of Egypt—we will still make mention of the exodus from Egypt. Because that's when it all began.

Which means that all the days since that first mass escape are really one long exodus. Every day, whatever we are doing, wherever we are doing it, is another step in leaving our personal exile, and the exile of the whole world. It's just that leaving Egypt was the first leap forward, and ever since then, we're running on that impetus.

All human freedom began with the Exodus."

#### Originally, Our Ancestors Were Idolaters . . .

Abraham was the first iconoclast—meaning, an idol-smasher. Abraham saw that demagogues were abusing the natural awe and wonder of the human soul to establish their power over society.

All on his own, he rediscovered a forgotten truth—that there's really only one source of all power and existence, and He has nothing to do with what these charlatans were preaching.

Most importantly, Abraham had a conviction that this all-powerful being is just, and cares about what's going on down here with us little creatures. And so, he stood up for justice and compassion.

And that's how the Jewish people got started.

#### And This Is What Has Stood for Us . . .

People are looking for miracles. Why did they happen back then, and not today?

But the fact that you are here today and you know you are a Jew is the greatest of miracles.

Just because we don't notice the miracles doesn't make them any less miraculous.

#### This Matzah That We Eat...

We ran out of Egypt. Because we were liberated by an outside force, it was only a partial liberation. You're really free only when you achieve freedom from within.

But in messianic times, we won't have to run. That liberation will be achieved by our own hard work and suffering over these many years of exile.

So it will be real, through and through. There will be nothing left from which to run. Everything of this world will remain, and it will all be good.

Because everything G-d made is inherently good. It's just that it's up to us to reveal that good.

## PESACH 5784 TIMETABLE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SHABBAT
21 April 13 Nisan	22 April 14 Nisan	23 April 15 Nisan	24 April 16 Nisan	25 April 17 Nisan	26 April 18 Nisan	27 April 19 Nisan
<i>Last day to sell Chametz Checking for Chametz in the evening</i>	<b>EREV PESACH</b> Shacharit: 7:15 a.m. <i>Eat Chametz until 10:00 a.m. - Burn &amp; Annul Chametz before 11:00 a.m.</i> Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m. <i>First Seder in the evening</i> ‏‏‏ 5:27 p.m.	<b>1<sup>st</sup> DAY PESACH</b> Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m. <i>Second Seder in the evening</i> ‏‏‏ 6:16 p.m.*	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> DAY PESACH</b> Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. ‏‏‏ 6:15 p.m.	<b>First Day Chol Hamoed</b> Shacharit: 7:00 a.m. ‏‏‏ 5:23 p.m.	<b>Second Day Chol Hamoed</b> Shacharit: 7:00 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m. ‏‏‏ 5:23 p.m.	<b>Shabbat Chol Hamoed</b> Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. ‏‏‏ 6:13 p.m.
28 April 20 Nisan	29 April 21 Nisan	30 April 22 Nisan	1 May 23 Nisan	2 May 24 Nisan	3 May 25 Nisan	4 May 26 Nisan
<b>Fourth Day Chol Hamoed</b> Shacharit: 8:00 a.m. ‏‏‏ 5:22 p.m.	<b>7<sup>th</sup> DAY PESACH</b> Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. ‏‏‏ 6:11 p.m.*	<b>8<sup>th</sup> DAY PESACH</b> Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. Yizkor: 10:45 a.m.. ‏‏‏ 6:11 p.m.	<b>Issru Chag</b>	Shacharit: 7:15 a.m.	Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m. ‏‏‏ 5:18 p.m.	<b>SHABBAT</b> Shacharit: 9:30 a.m.. ‏‏‏ 6:08 p.m.

‏‏‏ Candle Lighting -- \* Light from pre-existing flame – ‏‏‏ Shabbat or Chag ends (Havdalah)

## WHAT TO DO, AND HOW TO DO IT

## ★ Maot Chittim

It is an old and widespread custom to give Tzedakah during the first part of the month of Nissan 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 deposited directly into ABSA account 38043260534 (Branch code 632005) or made via secure credit card link [pay.oxfordshul.com](https://pay.oxfordshul.com).

## ★ Sale of Chametz (Must be completed before Monday 21 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 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. Sale of Chametz can be done online at <https://tinyurl.com/OxfordChametz>

## ★ Bedikat Chametz (Sunday 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:

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 (Monday 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).

## ★ Burning of Chametz (Monday 22 April before 11:00 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 10:30 and 11:00 a.m.

## ★ Annulment of Chametz (Monday 22 April before 11:00 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.

**MAZALTOV**

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

**BIRTHDAYS**

- Frank Wilks on his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April
- Stuart Buxbaum on his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April

- Judith Feinberg on her 85<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April

**BIRTHS**

- Philip and Rilla Jacobson on the birth of a great granddaughter to Rabbi Mendel and Sara Malka Shishler in Johannesburg

**MARRIAGES**

- Raymond and Hillary Isakow on the marriage of their son David to Omer Kochav on 17th April in Israel

**BEREAVEMENTS**

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



- Rivky Chaikin on the death of her father, Rabbi Koppel Bacher
- Steven, Kevin and Neill Lampert and Lisa Friedman on the death of their mother, Julie Lampert.

Wishing You a  
Kosher  
and  
Happy  
Pesach