

# THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

April 2025

Nisan 5785

## SHABBAT TIMES

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

4 & 5 April – 7 Nissan

🔁 Vayikra  
🕯 5:44 – 🕯 6:33

11 & 12 April – 14 Nissan  
🔁 Tzav (Shabbat Hagadol)

🕯 5:37 – 🕯 6:26

18 & 19 April – 21 Nissan  
Seventh Day Pesach

🕯 5:31 – 🕯 6:20

25 & 26 April – 28 Nissan

🔁 Shemini  
🕯 5:24 – 🕯 6:14

2 & 3 May – 5 Iyar

🔁 Tazria & Metzora  
🕯 5:19 – 🕯 6:09

## RABBI'S MESSAGE

*"It is not going to happen again for another 20 years..."*

*"How can you say that? Do you not believe Mashiach is going to come before then?"*

I came across the above exchange on social media and was quite amused, though the retort was profound.

The reference is to Pesach starting on a Saturday night, a rather uncommon occurrence. Because of its rarity, people forget how to go about it. Not very complicated, but different than when Erev Pesach is on a weekday. Because of Shabbat all Seder/Passover prep must be completed 24 hours earlier. And many of the pre-Pesach practices are shifted across the prior days,

for the same reason. Full instructions on how to go about this are on page 3 of this newsletter, so no need to stress.

The next time this will happen is in 2045, indeed.

But this is only in the very unlikely and highly tragic event that Mashiach is not here by then. (Can the world exist that much longer without him?).

As instructed to us in the 4th of the special pre-Pesach portions we read just a few days ago in shul, Hashem has handed over the establishment of the Jewish calendar to our courts. Specifically, it is the Sanhedrin (the highest halachik court) who have the power to determine the length of months and years on ongoing basis. Months can be 29 or 30 days long (hence one or two days Rosh Chodesh); years can have 12 or 13 months.

In the Fourth Century (CE) Hillel II was the head of the Sanhedrin. He foresaw the imminent dissolution of this body, which would mean the collapse of our unique calendar and acted preemptively. He developed an algorithm to calculate the dates for centuries ahead, then proceeded to formally consecrate this calendar with the authority of his position.

The calendar we use today is still based on Hillel's calculations and declarations. This is how we can know the days and dates of festivals decades and even centuries ahead—and why we know there will not be a first Seder on a Saturday night for another 20 years.

But we are leaving out the Mashiach element, which will mean the restoration of Sandhedrin. At that stage it will be their prerogative to decide when festivals are held, and in 2025, it may be that the first day Pesach is not a Sunday.

May Hashem keep us and preserve us alive and in good health for many more years. At the very least, may we merit Mashiach in our lifetimes.

Note: Should Mashiach arrive before this Pesach, the reconstituted Sanhedrin will not have the authority to change the date for this year, as this must be done before the month of Nissan has begun. So even if we do not know about 2025, we are certain about the starting day of pesach this year. Hence full instructions on how to go about this in the newsletter, without any fear of sounding like a Mashiach heretic.

Chag Pesach Kasher veSameach

*Rabbi Yossi Chaikin*

**FROM THE REBBETZIN**

Life is a roller coaster of emotions. This was most apparent to me last week. On Sunday we kept the first yartzeit for my father o"n—such a strange emotion. I have been told that time heals. I am not sure exactly what that means, and I so deeply wanted to have a discussion with him about that! The next day my nephew got married in New York and the day after was my birthday, this year a milestone one, BH.

I have spent many hours looking back, introspecting, thinking and talking about the past years: the many things that have made me proud and happy; the other things that have been difficult, or have flopped, or been sad.

I have so much gratitude for the incredible blessings that I have been granted: my husband, my children and grandchildren, my family, friends, students and acquaintances, who make my life so very rich and special; my health which I do not take for granted.

In fact, I take none of it for granted. I spend a lot of time every day thanking Hashem over and over and asking Him to please continue blessing me and the people around me.

Wishing you all a kosher and freilichen Pesach.

Have a good month.

*Rivky*

**SERVICE TIMES**  
**SHACHARIT (A.M.)**

Monday & Thursday)	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:30

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

Friday	5:45
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**DVAR TORAH****Matzah After Midnight**

by *Yanki Tauber (chabad.org)*

When you were a child, you were blessed with faith. The world was good, people were good, and being good yourself was simply a matter of following the the dos and don'ts of life which G-d had told you Mom and Dad.

Then you grew up, met some of the bad guys, and found that following the rules doesn't always pan out the way you imagined it would. Morality muddled into an amalgam of maybes, ifs and usuallys. Faith alone wasn't enough anymore: you also needed intellect, sensitivity, feeling, will and desire to navigate this thing called life.

When you first married, you were blessed with faith. Your husband/wife was the most good-hearted, intelligent, beautiful, talented, caring and loving person in the universe. Your love for each other would get you through anything. Then your marriage aged, acquiring wrinkles, an irregular heartbeat and bouts of dementia. Love alone just wasn't enough anymore: you also needed intellect, sensitivity, feeling, will and desire to maintain the relationship.

You begin in faith, and move on to experience. But there is also a third stage: a stage in which the faith reemerges. A stage in which you discover that your spouse really is the greatest, most wonderful person in the universe. A stage in which you discover that the world is good, that people are good, that the G-d-given dos and don'ts are the formula for a meaningful life. No, it's not as simple and straightforward as your youthful faith saw it. But this mature, complex, thoughtful, willed and inspired faith has something that youthful faith didn't have: it has a density, a texture, a taste. A richness.

You've returned to that original faith, that same faith which shone so bright and hard because it wasn't saddled with knowledge and

experience. Now, however, your faith co-exists with — indeed feeds upon — your knowledge and experience. The roots of your faith reach deeper than them, its crown towers higher than them, but it also leans against them and is fortified by them.

Matzah is the most basic icon of the festival of Passover. The biblical name for Passover is "The Festival of Matzahs." For eight days, this flat, "unleavened bread" displaces all leavened forms of the staff of life. And on Passover eve, the three seder matzahs, enthroned on their special plate at the head of the table, take center stage in the seder rituals.



But there's no small amount of confusion surrounding the significance of the matzah. The sages of the Talmud and the Kabbalah give it different — even conflicting — names: "The Bread of Affliction," "The Bread of Poverty," "The Bread of Humility," "The Bread of Instruction," "The Bread of Faith," "The Bread of Healing."

And then there's the matter of timing: Just when was the matzah born? At the beginning of the seder we announce, "This is the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt..." But later in the evening, we recite: "This matzah that we eat, for what reason [do we eat it]? Because the dough of our fathers did not have time to become leavened before the King of the kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to them and redeemed them."

Thus we have pre-Exodus matzah and post-Exodus matzah. Or, as they're referred to in the teachings of Chassidism, pre-midnight matzah and post-midnight matzah.

For matzah, the bread of faith, has two faces. It is the faith of "poverty" which thrives in pristine souls free of the tangles of intellect and the burdens of experience. And then, when it emerges from the other side of the night, it is a faith enriched by the very elements that stifled it in its years of exile.

# PESACH 5785 TIMETABLE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SHABBAT
		<p><i>Wishing You a Kosher and Joyous Passover</i></p> <p><b>חג פסח כשר ושמח</b></p>		10 April <b>12 Nissan</b>	11 April <b>13 Nissan</b>	12 April <b>14 Nissan</b> <b>EREV PESACH</b>
				Shacharit: 7:15 a.m. Fast of the First Born Last day to sell Chametz: Checking for Chametz in the evening (after nightfall)	Burn & Annul Chametz before 11:00 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:45 p.m.  ⚡ 5:37 p.m.	Shacharit: 9:00 a.m. Last time to eat Chametz is 10:00 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:45 p.m. First Seder in the evening ⚡ 6:26 p.m.*
13 April <b>15 Nissan</b>	14 April <b>16 Nissan</b>	15 April <b>17 Nissan</b>	16 April <b>18 Nissan</b>	17 April <b>19 Nissan</b>	18 April <b>20 Nissan</b>	19 April <b>21 Nissan</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> DAY PESACH</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> DAY PESACH</b>	<b>First Day Chol Hamoed</b>	<b>Second Day Chol Hamoed</b>	<b>Third Day Chol Hamoed</b>	<b>Fourth Day Chol Hamoed Good Friday</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> DAY PESACH</b>
Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m. Second Seder in the evening Omer: Count 1 Tonight  ⚡ 6:25* p.m.	Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:30 p.m. Omer: Count 2 Tonight  ⚡ 6:24 p.m.	Omer: Count 3 Tonight	Omer: Count 4 Tonight	Shacharit: 7:00 a.m.  Omer: Count 5 Tonight	Mincha/Maariv: 5:45 p.m. Omer: Count 6 Tonight  ⚡ 5:31 p.m.*	Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:45 p.m. Omer: Count 7 Tonight  ⚡ 6:20 p.m.
20 April <b>22 Nissan</b>	21 April <b>23 Nissan</b>					
<b>8<sup>th</sup> DAY PESACH</b>	<b>ISRU CHAG Family Day</b>					
Shacharit: 9:30 a.m.  Omer: Count 8 Tonight ⚡ 6:19 p.m.	Shacharit: 8:00 a.m.  Omer: Count 9 Tonight					

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

## WHAT TO DO WHEN PESACH BEGINS ON SATURDAY NIGHT

★ **Sale of Chametz** -- Must be completed before Friday 11 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. An additional challenge, this year, is that the sale, contracted on Friday morning, is only to take effect the next day. It is therefore highly recommended that you appoint a rabbi as your agent to sell your Chametz before Pesach. The rabbi will also re-purchase your Chametz from the Gentile at the completion of Pesach.

★ **Fast of Firstborn** -- Thursday 10 April after the morning service

When G-d slew the firstborn of Egypt, He spared the firstborn sons of Israel. Out of gratitude, all firstborn sons fast on this day. Because Erev Pesach is on Shabbat this year the fast is brought forward to Thursday. To avoid fasting, simply participate in a “Siyum” the formal completion of a Talmudic tractate, on the morning of the fast: the spiritual achievement and ensuing celebration are cause enough to void the fast.

★ **Bedikat Chametz** -- Thursday 10 April in the evening

Conduct the formal search of your house for chametz after nightfall. This is normally performed on the eve of Pesach but is brought forward by twenty-four hours this year due to Shabbat. It is customary to hide ten pieces of bread around the house. These are then “found” when the search is performed. We traditionally use a candle, wooden spoon and feather for our search: the candle lights the way; any chametz found is swept by the feather onto the wooden spoon and dumped into a paper bag. Begin searching with this blessing:

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

After your search, put the bag—containing the chametz, feather, candle and spoon—in a place you won’t overlook, until the morning (when it is burnt), and recite this disclaimer (original Aramaic text can be found in the first pages of most Haggadot):

**ALL LEAVEN OR ANYTHING LEAVENED WHICH IS IN MY POSSESSION, WHICH I HAVE NEITHER SEEN NOR REMOVED, AND ABOUT WHICH I AM UNAWARE SHALL BE CONSIDERED NAUGHT AND OWNERLESS AS THE DUST OF THE EARTH**

★ **Burning of Chametz** -- Friday 11 April before 11:00 a.m.

The morning after your chametz search, retrieve your bag of chametz, take it outside and burn it in a safe place. Chametz is usually burnt on Erev Pesach, but because it cannot be done on Shabbat it is done a day early.

Only Chametz that will be needed for the Shabbat meals is left over. For this reason, the traditional second formula for annulling Chametz is not said at this stage.

There will be a fire available in the Shul driveway (North Avenue entrance) for burning of Chametz between 10:30 and 11:00 a.m.

★ **First Shabbat Meal** -- Friday 11 April in the evening

Because it is forbidden to make the house *Pesachdik* on Shabbat, all Shabbat food must be Kosher for Pesach and must be cooked and served in Pesach utensils and dishes. However, Hamotzi must be made over Challah (as Matzah may not be eaten on Pesach eve). Care must be taken to eat well away from the table so that Pesach dishes and cloths do not come into contact with Challah—ideally eating in a different room or even outdoors—and all crumbs must be carefully swept up and disposed of.

★ **Second Shabbat Meal** -- Saturday 12 March before 10:00 a.m.

Once again Hamotzi is made over Challah at this meal. Because Chametz may not be eaten after 10:00 a.m. the meal must take place early in the day. The procedure is the same as the previous night. Any leftover Chametz must either be given away to a non-Jew or crumbled up and flushed away.

At Shul, we will begin Shacharit at 9:00 a.m., followed Kiddush and Hamotz and brocha.. Torah reading and Musaf will begin at 10:15 a.m..

★ **Annulment of Chametz** -- Saturday 12 March before 11:00 a.m.

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

**ALL LEAVEN OR ANYTHING LEAVENED WHICH IS IN MY POSSESSION, WHETHER I HAVE SEEN IT OR NOT, WHETHER I HAVE OBSERVED IT OR NOT, WHETHER I HAVE REMOVED IT OR NOT SHALL BE CONSIDERED NAUGHT AND OWNERLESS AS THE DUST OF THE EARTH.**

**MAZALTOV**



We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

**BIRTH**

- Mazal tov to Philip and Rilla Jacobson on the birth of a great granddaughter, born to Levi & Nechama Salek in New York

**BIRTHDAYS**

- Margot Cohen on her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 8<sup>th</sup> April.
- Ruth Kuper on her 91<sup>st</sup> birthday on the 21<sup>st</sup> April



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 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 done via EFT to ABSA account 38043260534 (Branch code 632005) or by secure credit card at [pay.oxfordshul.com](http://pay.oxfordshul.com). Please use "Pesach" as the reference.

