

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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February 2014

Adar I 5774

SHABBAT TIMES

🕒 Parasha - 🕒 Candle Lighting

🕒 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)
For service times see page 2

14 & 15 February – 15 Adar I

🕒 Ki Tissa

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:23

21 & 22 February – 22 Adar I

🕒 Vayakhel

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:17

28 February & 1 March – 29 Adar I

🕒 Pekudei (*Shekalim*)

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:10

7 & 8 March – 6 Adar II

🕒 Yayikra

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:03

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Happy Purim!

No, you have not miscalculated, and yes, Purim is still another month away (and will of course be covered in our March edition). This month, however, we celebrate a Jewish Holiday that occurs only once in three years or so – Purim Katan.

This year is a Jewish Leap year. When we Jews have a leap year, we don't add just one day to the year, but a full month. The month is called Adar I, and it is placed just before the regular month of Adar

(which then becomes Adar II). The principal reason for doing so is that Pesach must fall after the spring (for us autumn) equinox, but the net result is that we have to wait another month for Purim. Poor children (and adults too...)!

What about the fourteenth of Adar I, the day that would have been Purim, had it been a regular year? Our rabbis ruled that it too must be celebrated, and they named it Purim Katan, or the "Little Purim."

We know it is a Mitzvah to rejoice on Purim, but does this extend to the "Little Purim" as well? In Halachik authorities, this is a matter of debate. Some opinions rule that one must have a celebration meal; others differ. What do we do then? In the last paragraph of Orech Chaim, a section of the Shulchan Aruch (authoritative Code of Jewish Law), Rabbi Moses Isserels quotes a verse in Proverbs (XV,15): "A (person of) good heart rejoices all

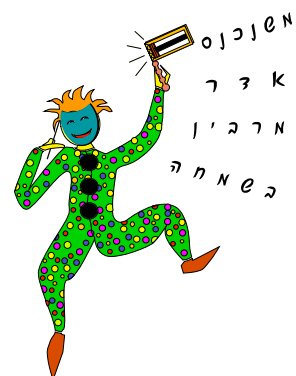
the time." The bottom line, says the Shulchan Aruch, is: when in doubt, celebrate.

Here is the lesson of Purim Katan: celebrate always. Easy when the Almighty gives us only reason to rejoice. But a good heart, our prophet teaches us, discovers cause to be happy all the time. Even when He seems to be throwing us curveballs, and makes us wonder why we deserved the lot in life that we have been granted, it is our duty to search and find something to be grateful for and to celebrate every day.

Happy Purim Katan!

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

Purim Katan is on 14 & 15 February this year.



A STORY

MINCHA AT THE SUPER BOWL

The most unlikely minyan
of all.

By Lonnie Ostrow (*aish.com*)

The date was January 25, 1998. The place: Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego California. An epic match-up between the Green Bay Packers and the Denver Broncos. More than 68,000 spectators in attendance, with another 90 million watching at home on television. Among those seated behind the goalpost at the north end of the stadium were myself, and a young colleague of mine by the name of “Yankel.”

I was then working as the Director of PR and Marketing for an international postal agency. Yankel – only a teenager at the time – had recently been hired to help out in the stockroom. My love for sports, and pro football in particular was well known around my old workplace. Every Monday morning during football season, my corner office would fill with a half-dozen, or so, NFL enthusiasts to recap the weekend’s games. We had a Pittsburgh Steelers fan, a Miami Dolphins die-hard, two Dallas Cowboys rooters, and an assortment of backers for our pair of local teams. Yankel, as I recall, was a New York Jets fan. It would be hard to call him “long-suffering” back then, as he was only 18-years old. However, his passion for the sport, and his knowledge of the game made him a valuable contributor to our Monday morning wrap-ups.

Yankel was a unique young man. He once confided in me that he had

been raised by an Aunt and Uncle due to “complicated issues” relating to his biological parents. I also noticed that he would regularly recite kaddish during mincha in our office conference room each weekday afternoon. When I quietly asked him who he was saying it for, he told me matter-of-factly that his “actual father” had recently passed away... a man he barely knew. He had been advised by a rabbi that he was not obligated to observe all aspects of mourning due to these circumstances. Still, he felt the need to say kaddish whenever a minyan was available.

It was an overcast January Monday morning when Yankel skipped into my office with a grin from ear-to-ear. I’d figured that my young friend had come in to talk about Sunday playoff games from the just-completed weekend. Instead, Yankel closed the door to my room, sat down in the lone chair facing my desk and leaned in to share his big news.

“Hey, Lonnie, what if I told you that I could get us tickets to the Super Bowl?”

Up to this point in my life, I had never attended an NFL game. Tickets to the NY Giants were pretty much locked down by a group of some 70,000 season-ticket holders for decades. The Jets were of no interest to me, even if plenty of good seats were often available. Now, here was this young man that I worked with, offering me a ticket to attend the Super Bowl! I nearly fell backward off my chair.

It turned out that Yankel’s uncle worked for an apparel company in Brooklyn. As an

NFL licensee, he received a pair of tickets to the big game each year. But this year, urgent business prevented him from traveling. He offered them to his football-obsessed nephew, providing that Yankel could find a responsible adult to accompany him to San Diego. That “responsible adult” turned out to be me.

I immediately began checking for flights to San Diego. There were none to be had. No hotel rooms either for Super Bowl weekend. A complete sellout. Plan B was to inquire on flights to Los Angeles. A few scattered seats remained open. Next, I called up a friend out in Agoura Hills to determine if he and his wife could host us for Shabbos, then drive us to the Amtrak station early on Sunday morning. Thankfully, the answer was yes on both counts.

Sunset at the Super Bowl

Kick-off occurred around 3:30pm local time. It was a picture-perfect warm and sunny afternoon. Yankel and I watched with excitement as Denver jumped out to a 17 – 14 halftime lead behind the success of star running back, Terrell Davis. A thoroughly entertaining back-and-forth affair.

The halftime show was billed as a 40th anniversary tribute to Motown. Featured

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday and Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00
<i>03/03 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00</i>	

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Sunday to Thursday	6:15
Friday	5:45
Shabbat	6:30
from 15/02	6:15
from 01/03	6:00

performers were to include Boys II Men, Smokey Robinson and the Four Tops. As stages were being rolled into place on the field below, my friend, Yankel suddenly became panicked by a singular detail that we had overlooked.

"The sun is already starting to set. By the time the game is over, it'll be too late to daven mincha (pray the afternoon service). Where am I going to find a minyan to say kaddish?"

My initial instinct was to dismiss the idea of a minyan and to simply recite mincha on our own in one of the stadium corridors. Yankel was not sold. "There's got to be ten Jewish men around here in this stadium. Probably more than that. But how do we find them and get them into one place? There's got to be a way."

We hurried from our seats to the main concourse, seeking men with yarmulkes. I located one emerging from a men's room. Yankel couldn't locate any. He was particularly frustrated by all the baseball caps, and these triangular cheese-head hats worn by the Green Bay contingent.

We strolled the crowded hallways in search for eight additional eligible participants. We passed concession stands, souvenir carts, even a baby-changing station. No luck. And to make matters more difficult, the halftime show was about to begin according to the announcements over the public address system. We were nearly prepared to call it quits when it hit me. The "Lost and Found." Yankel and I had passed this area only moments before. Now,

suddenly, it was our last hope.

A stanchion with red rope led us to a pair of wooden desks, situated in front of a small glass window that resembled a bank-teller station. A pair of stadium security guards sat at each of the desks with arms folded. Only one woman waited ahead of us in line. I turned back to Yankel and urged him to follow my lead. Moments later, one of the uniformed men called out: "Gentlemen, how can I help you?"

This may not have been honest, but it's what I came up with on the spur of the moment. I switched on my most panicked disposition. "Sir, it's our younger brother. He's only 12. He wandered off to the bathroom just before halftime. We can't find him anywhere."

The security guard pulled out a clipboard, fired off a few questions about the characteristics of our "missing brother," and scribbled a few notes. Finally he asked: "And by the way, what's his name?"

"Mincha," I responded. "Mincha Service."

"Meen-cha Service?" The man looked up at us with a puzzled expression, repeating the name to make sure he had the correct pronunciation. "Okay, I'm going to have them announce something. Let's hope he hears it and turns up."

The guard slid a paper to a woman behind the glass window and carefully repeated the name we had provided. Within moments, an announcement rang out throughout the stadium: "Ladies and gentleman, may I have your attention please. Would Meen-Cha Service

please report to the lost and found, located in on the plaza level between gates F and G. That's Meen-Cha Service."

To this day, I'm still not sure which aspect of this story surprises me more: The fact that the stadium security actually made the announcement at the Super Bowl, or the incredible, immediate response to our unusual minyan call. Within 90 seconds of the announcement, we had 14 men just outside the Lost & Found ready to daven. One man removed his Cheese-head, revealing a knitted yarmulke with the Green Bay Packers logo stitched in. He pointed the way east and led the service. Soon enough, some 27 men were shuckling back and forth, reciting the shemoneh esrei. Yankel had more than twice the requisite number of men to answer amen to his kaddish.

We recited Aleinu as the muffled strains from the halftime concert commenced. At that moment our friendly security guard stepped out from behind his post. "Sir, did you find your little brother?" he asked me with a look of concern etched on his face.

"Several of them," Yankel shouted behind his back.

"Yes, thank you," I replied, flashing a grateful smile. "We never would have found him if you hadn't made that announcement. Thanks for being so helpful. You really saved the day."

The final score was Denver 31 – Green Bay 24. But to Yankel, the 27 men who gathered outside the Lost & Found was the most significant number of all.

Published: January 30, 2014

MAZAL TOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Edeline Kantor on the birth of a great granddaughter
- Solly & Sylvia Jossel on the birth of a great granddaughter

BAR/BATMITZVAH

- Eddie and Carol Pokroy on the barmitzvah of their grandson
- Willie and Esther Wittert on the barmitzvah of their grandson

ENGAGEMENTS

- Edeline Kantor on the engagement of her grandson, Bradley Kantor, to Jenna Hosiosky

BIRTHDAYS

- Vivienne Frame on her 75th birthday on 4th February
- Sybil Pollack on her 92nd birthday on 4th February
- Albert Epstein on his 83rd birthday on 7th February
- Molly Ulfane on her 85th birthday on 8th February
- Melanie Jacobs on her 55th birthday on 15th February
- Kenneth Marks on his 75th birthday on 24th February

REFUAH SHLEMAH

We wish a Speedy Recovery to:



- Michael Don
- Carole Strimling
- Ralph Zulman

BEREAVEMENTS

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



Dahlia Gordon on the death of her husband Israel (Ollie)

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



Have you visited the Shul's page yet?

www.facebook.com/oxfordshul

Make sure to click on the  button at the top of that page and Oxford notices will start appearing in your own news feed.

OXFORD'S BIKKUR CHOLIM PROJECT

Do you know of someone who is ill or alone and would appreciate an occasional telephone call or visit?

Would you like someone to call on you?

Do you have some time to volunteer and give of yourself to the community?

Marion Rapp is the co-ordinator of this latest Oxford initiative.

Call her for more details on 082 871 3756

