

# THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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August 2025

Av & Elul 5785

### SHABBAT TIMES

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

15 & 16 August – 22 Av

🕒 Eikev

🕒 5:30 – 🕒 6:21

22 & 23 August – 29 Av

🕒 Re'eh

🕒 5:33 – 🕒 6:23

29 & 30 August – 6 Elul

🕒 Shoftim

🕒 5:36 – 🕒 6:26

5 & 6 September – 13 Elul

🕒 Ki Teitzei

🕒 5:39 – 🕒 6:29

### RABBI'S MESSAGE

From 15 Av – following a beautiful custom taught by the **Baal Shem Tov** – we begin wishing one another *Kesiva Vachasima Tova*.

For me, this is the quiet tap on the shoulder that the High Holidays are approaching. It's time to start preparing – not only with logistics, but with heart and soul. Here's my personal Elul to-do list. I share it in the hope that some of it may inspire you as well.

✅ **Arrange Chazan for Yom Tov** – I am pleased to share that my

son Betzalel will be leading services over Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. He did so in 2020, 2021, and 2022, and was much enjoyed by all. Having attended Oxford since the age of three, he's most familiar with our tunes and customs.

✅ **Order Mechitza for the big shul** – This is where our services will be held. The main shul has a unique aura and atmosphere – worth coming just to imbibe it.

🕒 **Sign off communications with “May you be written and sealed for a good year”** – Tradition has it that every instance of this creates a *defender* in the Heavenly Tribunal for the judgement on Rosh Hashanah.

🕒 **Spend the weeks in introspection and reckoning** – The month of Elul (starting 24 August) is the correct time for this, but there's no rule against starting early.

🕒 **Give extra charity** – The power of *\*tzedakah\** is intense, particularly during Elul. But there's no harm in starting now.

🕒 **Recite Psalm 27 twice daily every day of Elul** – this Psalm captures the essence of our relationship with Hashem during this period.

🕒 **Hear the Shofar daily** – Starting 24 August. The piercing sound puts me in the right frame of mind for the *Yamim Nora'im*.

🕒 **Reflect back on the past year** – Anyone I have offended? Elul is the right time to reconcile. You can help by letting me know if there is any reason you could be on that list.

Kesiva Vachasima Tova — may this year bring blessing, peace, and joy to all of us.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

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**IN THE NEWS**


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**Guyana's 'Last Jew'  
Dethroned**

*Chabad's rabbinical students spent eight days in the remote Caribbean nation*

*By Mendel Super (chabad.org)*

The first thing that hit them was the quiet. Georgetown, where Rabbis Mendel Zaklikovsky and Schneur Deren landed, is the capital of Guyana, one of the least densely populated countries on earth.

"It was a long drive from the airport to our rental," Zaklikovsky, 23, a New Jersey native, told Chabad.org. "We landed late at night. The streets were quiet, and we picked up a rental car and drove an hour to our accommodations, which was located near the U.S. embassy, an ideal location for us."

That area, Zaklikovsky describes, was key to their mission: locating Jews and connecting them with each other. The pair hung around the ex-pat neighborhood speaking with diplomats, oil executives and farmers, building a network of Jewish contacts.

Unlike neighboring Suriname, Guyana never had an established Jewish community.

From nearby St. Lucia in the eastern Caribbean, Rabbi Avromy Super, co-director of Chabad of St. Lucia with his wife, Sternie, oversees Chabad's activities in Guyana, visiting before major Jewish holidays, bringing Passover supplies and providing a Jewish connection in this isolated Jewish community.

To further Super's efforts, Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch—the educational arm of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement—added Guyana to this year's roster of Chabad's storied Roving Rabbis program, which since 1943 sees hundreds of Chabad's rabbinical students fan across the globe to reach isolated, remote and underserved Jewish communities.

Years of continued visits by the Roving Rabbis have often culminated with the placement of permanent Chabad emissaries.

Raphael Ades, an Israeli ex-pat living in Guyana since 1972, recalls visits from Rabbi Yossi Shuchat, today a Chabad emissary in Las Vegas, and an earlier visit from Yitzchak Nemes, a stamp dealer doing business in Guyana whom the Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory—personally instructed to find a Jew there.

Ades, who has been widely touted as Guyana's

"Only Jew" in Jewish media outlets, is probably the Jew who has lived in the country the longest.

Ades followed his parents to Guyana, where they had a diamond business. Today, he's more involved in the tourism industry, organizing and leading tours throughout Guyana's nature.

"I am quite pleased with the work the Roving Rabbis have done," Ades told Chabad.org. "They traveled all over the country, to villages and farms, to connect with Jews."

**'We Came To Find You'**

On their first morning, the rabbis met a group of Israelis involved in cybersecurity and agriculture. The next day, they went to a farm to meet another one of the group who wasn't there the previous day.

The rabbis heard rumors of an Israeli-owned farm about three hours away, but nobody seemed to know who they were, or exactly where the farm was. With sparse information, the pair set out in their rental car to find the farm they weren't sure really existed. "We had no address, just a dirt road in the general area."

"Suddenly, a heavy rainstorm hit," Zaklikovsky reported. "Our car got stuck deep in the mud; our shoes were soaked, and the

vehicle kept sinking. After 20 minutes, a van drove by. We flagged it down and explained that we were looking for a Jewish farm. The driver said, 'Oh, the dairy farm? I'll take you there in my van.' He happened to forget his lunch at home and came back—something he never normally does.

"We arrived at the site—no animals yet, just workers. The owner wasn't present, but the secretary there called him. She arranged for workers to help tow our car from where we'd abandoned it. As we were heading out, muddy and tired, a man pulled up. We shouted, "Shema Yisrael!" and he responded, "Hashem Echad!"

Shocked, he asked, "How did you find me?" We told him: "We're emissaries of the Rebbe. We came to find you." The workers pulled our car out—the bumper fell off, and we were left sitting in an office full of mud and broken car parts, waiting five hours for the car to be repaired."

A self-proclaimed atheist, the fellow in the office wouldn't put on tefillin but engaged the rabbis in deep philosophical discussion for hours.

While he arranged for their car to be fixed, the farm manager shared his one positive childhood experience with Judaism: a Shabbat retreat to Kfar

Chabad, the Chassidic village near Lod, Israel, where he stayed at the home of a Chabad family and enjoyed the traditional Chassidic warmth, hospitality and joyful Judaism.

The rabbis gave him a charity box to keep in his office, and he placed a coin in it.

As they were pulling out, the farmer ran over with one last word: "I am still in shock. How did you find me?!"

Nadav Weiss, also from Israel, moved to Guyana with his wife, Michal, and their three young children, just a year ago.

"I wasn't surprised to see Rabbi Super's Chabad active here," he says, underscoring Chabad's global footprint that is so ubiquitous it is often taken for granted. "I used to live in Nigeria and Ghana in West Africa and became familiar with Chabad there."

"In a way," Weiss says, "we became almost a Chabad House here."

Super connected the Weiss family with other local Jews and sent them matzah to host a Passover seder, Chanukah menorahs for a Chanukah party, and they became the Jewish address in town. For Shabbat, Zaklikovsky and Deren joined Weiss and a motley group of Jews from

all over the world for a Friday-night meal.

"There's only so much Judaism I can bring to the table," says Weiss, "but the rabbis came with so much energy and wisdom, sharing inspiration from the Torah portion, singing traditional Shabbat songs. It was so good!"

That Friday night in Georgetown, Zaklikovsky, Deren, Weiss and the legendary Ades watched as history was made. "Our goal was to gather everyone we'd met for Shabbos. We hosted almost 15 people, including two Jews from Brussels who hadn't heard Shalom Aleichem sung in 40 years. It was a beautiful, emotional moment. Everyone shared a Jewish memory or story. Many of them didn't even know other Jews were living nearby."

And Ades? Despite being dethroned as Guyana's only Jew, he couldn't be happier: "I am quite satisfied, and G d willing, this will continue to grow."

## SERVICE TIMES

### SHACHARIT (A.M.)

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

### KABBALAT SHABBAT (P.M.)

Friday	6:00
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**MAZAL TOV**

We wish a hearty  
Mazal Tov to:

**BIRTHS**

- Doris Samson on the birth of a great granddaughter to Yehuda and Shifra Samson in Jerusalem

**BIRTHDAYS**

- Theo Rutstein on his 84<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August.
- Justin Abratt on his 81<sup>st</sup> birthday on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August.
- Stanley Yankelson on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August.
- Avril Wolpert on her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August.
- Estelle Levin on her 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August.
- Lewis Neuberger on his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August.
- Lindy Hoffman on her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August.
- Raymond Isakow on his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August.

# לשנה טובה תכתבו ותחתמו

