

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

December 2014/January 2015

Kislev/Tevet 5775

SHABBAT TIMES

🕒 Parasha - 🕒 Candle Lighting

🕒 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)
For service times see page 3

12 & 13 December – 21 Kislev

🕒 Vayeshev

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:29

19 & 20 December – 28 Kislev

🕒 Miketz (Chanukah)

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:33

26 & 27 December – 5 Tevet

🕒 Vayigash

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:36

2 & 3 January – 12 Tevet

🕒 Vayechi

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:39

9 & 10 January – 19 Tevet

🕒 Shemot

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:39

16 & 17 January – 26 Tevet

🕒 Vaera

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:39

23 & 24 January – 4 Shevat

🕒 Bo

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:37

30 & 31 January – 11 Shevat

🕒 Beshalach

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:33

6 & 7 February – 18 Shevat

🕒 Yitro

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:33

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It has certainly been a busy and eventful few months at Oxford. The High Holidays at Oxford were as meaningful and spiritual as always in our beautiful Shul. We had great attendances and the services were excellent. Sukkot was equally great.

Sheceiach to everyone who played a part from Rabbi,

Chazan, Choir, Tanya (Youth Director), Colin Bliss, Gaboim, Lance Cohen (head of our CSO arm) and everyone who helped with security, Rivky who helped out with a lot of the catering, Belinda and last but by no means least Petrus, Chicco and Connie who really worked hard with all the brochas and meals held over this period. Thank you to you all.

We held the special general meeting as advertised on the 28th October to discuss selling the Shul's house in Saxonwold. After a much relevant discussion a unanimous motion was passed to accept the offer of purchase. The sale process is now underway and again we need to thank Martin Lewison for all his time and effort in getting the Shul a great offer as well as everyone who took the time to attend and contribute to the meeting. It is most appreciated.

The plan forward is to move the Rabbi and family closer to the Shul in Killarney or Riviera, and to this end we have started looking at suitable properties in the area. The remainder of the proceeds from the sale of the house will be invested.

The water saga continues but we are getting there. Thanks to Stan Yankelson for all his time, effort and help in sorting out the issue.

Wishing you all a great December.

Hoping to see you all in Shul
Regards

Brian

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Sometime back, a congregant emailed me an article entitled "The Secrets of a Happy Marriage." It began as follows:

My wife and I have the secret to making a marriage last. Twice a week we go to a nice restaurant, have some good food, a little wine and companionship. She goes Tuesday and I go Thursday... I take my wife everywhere, but she keeps coming back...

I am not quite sure what the sender of the email had in mind. It was obviously just a joke, not intended for me specifically.

But behind every joke there is an element of truth and in this case the above little story would be what we call in Yiddish a *bitterer gelechter*.

My experience has shown me that many marriages survive because husband and wife lead separate lives, with little time shared and few common values. While the one spouse buries himself in the stresses of work the other runs around doing lift schemes, attending book club meetings and tending to various charities. Multiple TV sets in the home allow the family to spend evenings watching different programmes in different rooms.

Retirement often comes as a shock, as suddenly the two partners are spending much

more time together. Sadly, over the years, they have failed to invest enough into the relationship and there is little rapport between the couple.

Annual holidays can likewise be stressful. Families that keep themselves busy and out of one another's hair for the entire year, suddenly find themselves with time on their hands, in holiday accommodations more spartan and less spacious than their year-round home. Pressure begins to mount and what should be quality, family time ends up bringing out to the fore pain and suppressed resentment.

This is why, very sadly, the worst family issues surface over periods that should be times of togetherness and bonding: the Friday night family dinners, the Yamim Tovim and, often worst of all of them, the dreaded December holidays.

During the weeks and days ahead we would all do well to pay special heed to the advice of our rabbis in the Talmud (Yevamot 62b):

Our Sages taught: He who loves his wife as himself, and respects her more than himself, and leads his sons and his daughters on the right path, concerning him the biblical text reads, "And you shall know that your tent is peace."

Let us all try our hardest that the holidays are a time of shalom bayit, when the relationships within our family are strengthened through quality family time, so that we come away enriched, refreshed, and closer than before.

Have a great holiday and happy Chanukah

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

Most people know to turn to G-d and ask for help when they are facing hard times G-d forbid. What I have learnt, thank G-d, is the necessity to also ask for help when celebrating a simcha.

Simchas don't come alone; they don't allow you to stop the rest of your life while you celebrate. So simchas land up being hectic times. Just the planning, shopping, booking tickets, halls and hairdressers. Organizing clothing and gifts, and winter coats (it's freezing in N.Y!) and then paying for it all is plenty of stress.

The hardest part for me is the overwhelming emotions.

Of course our overriding emotion is joy.

Boruch Hashem, Shmuli has grown up into a man we are so proud of. He has found someone special and perfect to share his future. For this we are overjoyed and tremendously grateful.

As we pack our suitcases for our 2½ week trip, we are filled with the excitement and the anticipation of seeing our children and grandchildren too. Then we are filled with bitter sweetness, as we help Chanala pack up her room and get ready to leave home now, having completed matric.

There are the regular end-of-year emotions happening too – relief, exhaustion, self-assessment as we sum up the year that passed. And some brightness as we check work schedules and buy books for the year ahead. So when people meet me and ask, "so are you ready?" they have no idea how loaded their question is.

Can we ever be ready?

The only way is to turn to Hashem—to thank him for the incredible blessings He has bestowed on us and ask Him to help us enjoy the simcha.

May we all have simchos to stress over!

Rivky

DVAR TORAH

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EIGHT

(www.chabad.org)

1

Seven symbolizes the Natural order, for G-d created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, which He made holy, thus creating the holy Shabbos. Seven, therefore, represents the whole of Creation, or Nature.

Eight, on the other hand, being higher than seven, symbolizes the Super-natural. The human brain is a creation of G-d, and part of Nature. Human intelligence is therefore limited to the Natural order; anything which is above and beyond Nature is also above and beyond human understanding.

2

G-d, the Creator of Nature, is obviously over and above Nature. We cannot therefore understand G-d, or his ways. There are many things which we can know and understand about G-d: We know He is the Creator - from the world He created; we know He is wise and mighty - from the wonders we see in Nature; we know He is good and kind - because we see His goodness and kindness in our daily life. But even this knowledge cannot be a perfect knowledge, not to mention any knowledge of G-d Himself. We can know something of what G-d does but not what G-d is.

By the same token, the Torah and Mitzvot, which G-d gave us, and which contain G-d's wisdom and will, are also beyond our understanding, except in a limited way - to the extent that G-d revealed them, and

made them known to us. however, the wonderful thing about Torah and Mitzvoth is that the more Torah we learn and the more Mitzvoth we observe in our daily life, the more we become attached to G-d's wisdom and will. By being attached to G-d, we are no longer limited to our own human resources, but. are able to draw from the unlimited "storehouse" of Divine wisdom. In other words, the more Mitzvoth we observe, the more we understand them. It follows, therefore, that the way to understand G-d's Mitzvoth is to do them first. To say, "I want to understand them first, and then do them," is the same as saying, "I want to be able to swim before going into the water."

3

The Jewish viewpoint and attitude is that of Na'aseh V'Nishma-we will do (first) and (then) we will understand. This is how we accepted the Torah and Mitzvoth at Mount Sinai. At the time of Chanukah, the Jewish people faced a serious challenge to this view and way of life. Then came Antiochus, the Greek King of Syria, who held Eretz Yisroel under his power. The Greeks, at that time had many philosophers and men of science, who believed that there was nothing higher than the human brain and human intelligence. They did not believe in the true G-d, the Creator, because they did not understand G-d, and according to them, anything that could not be understood was not to be believed.

The Syrian king Antiochus of the Chanukah story got it into his head to force the Jews to give up their way of

life and to follow, instead, the Greek way of life. He wanted to force the Jews to give up the observance of all such Mitzvoth which seemed "unreasonable" to him. Among these Mitzvoth, which were especially forbidden by him, was also the Mitzvah of the Bris (Circumcision) which is carried out on the eighth day after the birth of a Jewish boy. As far as the Torah was concerned, Antiochus did not mind if the Jews studied it as a book of literature, or history, or anything else; so long as they did not believe in it as given by G-d.

4

For the first time in Jewish history, the Jewish way of life came into a head-on collision with the Greek way of life. It was an unequal struggle, for Antiochus had on his side vast and well trained armies which overran the whole country, eager to put to death any Jew, man, woman or child who disobeyed the King's orders. Under these circumstances, a number of Jews accepted the new order and the whole future of the Jewish people was in great danger.

Fortunately, a handful of Jews, led by Mattisyohu and his sons, openly resisted Antiochus. They kindled the flame of true faith in G-d, and with G-d's help the struggle against overwhelming odds resulted in a complete victory for the faithful Jews, who would not make any compromise with the enemy.

5

The victory of the Jews against the Greeks was not only a miraculous victory in the battlefield, but a great spiritual victory, the victory of light over darkness. This

victory of the spirit was emphasized by the miracle with the oil; One little cruse of pure olive oil, undefiled by the Greeks, was found in the newly rededicated Beth Hamikdosh, and instead of lasting for one day, it miraculously lasted for eight days.

The eight days of Chanukah, with the eight Chanukah lights, remind us that the victory which gave rise to this festival of Lights was not merely a "supernatural" victory for the "Weak over the mighty" and for the "Few over the many," but also a victory for the Jewish world-outlook and way of life, namely, that the true approach to Torah and Mitzvoth is not through the limited human intelligence, but rather through the actual fulfillment of the Mitzvoth first and foremost.

6

Chanukah also reminds us that the Jewish people are not subject to the laws of Nature, like other peoples and nations. For as long as there is even a minority of Jews who remain faithful to G-d and His Torah and Mitzvoth, in all their purity and holiness, without concession or compromise, there is no power on earth that can overwhelm them.

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday and Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
<i>22/12 & 23 12 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00</i>	
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Sunday to Thursday	6:15
Friday	5:45
<i>19/12, 26/12 & 02/01: 6:00</i>	
Shabbat from 20/12	6:15
	6:30

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

MARRIAGES

- Mazal Tov to Rabbi Yossi & Rivky Chaikin and family on the marriage of their son Shmuel to Shoshy Warsjawaski in New York on 8th December

BIRTHS

- Mazaltov to Annette Wolk on the birth of a great-grandson in Melbourne.

BIRTHDAYS

- Esther Wittert on her 80th Birthday on 5 December.
- Solly Burgin on his 88th birthday on 10 December.
- Rose Selesnik on her 92nd birthday on 16 December.
- Lorna Sonnenberg on her 80th birthday on 19 December.

- Michael Don on his 85th birthday on 19 January.
- Saul Kobrin on his 80th birthday on 31st January.

REFUAH SHLEMAH

We wish a Speedy Recovery to:



- Gerd Elsbach
- Louis Balkind

**CHANUKAH CANDLE LIGHTING SCHEDULE**

🕯 Tuesday, 16 December - Light candle at 7:30 p.m.

🕯🕯 Wednesday, 17 December - Light candles at 7:30 p.m.

🕯🕯🕯 Thursday, 18 December - Light candles at 7:30 p.m.

🕯🕯🕯 Friday, 19 December - Light the Chanukah candles first (after 5:32 p.m.), then the Shabbat candles. Make sure the Chanukah candles are long enough (or sufficient oil is used) so that they will burn until at least 8:00 p.m.

🕯🕯🕯🕯 Saturday, 20 December - Light candles only after Shabbat is out (7:33 p.m.) and after Havdalah

🕯🕯🕯🕯 Sunday, 21 December - Light candles at 7:30 p.m.

🕯🕯🕯🕯🕯 Monday, 22 December - Light candles at 7:30 p.m.

🕯🕯🕯🕯🕯🕯 Tuesday, 23 December - Light candles at 7:30 p.m.

Always place the candles on the right of the Chanukiyah. When lighting, kindle from left to right (the newest candle first)

All times are for the Johannesburg area only. Please inquire about local times if you are elsewhere.