

# THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

August 2013

Elul 5773

### SHABBAT TIMES

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

2 & 3 August – 27 Av

🔊 Re'eh

🕯 5:24 – 🕯 6:14

9 & 10 August – 4 Elul

🔊 Shoftim

🕯 5:27 – 🕯 6:17

16 & 17 August – 11 Elul

🔊 Ki Tetze

🕯 5:30 – 🕯 6:20

23 & 24 August – 18 Elul

🔊 Ki Tavo

🕯 5:33 – 🕯 6:23

30 & 31 August – 25 Elul

🔊 Nitzavim

🕯 5:36 – 🕯 6:26

6 & 7 September – 3 Tishrei

🔊 Vayelech

🕯 5:39 – 🕯 6:29

### CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Even though we were in the month of Av these past weeks we have been privileged to have celebrated quite a few simchas at the shul culminating in a wonderful barmitzvah. It was great to see the shul so full.

The AGM will be taking place the week of the 18th of August. The notice of the AGM and agenda points will be sent out in due course. Please attend as it is quite an important meeting.

Anyone who is willing to be part of the committee is welcome. Please either chat to me or give the office a call.

With just a few weeks to go before Rosh Hashana, yes its round the corner, the Shul has begun its preparations.

If you have any friends or family who need a shul to call home, send them our way.

Lastly, Mazal Tov to Rabbi and Rivky on the upcoming marriage of their son Mendel, in New York.

We wish them all mazal and brochas. May we all only have simchas.

Warm regards.

*Brian Levy*

### RABBI'S MESSAGE

On Wednesday 1 Elul (7<sup>th</sup> August) we start blowing the Shofar, heralding the countdown to Rosh Hashana. "Wake up," the piercing, shrill sound tells us, "you are in the last month of the year. The Day of Judgment is getting nearer."

There is no doubt that a Jew behaves differently during the month of Elul. The soul can intuitively feel that the High Holidays are coming

up. The result is that we are more careful and more deliberate in the way we speak or act. So there is less Lashon Hara, more attention to Kashrut, Shabbat, our relationship with our friends and family. Each of our actions, words and even thoughts are carefully weighed against the measure of our Torah value system.

"Hypocritical?" one may ask. After all is said and done, we are judged on Rosh Hashana for the entire year's behaviour, not just for the desperate last-ditch attempts to ingratiate ourselves before G-d. And clearly Hashem cannot be fooled. So, why not just be ourselves and be honest with our Maker?

This raises a very fundamental question: who, in fact, is the real me?

Let me illustrate my point by way of a well-known Chassidic story:

A certain Chassid left his home shtetel for business purposes. Living in the big city, he did not feel comfortable walking around with the full Chassidic regalia. He thus started dressing in a business suit, as he thought befits a respectable person of his stature. But of course the civvies were reserved for the city. On every visit back home, when he came to see the Rebbe, he would once

again don the full Chassidic garb, including the long black jacket, the fur hat and the knee-length socks.

This carried on for years until one day the Chassid thought to himself, "why am I being a hypocrite? Why do I need to pretend and dress up for the Rebbe. I must just be honest with myself and with him." On his next visit, the man went home, sans Chassidic garb. As was his custom, he set off for the house of his mentor, and put out his hand in greeting. "Shalom Aleichem, Rebbe... Please excuse my appearance. I have decided I no longer have to pretend and to dress up for you, so I've come clothed the way I normally do."

The Rebbe gave his pupil a deep, long, penetrating glance. Then, with a sigh, he said, "so it seems that it was for me you that have been dressing up. I am so disappointed. All along, I assumed you were getting dressed up for them."

So this is in fact the question each one of us must ask ourselves: which one is the real me? The Jew of the whole year or the Jew of the month of Elul? The person who talks as he pleases, eats what he pleases, partakes in whatever comes his or her way? Or the individual who is deliberate and calculated in each of his or her actions, testing each thought, word and deed against an ethical and moral standard.

What the Shofar is really telling us is, "be true to your real self."

Ketiva vaChatima Tova

*Rabbi Yossi Chaikin*

## FROM THE REBBETZIN

As soon as I have made a list, I feel like everything is under control and I can relax. This time however there are so many lists that I dare not relax.

"What to pack for us"

"What to pack for them" (did you know that in America you cannot get chutney, sweet chili sauce, deodorant etc.?)

"What to put in hand luggage"

"What needs to be done here before we leave"

"What needs to be done in New York before we come"

"What needs to be done here while we are away"

and so the lists continue. But with only two days to go until we leave P G it seems that many things on my lists may just land up unticked. I am starting to feel a little (or a lot?) anxious!!

One of the big lists is that of gratitude. I need to spend every moment thanking Hashem once again for this wonderful brocha – to all travel for a simcha and especially to be all together for a short time. So every time my stomach churns, my heart palpitates... or my head boggles, I try to breathe deeply and say thank you again.

Thank you also to everyone who has showered us with their blessings. We wish we could have our simcha with you. Please make a lechaim that night (August 7th).

Traditionally this is the time of year we wish each other a Shana Tova. May it be one filled with good and lots of lists of things to do for simchas, P.G.

Have a good month.

*Rivky*

## DVAR TORAH

### THE HIGH HOLIDAY ANTHEM

by Shlomo Yaffe ([chabad.org](http://chabad.org))

Nations, states, provinces and even some Japanese corporations have anthems.

An anthem is a piece of music that expresses the essence of the entity it celebrates, a common theme which unites all of the diverse people and variegated activities of life in that place.

For example, there are a lot of different types of gatherings at which the "Star Spangled Banner" is played in the United States. Some are happy and some sad. Some are deeply serious, and some are frivolous. Some are large and some quite small. The common theme the anthem gives voice to is: we are proud to be Americans, and are grateful for the opportunities this country has given us; we know that our felicity and security has been bought with sacrifice and blood, and we know that only absolute steadfastness in protecting our liberties will retain them. We are cognizant of these truths both when swearing in a new president and when enjoying ourselves at a baseball game, as they are equally crucial to both.

The High Holiday season also has an "anthem."

We are now entering a season of profound, powerful, and experientially diverse days on the Jewish calendar. The festivals and special dates of this season pluck every string of our being and sound virtually every note our soul can sing.

During the month of Elul we engage in introspection and self-evaluation.

On Rosh Hashanah, we explore our personal and communal connection to G-d and renew our belief that we can make a difference in our world.

During the Ten Days of Return which climax on Yom Kippur, we confront the negativity in our past. We then connect ourselves to our ultimate Source at a level deeper than our shortcomings can reach, and with the power of that bond transform the bitterness of the past into the sweetness of a better future.

With this new-found closeness to the transcendent, we then enter the festival of Sukkot, where every aspect of our lives is embraced and suffused with the presence of G-d's love for us and our reciprocal love of G-d -- an experience that engenders the great happiness which culminates in the consummate joy of Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah.

These experiences are very varied, yet are part of a single continuum. They have an anthem that expresses that continuity.

The "anthem" of the High Holiday season, which spans the Jewish months of Elul and Tishrei, is Psalm 27, "G-d is my Light."

For fifty days -- from the Rosh Chodesh ("head of the month") of Elul to the 7th day of Sukkot ("Hoshana Rabbah") -- we recite this psalm twice a day, morning and evening. Its opening line is the key to all of the

aforementioned experiences: "G-d is my light..."

The purpose of light is to reveal. It enables us to see clearly that which it shines upon. This anthem gives voice to our sense that during this time of year G-d is uniquely accessible, and we therefore can open the doors of our consciousness to G-d and allow His light to reveal all that we possess, but have somehow missed in the dimmed corridors of everyday life.

This light is the overarching theme of this season:

The light reveals our flaws.

It reveals our potential to transcend those flaws.

It reveals that our negativity runs no deeper than a bad dream from which we can awake with a surge of willed consciousness.

It reveals that our dream of perfection is a vision we are empowered to attain.

It reveals that we are not as far from G-dliness as we thought we were.

It reveals that we are not a separate entity from G-d, but an extension of G-d's essence.

It reveals our ability to see this Divine quality in everyone else, as well.

It reveals our capacity to rise above the pain of the transient and ephemeral.

It reveals our capacity to rejoice in the real and eternal.

As we say these magnificent words each day during this crucial period, let us open ourselves up to the G-dly light within us, and transform ourselves and our world -- for good.

#### PSALM 27

*Of David. G-d is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? G-d is the stronghold of my life; from whom shall I be frightened? When evildoers draw near to me to devour my flesh, my adversaries and my enemies against me -- they stumbled and fell. If a camp encamps against me, my heart shall not fear; if a war should rise up against me, in this I trust. One [thing] I ask of G-d, that I seek: that I may dwell in the house of G-d all the days of my life, to see the pleasantness of G-d and to visit His Temple every morning. That He will hide me in His tabernacle on the day of calamity; He will conceal me in the secrecy of His tent; He will lift me up on a rock. And now, my head will be raised over my enemies around me, and I will sacrifice in His tent sacrifices with joyous song; I will sing and chant praise to G-d. Hearken, O G-d, to my voice [which] I call out, and be gracious to me and answer me. On Your behalf, my heart says, "Seek My presence." Your presence, O G-d, I will seek. Do not hide Your presence from me; do not turn Your servant away with anger. You were my help; do not forsake me and do not abandon me, O G-d of my salvation. For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but G-d gathers me in. Instruct me, O G-d, in Your way, and lead me in the straight path because of those who lie in wait for me. Do not deliver me to the desires of my adversaries, for false witnesses and speakers of evil have risen against me. Had I not believed in seeing G-d's goodness in the land of the living! Hope for G-d, be strong and He will give your heart courage, and hope for G-d.*

#### SHACHARIT (A.M.)

|   |      |
|---|------|
| <b>Sunday and Public Holidays</b>             | 8:00 |
| <b>Monday to Friday</b>                       | 7:15 |
| <b>Shabbat &amp; Festivals</b>                | 9:00 |
| <i>06/08 &amp; 07/08 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00</i> |      |

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

|                           |      |
|---------------------------|------|
| <b>Sunday to Thursday</b> | 5:15 |
| <b>from 04/08</b>         | 5:30 |
| <b>Friday</b>             | 5:20 |
| <b>from 09/08</b>         | 5:30 |
| <b>Shabbat</b>            | 5:15 |

**MAZALTOV**

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

**BIRTHS**

- Blima Nudelman on the birth of two great granddaughters and a great grandson

**BAR/BATMITZVAHS**

- Alan and Marice Lieberman and Robert and Fanny Lieberman on the barmitzvah of their son and grandson, Nathan
- Edeline Kantor on the batmitzvah of her twin granddaughters, Megan and Nicole Kantor

**ENGAGEMENTS**

- Alan and Gillian Bolon on the engagement of their daughter, Lindy to Matthew Bernath

**MARRIAGES**

- Chaikin and Bacher families on the marriage of their son and grandson, Mendel, to Tzippy Rivkin in the USA on 7<sup>th</sup> August

**BIRTHDAYS**

- Lola Futerman on her 75<sup>th</sup> birthday on 6<sup>th</sup> August
- Myriam Goldberg on her 91<sup>st</sup> birthday on 12<sup>th</sup> August
- Sabina Sweidan on her 97<sup>th</sup> birthday on 16<sup>th</sup> August
- Karen Sundy on her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday on 19<sup>th</sup> August
- Gerald Rubenstein on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on 25<sup>th</sup> August
- Bella Trapido on her 75<sup>th</sup> birthday on 26<sup>th</sup> August

**REFUAH SHLEMAH**

We wish a Speedy Recovery to:



- Willie Spark
- Audrey Kobrin
- Phyllis Krausz
- Sandra Sher
- Michael Freedman

**BEREAVEMENTS**

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



- Morris and Esther Bassin on the death of their son, Julian

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



## 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



## 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*