

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

February 2016

Adar I 5776

SHABBAT TIMES

🔊 Parasha - 🕯 Candle Lighting

🕯 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)

For service times see page 3

12 & 13 February – 3 Adar I

🔊 Terumah

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:25

19 & 20 February – 10 Adar I

🔊 Tetzaveh

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:19

26 & 27 February – 17 Adar I

🔊 Ki Tisa

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:12

4 & 5 March – 25 Adar I

🔊 Vayakhel (Shekalim)

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:05

11 & 12 March – 2 Adar II

🔊 Pekudei

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 6:58

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Is there much to be happy about all around? From our local situation, to the news from Israel, to what is going on around the world... we seem to be bombarded with gloom and sadness all the time. Is it worse than it ever was? Or is just a perception, because there are so many new, instant channels to be informed about what is going on around the globe? Between emails, Facebook and Twitter, every incident is beamed to us, virtually in real time. No doubt it appears that there is much more bad stuff than there used to be. Perhaps we did not hear about every earthquake, every terrorist attack, and

every economic downturn—until the advent of all these communication technologies.

But being sad is no way to live. It drags us down, it does not let us perform at our peak. It affects all our relationships, our health, our faith. Hence happiness is key to Judaism. We are enjoined to serve Hashem with joy and to be perpetually happy.

What is the solution? The bad stuff is out there, we can't make it go away. But we can surround ourselves with positivity, look at the bright and happy things (they are also out there). Act and behave with joy... The sad stuff is still there, but it is now drowned in a sea of happiness, outnumbered and made to appear insignificant.

The cycle of the Jewish year begins with Nissan, the month of our birth as a People and of Pesach, the celebration of the Exodus. But before we can begin this new annual cycle, there is an important process that has to be followed. The final and 12th month is called Adar, a month when we have to immerse ourselves in non-stop joy. משננס אדר מרבים בשמחה—when the month of Adar begins we have to increase joy. This is when all the negative stuff that has accumulated over the year is flushed out, purged away, overwhelmed with true

celebratory joy. The month of Adar is when the miracle of Purim occurred, referred to in the Book of Esther as ונהפוך הוא—it was turned around: the day that was destined to be spent in mourning and sorrow turned into one of happiness and celebration.

And this year, being a Jewish leap year, we have not just one month of Adar, but two. That gives us 60 days of Adar, 60 days of joy and happiness. Anyone familiar with the laws of Kashrut knows about the 60:1 ratio. It has the power to render insignificant. Thus if something treif/bad got mixed up in food preparation, the mixture will remain kosher if there is 60 times the amount of ok food to drown out the taste of the non-kosher invader. 60:1 has the power to totally overwhelm and annul the negative. 60 days of joy have the power to flush away, to render totally insignificant all the negative stuff going on in our lives.

The first month of Adar begins on Tuesday 9 February. The second month of Adar begins on Friday 11 March. It's nonstop increasing joy until 8 April. Enjoy every minute and let everything else slip into insignificance.

Happy Adars.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

Living in a complex means having neighbours close by. It is both an advantage—we feel safer thinking that there are people near and around us—and a disadvantage, we are not our own free people anymore and have to deal with the ways of other people.

For the first few weeks I walked around whispering. Didn't want to disturb anyone, didn't want to share any private conversations. Panicked about the gate that squeaked, the phone that rang late at night, the door that slammed...

But now we are getting used to it. We have learnt that brick walls are thick enough to muffle most sounds; that neighbours don't mind regular human sounds; that it is possible for strangers to live happily closely next door to each other.

When the wicked Bilaam came to curse the Jews he found himself unable to do so. Instead he said the famous words "Mah Tov Ohalecho Yaakov" – "How good are your tents Jacob" – in other words, how great it is that you are good neighbours. You have found the balance of being friendly yet giving each other space and privacy. You are tolerant and considerate of other people's life styles. You treat common property with extra care and respect. You help each other when you can. You are friendly and respectful to each other.

Although it has been about 28 years since we last lived with neighbours so close by, it is now TG one of the reasons we are happy in our new home!

Have a good month

Rivky

DVAR TORAH

**MORE THAN A
PREGNANT PAUSE**

(www.ohr.edu)

We've all heard of a 'pregnant pause' but how about a 'pregnant year'?

Seven times in nineteen years an extra month is added to the Jewish calendar to equalize the solar and the lunar calendars. Such a year is called in Hebrew 'a pregnant year.' This year is one of those nineteen.

The 'pregnant' year's extra month is called Adar Bet, or the second Adar. As we said, the Jewish year starts with Nissan and ends with Adar, but why is the extra month added at the end of the year? Why not have two Nissans? Or why not add an extra month in the middle of the year?

On one level, the answer is that the purpose of the leap year is to ensure that Pesach always falls in the Spring, as the Torah commands.

When Beit Din (the Rabbinical Court) fixed the lengths of the months and the years by observation of the New Moons, it was only when Adar arrived that it became clear whether the Pesach of that year would fall in the Spring, or whether there was a need to add another month.

Although our calendar is fixed, we nonetheless adhere to the principles which guided the Sanhedrin when they regulated the calendar by observation.

But maybe there's a deeper reason why we make two Adars and not two Nissans.

The festival of Pesach was given to us by Hashem Himself. It is D'Oraita (a Torah mitzvah).

Purim is D'Rabbanan (a Rabbinic mitzvah). It's man-made. It was instituted by the Sanhedrin after the deliverance of the Jews who were under the rule of the Persian Empire. The whole existence of the festival of Purim is based on Man unraveling the 'megillah' of existence, and recognizing the writing of the Divine Author.

Purim is Man playing detective in G-d's world. Finding the solution to the cosmic Whodunnit by himself, without the sea splitting in front of him, without open miracles.

It's the end of the year, and its 'end,' its purpose.

For the whole purpose of the Creation is that Man should open his eyes and see Who pulls the strings of history.

Maybe that's why the leap year has two Adars, and not two Nissans. When we emphasize a part of the year, we emphasize its end, its purpose, the recognition of the Creator via our own efforts.

If there's a pregnant pause in the year, a pause to consider what we are doing here, then the time to do it is Adar.

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday and Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
<small>09/02 & 10/02 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00 10/03 & 11/03 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00</small>	
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Sunday to Thursday	6:15
Friday	5:45
Shabbat	6:15

MAZALTOV**BIRTHS**

- Ely and Stacey Knight on the birth of their daughter Rachel Batya.
- Doris Samson on the birth of a great granddaughter in Israel.

ENGAGEMENTS

- Aaron and Maisie Ehrlich on the engagement of their grand-daughter Joanna Lewis to Daniel Lewin in London.
- Phillip and Rilla Jacobson on the engagement of their grandson Ariel Flax to Tali Laing.

BIRTHDAYS

- Maxine Abratt on her 65th birthday on 17 January.
- Albert Epstein on his 85th birthday on 7 February.

- Lynette Gordon on her 70th birthday on 14 February.
- Ivan Epstein on his 55th birthday on 16 February.
- Alan Zev on his 65th birthday on 24 February.

ANNIVERSARIES

- Simon and Nan Woolf on their 35th anniversary on 3 February.
- Stanley and Riva Stein on their 50th anniversary on 8 February.
- Joel and Jennifer Levy on their 30th anniversary on 13 February.
- Justin and Maxine Abratt on their 45th anniversary on 21 February.
- Ivan and Jo-An Epstein on their 30th anniversary on 27 February.

REFUAH SHLEIMA

We wish a
Speedy
Recovery to



- Marion Sweidan
- Madeleine Fane

BEREAVEMENTS

Our condolences
to the following
who have
suffered
bereavements recently:



- Stanley Stein on the death of his mother, Ruth.
- Sylvia Jossel on the death of her husband Solly.
- Ronald, Bernard, Martin and Marlene Goldberg on the death of their mother, Miriam.
- Michael and Alan Shkudsky and Jennifer Moss on the death of their mother, Phyllis.
- Rene Gamsu, Jack and Alan Selesnik on the death of their mother, Rose Selesnik
- Valerie Bieber and to Martin and Richard Flekser on the death of their mother, Rebecca Flekser

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at the Shul on the occasion of a personal or family Simcha,
to commemorate a Yartzeit, birthday or anniversary.

For details and bookings contact Lee at the Shul office



THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE CENTRE

בס"ד



LOVE YOUR FAMILY,
LOVE YOUR SHUL
OXFORD SHUL DINNER

JOIN US FOR DINNER ON
FRIDAY NIGHT **12TH FEBRUARY**

R150 PER ADULT (OVER 12 YEARS)
PARTNER COMES FREE!!!
KIDS UNDER 12 YEARS FREE

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE OF
LECHA DODI BY OXFORD KIDS



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