

# THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER December 2019/January 2020

Kislev/Tevet 5780

### SHABBAT TIMES

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

6 & 7 December – 9 Kislev

🔊 Vayeitzei

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:25

13 & 14 December – 16 Kislev

🔊 Vayishlach

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:30

20 & 21 December – 23 Kislev

🔊 Vayeishev

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:34

27 & 28 December – 30 Kislev

🔊 Miketz (*Rosh Chodesh*)

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:37

3 & 4 January – 7 Tevet

🔊 Vayigash

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:39

10 & 11 January – 14 Tevet

🔊 Vayechi

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:40

17 & 18 January – 21 Tevet

🔊 Shemot

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:39

24 & 25 January – 28 Tevet

🔊 Va'era

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:37

31 & January & 1 February – 6 Shevat

🔊 Bo

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:33

### RABBI'S MESSAGE

“Maoz Tzur Yeshuati - Mighty Rock of My salvation...” These words come from the well-known Chanukah hymn which Jews all over the world sing after lighting the candles on this Festival of Light. Referring to G-d as the Rock is

unusual. It has its roots in the well-known verse from Deuteronomy (32:4): “Hatzur Tamim Po’alo” (The Rock, his deeds are perfect).

Hashem has many names. Why the use of this rather peculiar appellation in reference to the miracle of Chanukah?

The term Rock has the connotation of strength and dependability. In this day and age we humans sorely need solid unchanging values.

We constantly speak and hear of erosion: Moral values being worn away; the sense of social responsibility and of acting as good neighbours or just as plain decent human beings being lost; even the worth of our money eroding.

Up above is the Rock. The Source from which we are hewn. He will never change nor amend his Law, as we sing every Shabbat in Yigdal. To survive in this world where the torrents of immorality and evil swirl around us, we must hold on tight to this Mighty Rock of our Salvation.

Chanukah means dedication. It is a time for us to consecrate ourselves to the values, principles and

precepts contained in the Law given to us by our Rock, our Torah and its Mitzvot.

Very soon we will sit with our families around the table staring into the Chanukah candles we have just lit. We will look into our children's and grandchildren's eyes and the question will form in our mind: “Will their children and grandchildren also be sitting one day to celebrate the Festival of Lights?” The reply to this query will be our centuries-old refrain: “Maoz Tzur Yeshuati.” The Rock is our salvation. He was there when Greek culture threatened to destroy Jewish teaching three thousand years ago. Unchanged, He remains to rescue us from the modern-day evils of today.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin



**FROM THE REBBETZIN**

There are few things that are more annoying than the whining of a mosquito in the middle of the night. No doubt, everyone can recall being woken up by the high pitched buzz. In fact, one of my early childhood memories is of a night in a chalet outside the Kruger Park, crying because of the profuse amount of mosquitos in the room.

Well, last night was a repeat performance. This morning I am trying to find out how a grown adult lady can be brought to near hysteria by a tiny, tiny little buzzing gogga!

I tried various ways of dealing with this.

I bought a plug-in Peaceful Sleep unit.

I sprayed myself with Citronella oil.

I covered every part of myself with a sheet.

I tried catching it, squashing it (not on our freshly painted walls!)

I even tried ignoring it. Trying to convince myself that the worst that could happen is that it would bite me – and what are a few mosquito bites anyway?

But, it whined... I scratched. It buzzed... and I got more hysterical. Finally, at 3am, I got out of bed, had a cool shower, took a magazine and guess what... I fell asleep.

This morning I am left wondering what all that fuss was about. Isn't that how it is with so many of life's annoyances? Little things that make us crazy, bring us to tears, make us feel almost desperate. If we could just step back, look at everything from the outside. Calmly. How many times we would be left wondering what the fuss was all about?

Have a good month

*Rivky*

**DVAR TORAH*****The Significance of Eight***

*by (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 Mitzvoth, 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.

### SERVICE TIMES

#### SHACHARIT (A.M.)

**Sunday & Public Holidays** 8:00

**Monday to Friday** 7:15

*07/01: 7:00 (Fast of 10<sup>th</sup> Tevet)*

*27/01: 7:00 (Rosh Chodesh)*

**Shabbat & Festivals** 9:00

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

**Sunday to Thursday** 6:15

**Friday** 5:45

*27/12 (Chanukah): 6:00*

**Shabbat** 6:15

**From 14/12** 6:30

**MAZALTOV**

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

**BIRTHDAYS**

- Solly Burgin on his 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday on the 10<sup>th</sup> December.
- David Jacobs on his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 15<sup>th</sup> December.

- Caroline Myerson on her 45<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 7<sup>th</sup> January.
- Enid Melamet on her 91<sup>st</sup> birthday on the 8<sup>th</sup> January.
- Martin Moritz on his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 15<sup>th</sup> January.
- Roslyn Sussman on her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 17<sup>th</sup> January.

**ANNIVERSARIES**

- Philip & Rilla Jacobson on their 20<sup>th</sup> wedding

anniversary on the 14<sup>th</sup> December.

- Joseph & Myrna Davidovitz on their 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary on the 4<sup>th</sup> January.
- Sam & Hazel Benard on their 58<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the 28<sup>th</sup> January.

**REFUAH SHLEIMA**

We wish a speedy recovery to:



- Freda Wolff
- Jonathan Orlanski
- Rafi Grusin

**CHANUKAH CANDLE LIGHTING SCHEDULE**

Sunday, 22 December - Light first candle at 7:25 p.m.

Monday, 23 December - Light candles at 7:25 p.m.

Tuesday, 24 December - Light candles at 7:25 p.m.

Wednesday, 25 December - Light candles at 7:25 p.m.

Thursday, 26 December - Light candles at 7:25 p.m.

Friday, 27 December - Light the Chanukah candles first (after 5:36 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 7:55 p.m.

Saturday, 28 December - Light candles only after Shabbat is out (7:37 p.m.) and after Havdalah

Sunday, 29 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.*