

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

August/September 2014

Av/Elul 5774

SHABBAT TIMES

🕒 Parasha - 🕒 Candle Lighting

🕒 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)

For service times see page 3

For times over Tishrei consult Tishrei calendar

12 & 13 September – 18 Elul

🕒 Ki Tavo

🕒 5:41 – 🕒 6:31

19 & 20 September – 25 Elul

🕒 Nitzavim/Vayelech

🕒 5:44 – 🕒 6:34

26 & 27 September – 3 Tishrei

🕒 Ha'azinu

🕒 5:47 – 🕒 6:37

3 & 4 October – 10 Tishrei

Yom Kippur

🕒 5:50 – 🕒 6:40

10 & 11 October – 17 Tishrei

Chol Hamoed Sukkot

🕒 5:54 – 🕒 6:43

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

As we near Rosh Hashana, preparing our hearts and souls so that we should all be signed and sealed for a gezun, healthy and happy year ahead, we also need to prepare and pray that our Shul and congregation have an equally wonderful year ahead.

We have recently experienced the most unbelievable acts of barbarism by an enemy who wants, amongst other things, the destruction of Israel and Jews by and large. The surge of anti-Semitism is worrying and Boruch Hashem to date South Africa has been a haven for us. We are privileged to have the freedom to practice our religion in the open, amazing infrastructures that serve the community and its needs without the threat faced by our European brethren, for example.

However, at no time should we be complacent and now more than ever, we need to be more prepared.

To this end, I appeal to you all again to do the following as per your ability:

- Volunteer to help with CSO duty at the Shul over Yom Tov and shabbosim

- Be hyper-vigilant. If you notice ANYTHING out of the ordinary or worrying please tell the people on security duty, myself or Lance Cohen who is heading up the security at Oxford. If you notice anything outside of Shul times then let the CSO know on 086 18 000 18

OSSAC has been an Oxford Shul upliftment program for many years. We have recently taken back the programme from Tikkun, who were running it for a while. It still provides learning opportunities to many people and I once again appeal to you to consider this in your donations and pledges this Yom Tov.

Lastly, I would like to welcome Heidi Wasserman who has joined our admin team, taking over from Cecile Hendler. She has been working overtime trying to catch up and we appreciate her efforts and wish her a happy stay at Oxford.

I would like to thank the Rabbi, Staff, Chazan and Choir for all their effort in preparation for the ensuing High Holy days, ensuring that it will be another wonderful Oxford Yom Tov.

Wishing everyone a Ketiva v'chatima tova.

Best regards

Brian

RABBI'S MESSAGE

A couple of nights ago I went into Shul after hours for some urgent work. I chanced upon the choir practicing for the High Holidays. Over and over, they sang Kol Nidrei. As I sat in my office listening to the words from the Yom Kippur service, a feeling of unease overtook my entire being.

I never look forward to the Yomim Tovim. Not just because this is the month when, in my job, I have to work much harder than I do the rest of the year. That is part of it, but that is a stress I can handle. It is the thought of the upcoming scrutiny by Hashem that makes me feel uncomfortable. Over these Days of Judgment, which are coming so soon, our souls will be bare before Him.

You know that feeling when you open up your diary and notice that you have a dentist appointment in a fortnight. Suddenly the teeth start to hurt. Not that the decay was not there before. But now that you know that the man in the white coat will stand above you and stick his probe inside those cavities, you become painfully aware that your dental hygiene is not one hundred percent what it should be. And for

the next few days, the brushing is more thorough than before, the flossing more regular.

It is for the same reason that some inexplicable discomfort permeates our being when it dawns on us that Rosh Hashana is only a few days away. We start reflecting on the state of our neshomos, our souls, as we discover that our spiritual hygiene has not been up to scratch. Nothing has really changed, but we suddenly become aware of it as we think of Hashem, peering into the abysses of our spirit and probing deep into every recess of our mind.

This is why we spend the current month of Elul spiritually flossing and brushing our neshomo. This means having a hard look at ourselves, improving the way we relate to our fellow human beings and the way we relate to Hashem. It means realising that there is more to our lives than the pursuit of earthly pleasures and that there is a higher purpose to our lives here.

No amount of brushing of teeth will reverse damage that is already there. The Machzor, however, makes constant mention of Teshuva, repentance, which has the power to heal a diseased soul and regenerate a decayed neshomo.

I wish you a Ketiva Vachatima Tova. May you be inscribed in the Book of Life for 5775 and have a year of good health and happiness.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

I have just returned from a most incredible trip to the U.S.A. My heart is bursting with hakarot hatov to Hashem for the blessings He has bestowed on us. I can only wish and bless each and every one of you that the year ahead is full of reasons for you too, to be able to thank Hashem for the blessings He bestows on you!

One of the drawbacks of being in galut is that no matter how blessed one is, there are always bumps and difficulties along the road. Whether they are personal or communal. We can never be truly happy when we and our friends, community or, in fact, any other Jew is in trouble or in need. So, I pray that, this year, those who have had suffering and difficulties and in particular, those living in stress in Eretz Yisrael should be blessed that all of those troubles come to an end and that the new year ushers in only peace and blessings for all.

Wishing you all a Shana Tova Umetuka—a good and sweet year. Leshana Tova Tikatevu Vetechatemu.

A good yom tov

Rivky

FROM THE CHAZAN

As Rosh Hashana approaches this year my usual preparations have taken on new meaning, as during this month I am getting married to my soul mate Tanya Kramer. How the past three years have flown as I started at Oxford Shul August 2011 and have not looked back.

One of my early memories is of the Rabbi, Brian Levy and Karen Shkudsky telling me, "you know, our past two chazzans came to Oxford single and they both got married thereafter..." This blessing has come true by me and perhaps it does have something to do with me joining Oxford Shul.

Looking forward to seeing you all in shul over Yom Tov and taking inspiration from the Tefilot and the days themselves.

Shana Tova

Tzvi

FROM THE YOUTH DIRECTOR

To those of you who don't know me yet, my name is Tanya (otherwise known as the fiancée of the beloved chazan, Tzvi) and I have recently been appointed as the new Youth Leader for Oxford.

I am so excited to be part of this kind and warm community. In the last few weeks we have been having a blast! The kids are eager to get to shul and upset to leave!

Over Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur the children's services will be bigger and better than ever! The kids will be able to connect to Hashem in a fun and creative way during the services. They will play enriching and educational games, where they are not only learning and having fun, but are also moulding themselves into leaders.

So please do them a favour and bring along the children, grandchildren and their friends to Oxford for the high holidays!

Tanya

FROM THE CHOIRMASTER

The Oxford Shul choir has developed into something very special and unique. This is purely because of the people involved. It is not just the choristers, but the Rabbi, the committee, the congregation, the staff that set up tea for our late night rehearsals and the Chazzan that make the help make the choir what it is. That is why I want to start my Yom Tov message with one of thanks. Thank you Rabbi Chaikin for supporting the choir, thank you to the Shul committee for believing in the choir, thank you to the congregation for accepting my interpretation of music and the way we sing, thank you to our Chazzan Tzvi for trusting in my methods and the work you put in, thank you to Petrus and Chico for setting up the choir room and making sure there is always something to eat and drink for us and lastly thank you to the choir. Mike, Allan, Adam, David, Gary, Selwyn, Harold and Micki, the choir would not be possible without you and the hard work you put in.

One of the most important aspects of singing is listening. Listening helps determine what kind of musical elements are needed such as; dynamics (loud or soft), tempo (fast or slow) or what kind of emotion goes into a piece of music. We can compare a choir to life, it is important to listen to what is going on around you, to look up and take in one's surrounds and to make sure we are all in tune with what is going on. That is my message to you this Yom Tov. Stop, listen and appreciate, and remember it is never too late to start singing.

Have a good Yom Tov at Oxford Shul and please enjoy the service.

Thank you

Bryan

DVAR TORAH

BLESS YOU!

By Yanki Tauber (chabad.org)

You are ushered into a small room where time has stood still for centuries. An oil lamp flickers on the table; holy tomes cover every inch of the walls. A tzaddik with piercing eyes and a gentle voice pronounces the magic formula.

That's the picture that comes to mind when we think about receiving a blessing. Blessings are other-worldly things, resorted to when some drastic intervention is needed in our lives.

The truth is much simpler and much more profound. Everyone needs blessing, each and every moment of his or her life. And everyone can bestow a blessing.

Chassidic teaching explains that the word berachah (blessing) literally means "drawing down." Everything in life -- health, prosperity, joy, wisdom, peace of mind -- needs to be drawn down from its potential, spiritual state into the actuality of our physical existence. It's all there -- spiritually we are all healthy, wealthy and wise. The "problems" we experience in life are basically a matter of something gone wrong in the wiring. We're not connecting; our spiritual and physical selves are having trouble communicating.

The solution? Bestow a blessing.

Here's how it works. Let's say that your friend Chaim is experiencing financial difficulties. So you put your arm around his shoulder and say: "Chaim! May G-d grant you the money that you need!" By saying these words sincerely, with warmth and love and joy, you've blessed him. You've

roto-rooted that clogged supply line, opening up the flow. Just like that? Just like that.

We've all had the experience of hearing someone else give voice to an idea or describe a course of action, and suddenly realizing that we've been carrying this idea or action around in our own minds for the longest time. But until that person verbalized it, it was trapped inside our heads. Although we "had" it, we couldn't do it or even consciously think it. We didn't have the words for it, so it wasn't real to us yet.

A similar thing happens when you bless someone. The potential has been there all along, but saying it makes it real.

Your friend needs the blessing because he has reached a limit of what he can make real of his spiritual resources on his own. With your caring and compassion, with your love and joy, you bond with him to make an expanded self, thereby broadening the channels and unsnarling the lines of communication between his soul and his body, between his heaven and his earth.

Of course, being a holy person increases your blessing-giving powers. But the only thing you really need is a loving heart. And a nice big smile.

May you all be inscribed in the Book of Life for a year of goodness, health and prosperity.

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 Thursday	5:45
from 05/10	6:00
Friday	5:45
Shabbat	5:30

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

ENGAGEMENTS

- Philip and Rilla Jacobson on the engagement of their grandson, Netanel Moshel
- Rabbi Yossi and Rivky Chaikin on the engagement of their son Shmuel to Shoshy Warszawsky.

WEDDINGS

- Mazeltov to Philip and Rilla Jacobson on the marriage of their grandson, Moshe Sarchi to Nechama Moss in Sydney, Australia.
- Mazaltov to Edeline Kantor on the marriage of her grandson, Bradley Kantor to Jenna Hosiosky.

BATMITZVAHS

- Mazaltov to Rabbi Yossi and Rivky Chaikin on Ita's Batmitzvah.

- Mazaltov to Philip and Rilla Jacobson and Rose Selesnik on the Batmitzvah of their granddaughter, Nechama Fox, in Pretoria.

BARMITZVAHS

- Ruth Stein on the Barmitzvah of her grandson, Dylan Dermik.

BIRTHS

- Mazaltov to Gerald and Shoshana Kaplan on the birth of a grandson.
- Mazaltov to Gary and Debbie Katzman on the birth of a daughter.
- Mazaltov to Brent and Vicky Davidoff on the birth of a daughter.

BIRTHDAYS

- Lilian Benard on her 21st birthday.
- Myriam Goldberg on her 92nd birthday on 12th August.
- Justin Abratt on his 70th birthday on 22 August.
- Anne Simon on her 80th birthday on 10 September.
- Percy Bloom on his 85th birthday on 22 September.

REFUAH SHLEMAH

We wish a Speedy Recovery to:



- Michael Don

BEREAVEMENTS

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:

- Rose Selesnik and Rene Gamsu on the loss of their daughter and sister, Devorah Nates.
- David Sussman on the loss of his father, Jack.
- Esther Bassin on the loss of her husband, Morris.
- Desmond Sweidan and Beverley Bonner on the loss of their mother, Sabina.
- Joe, Myron, Gary and Laurence Pollack on the loss of their wife and mother, Sybil.
- Madeleine Fane on the loss of her husband, Raymond

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

לשנה טובה תכתבו ותחתמו