

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

August 2012
Av / Elul 5772

SHABBAT TIMES

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

10 & 11 August – 23 Av

⇄ Ekev

🕯 5:29 – 🕯 6:19

17 & 18 August – 30 Av

⇄ Re'eh (*Rosh Chodesh*)

🕯 5:32 – 🕯 6:22

24 & 25 August – 7 Elul

⇄ Shoftim

🕯 5:35 – 🕯 6:24

31 August & 1 September – 14 Elul

⇄ Ki Tetze

🕯 5:38 – 🕯 6:27

7 & 8 September – 21 Elul

⇄ Kii Tavo

🕯 5:41 – 🕯 6:30

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

With only six weeks to go before the Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur Olympics of 2012, training and preparation at Oxford Shul is hotting up!

Together with the well known and popular disciplines, a few new contenders have entered into the games, having recently qualified. This past Shabbos the Shul trialled an explanatory service. The idea of an explanatory service is to pause briefly during the service with an explanation of the prayer, the order of the service and/or some his-

tory behind it. It was very well done and very well received, and a BIG shekeiach to the Rav. A few other contenders are still in trial heats, for example, new format shiurim for men and women... keep a close watch on your local news provider, but do book your tickets now for the opening ceremony, it will be a cracker!

We're pleased to welcome to the team Avi Gudelski who will be taking on the enormous task of services and activities for the Oxford kids. He'll be starting this coming Shabbos, 10th August. Please bring your children and support Avi who is putting in a big effort to make this a success. We wish him every success.

I would also like to welcome back from his holiday our choir master, Bryan Isakow. It's great to have you back.

Wishing you all a good August.

Regards

Brian Levy

RABBI'S MESSAGE

It's been Olympics, lots of Olympics for the past couple of weeks. South Africa's hero has been Oscar Pistorius, who managed to reach the semi-finals for the men's 400m last weekend. We're all rooting for him as he now moves on to his next challenge, the 4 x 400m relay race. The heats are on Thursday and we hope he and his team qualify. But we will not be watching the actual race on Friday—we will be busy in a relay of our own.

A relay race normally consists of four legs. There are longer races with larger teams. The largest relay event in the world is the Norwegian Holmenkollstafetten, consisting of 2,255 teams of 15. The race in which we are currently taking part has more than 100 members in each team and involves millions and millions of individuals.

It began 33 centuries ago at Mount Sinai. This is where we were given a mission: Hashem instructed us to change the world, to transform it from darkness to a G-dly, spiritual world filled with Divine light. To do this He gave us 613 Mitzvot—commandments we must follow that will enable us to fulfill this mission.

But there is so much darkness to get rid of—we cannot do it alone... Besides, no individual Jew can possibly fulfil all 613 commandments. Not just because they are so many. Not all of them apply to everybody. There are mitzvot for men and mitzvot for women only. In some cases you must be a Kohen, or a Levi, or an Israelite. Many mitzvot can only be fulfilled if you are living in the Holy Land. Then there are so many of the commandments that were only applicable in the days when the Temple stood in Jerusalem and cannot be performed today.

Indeed, this is a race that can only be run by a team. In any given generation, we unite with people all around the world to observe as many of the mitzvot that can be done at that time. The men do it for the women; and the women for the men—each individual does what he or she can and together we are all doing it all.

There is the power of the relay: each member of the team does the utmost in the time allocated to him. No individual can reach the finish line on their own, but by joining forces we all get further quicker.

The most crucial moment in a relay is the handing over of the baton. If it is dropped, then the race cannot proceed. In the relay of Jewish generations, teaching and motivating each successive link is the most vital element to assure continuity. Parents must make sure to impart to their children the knowledge they need to become full team members. More importantly they have to make

sure that their progeny is willing to join in the running.

Athletic relay runners have worked out that the best way to hand over the baton is for both to run, concurrently, for a few paces. If one is running and the other static, chances are that the handover will not be smooth. But when both team members are in step, it is less likely that the baton will be dropped. That is also how we pass on our tradition to the next generation—both must be in sync and moving forward, together, for it to be successful.

Over 100 generations are rooting for us, because the success of all of their endeavours depends on each of us assuming our role in the race forward. And we also know that our own personal success hinges on us completing our mission and also assuring that we have put succession in place.

This is why, on Friday night, we will not be watching Team SA in the 4 x 400m. For the members of Team Jew, it will be Shabbat. As has often been said, more than the Jews have kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jews. For it is at Shabbat tables throughout the centuries, where parents and children have sat together, that the baton has been passed on.

The finish line is not far away. All the signs are there. These 3300+ year-long Olympics are nearly over. We have done what we had to, and soon the world we have transformed, as a team, will be a true home for G-d.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

Ita is wailing in the next room. She had a horrible day at school. I am supposed to be writing an article for the shul newsletter and nothing is turning out. You see, mothers cannot really multitask. It's a lie.

We all know that when your child hurts there is nothing else a mom can do at the same time. For a parent their child's happiness and welfare are their number one priority.

Next week is Rosh Chodesh Elul, the beginning of our intense count up to Rosh Hashana, with all the physical and spiritual preparation Yom Tov entails. We are all hoping and praying for a sweet, good new year.

We remind Hashem for too many of his children this year has been a difficult one. We beg of him that this coming one should be just sweet and good. That, as our father, our happiness and welfare should be His number one priority.

Have a good month

Rivky

SHACHARIT (A.M.)	
Sunday and Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00
MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)	
Sunday to Friday	5:30
from 02/09	5:45
Shabbat	5:15
from 01/09	5:30

DVAR TORAH**WHEN EVERY MILLISECOND COUNTS**

*By Rabbi Efrem Goldberg
www.aish.com*

There are many lessons to extract from the Olympics currently taking place in London, England. Olympians serve as models of being extraordinarily focused and determined to realize the goals they have set for themselves. They are not satisfied with anything less than putting forth their very best effort and achieving the best results. Watching them reminds us to pursue our dream goal with everything we have.

There is another lesson that strikes me during this Olympic season. Most of us tend to devalue time. Young people think that they will live forever and have endless amounts of time before them. Older people sometimes feel that the prime of their lives is over and spend the days trying to pass the time. Contemporary society has even developed an idiom "killing time." Technology has made this task easier as we can pass the hours mindlessly surfing the web, playing on our smart phones or flipping the channels.

From a Jewish perspective killing time is considered a suicide in installments. Time is among the most precious commodities that we have. Once it has passed, it cannot be recovered. If it is wasted, it cannot be made up. There is a limited amount of it allocated to each one of us and with every passing second we come closer to emptying our account. As badly as we would like to slow it down sometimes, or speed it up at others, we cannot control time as it moves along at a steady pace entirely beyond our controller manipulation.

Each moment of our lives is precious and pregnant with possibility. We have the choice to fill our time with noble pursuits like helping others, improving ourselves, challenging our minds, developing our souls, caring for our bodies, or connecting with family and friends. Or, G-d forbid, we can allow time to pass without anything meaningful, squandered, wasted and unused.

As endless and limitless as time may seem in our lives, in truth every single moment counts. There is no place that we see the value of every second more poignantly than the Olympics. Athletes train their entire lives building up to this moment. Whether diving into a pool or pushing off the starting line of the track, everything they have worked for comes down to this. Races are often decided in the fraction of a second. The difference between qualifying or staying home, winning a medal or simply showing, being celebrated or a forgotten can be a millisecond.

Not only must we make every day in our lives count, every hour, every minute and as the Olympics teaches us, every millisecond matters, and can make or break us. If we combine all those milliseconds that we waste, we can find the time we think we don't have, to pursue noble endeavors and to achieve our goals, aspirations and dreams.

A Jew once asked Rav Yisroel Salanter "if I only have 15 minutes a day to learn, what should I learn, Bible, Talmud, the Prophets or Jewish law?" Rav Yisroel answered, "Learn Mussar, character development, and you will realize that you have much more than 15 minutes a day to learn."

THE MONTH OF ELUL

www.chabad.org

The origins of Elul as a month of special Divine grace and mercy go back to the time of Moses, in the year 2448 from creation (1313 BCE)--the first year after the Jewish people went out of Egypt.

Seven weeks after the exodus, the people of Israel received the Torah at Mount Sinai and entered into an eternal covenant with G-d as His chosen people. But just 40 days later, while Moses was still up on the mountain, they violated their special relationship with G-d by worshipping a golden calf. Upon descending from the mountain and witnessing their transgression, Moses smashed the two stone tablets on which G-d had inscribed the Ten Commandments; he then returned to Mount Sinai for a second 40 days to plead with G-d on Israel's behalf.

On the early morning of the 1st of Elul, Moses once again ascended Mount Sinai, taking with him the stone tablets he had hewn, by divine command, for G-d to re-inscribe the Ten Commandments. On the mountain, G-d allowed Moses to "see My back, but not My face" (which Maimonides interprets as a perception of G-d's reality but not His essence) -- the closest any human being ever came to knowing G-d -- and taught him the secret of His "Thirteen Attributes of Mercy" (Exodus 33:18-34:8).

For the third time, Moses remained on the mountain for 40 days, from the 1st of Elul until the 10th of Tishrei (Yom Kippur), during which time He obtained G-d's whole-hearted forgiveness and reconciliation with the people of Israel. Ever since, the month of Elul serves as the "month of Divine mercy and forgiveness."

Elul begins on 19 August

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Ruth Rappoport on the birth of a great grandson
- Cynthia Katz on the birth of a grandson
- Ronald and Susan Woolf on the birth of a granddaughter
- Sarah Copelowitz on the birth of a great granddaughter

BAR/BATMITZVAHS

- Selwyn and Jenny Steinhauer on the batmitzvah of their daughter, Serena

MARRIAGES

- Stanley and Jennifer Smidt on the marriage of their son, Wayne, to Batsheva Hadar

BIRTHDAYS

- Sam Nudelman on his 55th birthday on 1st August
- Lewis Freeman on his 94th birthday on 1st August
- Millicent Sacks on her 80th birthday on 3rd August
- Craig Nudelman on his 25th birthday on 4th August
- Myriam Goldberg on her 90th birthday on 12th August
- Sabina Sweidan on her 96th birthday on 16th August
- Barry Sinclair on his 83rd birthday on 28th August
- Dawn Nates on her 65th birthday on 29th August

- Maureen Goldblatt on her 75th birthday on 26th August
- Hilary Isakow on her 55th birthday on 28th August

REFUAH SHLEMAH

We wish a Speedy Recovery to:

- Alan Zev
- Ken Marks
- Sarah Copelowitz

**BEREAVEMENTS**

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



- Elaine Gavshon on the death of her husband, Maurice

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

**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*

**PURCHASE A LEAF IN OUR
“SIMCHA TREE”**

to mark a happy occasion in your family

Cost of each leaf is R 360.00 - For details please contact the office