

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

February 2018

Shevat & Adar 5778

SHABBAT TIMES

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

9 & 10 February – 25 Shevat

🔊 Mishpatim (*Shekalim*)

🕯 6:37 – 🕯 7:27

16 & 17 February – 2 Adar

🔊 Terumah

🕯 6:32 – 🕯 7:22

23 & 24 February – 9 Adar

🔊 Tetzaveh (*Zachor*)

🕯 6:26 – 🕯 7:15

2 & 3 March – 16 Adar

🔊 Ki Tisa

🕯 6:20 – 🕯 7:08

9 & 10 March – 23 Adar

🔊 Vayakhel & Pekudei (*Parah*)

🕯 6:13 – 🕯 7:01

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Why is it that we dismiss Purim as a children's holiday? Is it perhaps because we think of Judaism as a rigid code of life, entailing prohibitions and deprivation, with little opportunity for merriment and enjoyment?

After all, we've always been told, *es iz shver tzu zayn a yid*, it's difficult to be Jewish? Grownups deal with serious aspects of religion. If a festival involves dressing up, having a good time and sending food parcels to one another, then it must be kids' stuff!

How incorrect an assumption! Actually, Judaism and joy are

synonyms. Simcha permeates every dimension of being Jewish and of fulfilling G-d's commandments and is in fact a pre-requisite to the service of Hashem.

Purim is therefore the perfect model for all Mitzvot. A festival that is not only easy but also a lot of fun to observe. Listening to the Megilah, occasionally interrupted by joyful banging upon hearing Haman's name, takes only about half an hour. The precept of Misholach Manot can be observed by simply sending a parcel of two foodstuffs to a friend or neighbour, bringing delight to both giver and recipient. A family Purim meal, especially when accompanied by a few Lechaims, is a perfect way to celebrate cheerfully.

Purim is far from Kids' Stuff. It's a yearly reminder to us that although it can be *shver* to be Jewish, more often than not it's *gut tzu zayn a yid*, being a Jew is pleasant and a lot of fun.

Have a wonderful Purim and remember, whatever your age, you're never too old for Purim.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

Purim is on Wednesday 28 February and Thursday 1 March

FROM THE REBBETZIN

I always wish that young, new moms would really appreciate how short a time they have their children at home. I remember one young mom struggling through the fog of the first six weeks. She was beyond exhausted and I went over to hold and bath her baby so she could have an hour to relax. While I was there the baby smiled at her mom for the first time. With renewed energy and love the mother held her baby and moaned, "The time is passing so quickly. Look how big she is already."

The years do fly by... We were just a young married couple ourselves, drowning in nappies and bottles. Loving it and complaining. Smiling and crying. And mostly davening and davening, praying that Hashem would keep them well and happy.

In the last months we have made a whole lot of adjustments. Betzael matriculated. We are proud of his results and even more proud of his decision to go study in Yeshiva. This means that Ita has turned into an only child! How time has flown by...

Chanala is engaged to be married PG in the next few months. I look with wonder at this beautiful young woman, k.a.h., and try to figure how this happened in such a short time. I can only thank Hashem for all the blessings, over and over, and continue davening and davening, praying that Hashem keeps all of them well and happy.

Have a good month.

Rivky

A STORY

As the Wheel Turns

(chabad.org)

In a small town, there lived a young couple. The husband had learned in yeshivah before his marriage, and continued to learn for a few years afterwards. Eventually, it came time to think about earning a living. He went into business, using his wife's dowry for his start-up costs. His efforts met with success, and within a few years he became very wealthy. As the young man became richer, his commitment to his business became greater and greater, until it became the entire focus of his life. All that mattered to him was amassing more and more wealth.

In the same village, there were many people living in great poverty. Some had to beg just to keep body and soul together. Others in the village collected money to keep communal charities afloat.

The young wife was very generous, and no one asking for help left the house empty-handed. The husband, on the other hand, became very stingy. The richer he got, the more his wife's charity bothered him. Eventually, he commanded his wife not to give anything more to those needy people.

Of all the festivals throughout the year, Purim was the hardest for him. On Purim we are

commanded to give gifts of food and charity to the poor (mishloach manot and matanot la'evyonim). Fulfilling these commandments didn't interest him at all. No one sent anything to him—they all despised him and his stinginess—and he didn't see why he should have to give them anything either. After suffering with these commandments for a year or two, he found an innovative solution. He sent a simple mishloach Manot consisting of a baked potato and a hamantash to his business manager, and he tossed a few pennies to some beggars sitting in the doorway of the synagogue when he came to hear the Megillah reading. And with this, he considered his obligation fulfilled.

As he sat at a table that was overflowing with food, about to begin his eight-course Purim feast, he heard knocking at the door. He was extremely surprised. It had been a long time since anyone had approached him for money. He sent his wife to see who it was, and as soon as she opened the door he heard, "Happy Purim! Happy Purim! We're looking for donations in honour of Purim."

At the door was a group of masked charity collectors. They were going from house to house collecting money for "Passover wheat," the charitable fund that provides Passover

supplies for the poor. (Making "Passover wheat" contributions is an ancient tradition that still takes place today.) There is only one short month from Purim to Pesach, and the needs of the poor at this time of year were great. And so, the town's young Torah scholars would dress up in costumes and collect money for the poor. No one in the village refused them.

Well, almost no one. When this man's wife returned to the table and asked her husband to give at least a small donation, he yelled at her and told her to send them away empty-handed. Bowing her head in humiliation, she was forced to turn them away and close the door.

The next day, when the rich man returned to work, he discovered that he had suffered a large loss from an investment that had gone bad. Within a few short weeks, this loss was followed by another sizeable loss, and his fortunes continued to plummet until he was forced to sell everything he had, even his wife's jewelry. One day, he finally had to admit to his wife that he had no choice but to beg for charity. He gave her a stark choice: either don the beggar's cloak and collect with him, or accept a divorce and relinquish his financial obligations to her. His wife, who had suffered from his stinginess for years, decided to accept a divorce.

In time, she married a young widower, a man with a pleasant personality who was well liked by his neighbors, and they lived a quiet, peaceful life together. They made their home in a nearby village and were known as decent, honest people. Her new husband didn't stop her from inviting guests into their home and even encouraged her, inviting the poor of the village in himself after he saw that she didn't mind. He was very generous and gave money to charity whenever he could.

Perhaps it was in her merit, or perhaps in his, but his business prospered, and they were also blessed with two beautiful children, a boy and a girl. It was a warm Jewish home, and they lived a happy life together.

The festival of Purim came around one year, and as the family was sitting down to their holiday meal they heard knocking at the door. The wife got up to see who it was and saw a poor stranger standing there. His clothing was tattered, and she could tell just by looking at him that he was starving. She invited him in, and her husband set an extra place at the table.

The beggar could barely keep himself from wolfing down the food. He ate from all the different dishes and delicacies until he couldn't eat anymore. As he finally put down his fork, there were tears in his eyes. It is

unclear whether these were tears of gratitude or tears of sadness at the contrast between this family's happiness and his own dire condition. But his hosts did everything they could to cheer him up so that he could be joyful on the happy festival. They also gave him money so that he could buy new clothes for himself.

After Purim, when they had finished cleaning up and putting their children to bed, the husband and wife sat down and talked about the events of the day.

"I really feel for that poor man," the husband told his wife. "I remember when I used to be poor like that. There was this one Purim when I was starving, and I was going to this rich man, not so far from here, in the hope of getting something to eat. He was supposed to be a real miser, but I figured that he might at least give me something to eat in honor of Purim, even if he wouldn't give me any money. As I was approaching the house, I met a group of collectors who had been sent away. He didn't even agree to talk to them. I lost hope of getting anything from him and didn't bother knocking.

"How wonderful the world is. Now, not only do I have plenty to eat and a happy life with you, but we're actually able to invite guests and give food and charity to others. At the same time, we should never forget that everything we have comes

from above, and is only ours for as long as He wants it to be. He gave it to us as a present so that we can use it to help others, but if He wants He could take it from us and leave us as destitute as that poor man. Who knows? Maybe that man once had money, maybe he was even rich. G-d lowers the proud and raises the lowly. G-d turns the wheel of wealth, bringing people high and low."

"You're right on target, my dear husband," his wife said, wiping tears from her eyes. "That beggar was not only rich, he was the same miser you wanted to approach that Purim, the one who sent those charity collectors away in such disgrace."

"How on earth can you know this?" her husband asked in surprise.

"I know because I was there," she said softly. "As that man left our house today, it struck me. Our guest was none other than my first husband."

SERVICE TIMES

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday and Public Holidays 8:00

Monday to Friday 7:15

Shabbat & Festivals 9:00

15/02 & 16/02 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00

28/02 (Fast of Esther): 7:00

01/03 (Purim): 6:45

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Sunday to Thursday 6:15

Friday 5:45

Shabbat 6:30

from 17/02 6:15

from 03/03 6:00

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Mazal Tov to Grant and Amy Price and to Rene Gamsu on the birth of a son and grandson
- Martin Flekser on the birth of a granddaughter in Sydney
- Stanley and Jennifer Smidt on the birth of a granddaughter

MARRIAGE

- Gary and Melanie Epstein on the marriage of their daughter Sheree to Anthony Sarak on 14th January.
- Zalman and Ina Orlianski on the forthcoming marriage of their daughter Isa to Daniel Witz on 18th February

ENGAGEMENTS

- Doris Samson on the engagement of her granddaughter, Tova Lubinsky to Dan Segal.
- Rabbi & Rivky Chaikin on the engagement of their daughter Chanala to Shmuly Hurwitz from Brooklyn

BIRTHDAYS

- Sharon Hirschowitz on her 55th birthday on the 22nd February.
- Lily Sarembok on her 90th birthday on the 28th February.

ANNIVERSARIES

- Albert & Lee Epstein on their 35th anniversary on the 6th February.

REFUAH SHLEIMA

We wish a Speedy recovery to:

- Annette Wolk
- Rene Gamsu
- Doris Samson



PURCHASE A LEAF ON OUR “SIMCHA TREE”

To mark a happy event in your family
Cost of each leaf is R 540.00 – For details please contact the office



OXFORD'S HALL OF REMEMBRANCE

The plaques in the Hall of Remembrance record the names and the date of death of departed loved ones. The lights on the plaques are lit on the Yartzeit and also whenever Yizkor is recited. A special Hazkara memorial prayer is also recited during Yizkor.

Cost of a plaque is R720 for the first plaque ordered, R540 for subsequent plaques