

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

20 North Avenue, Riviera

✉ P.O. Box 87406, Houghton, 2041

☎ 011-646-6020 📠 086-580-2624

🌐 www.oxfordshul.com 📧 info@oxfordshul.com

📘 facebook.com/oxfordshul

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

February 2020

Shevat 5780

SHABBAT TIMES

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

7 & 8 February – 13 Shevat

🕒 Beshalach

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:29

14 & 15 February – 20 Shevat

🕒 Yitro

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:23

21 & 22 February – 27 Shevat

🕒 Mishpatim

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:17

28 & 29 February – 4 Adar

🕒 Terumah

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:10

6 & 7 March – 11 Adar

🕒 Tetzaveh

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:03

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Seated next to me at the gate, waiting for a Cape Town flight, were two young men. It seemed they knew each other quite well and had not seen each other for some time, but were now fortuitously on the same flight home. Their conversation was animated and knew no regard for the fact that everybody else waiting to board could hear every word.

They were discussing their travels around the world and that some countries do not admit visitors of their faith. From the way they were speaking, it seems that they were actually missionaries, which would explain why some governments may be

concerned about admitting them.

Then one of the men asked the other, "how would you handle it if they asked you straight out what your religion is?" There was a bit of discussion between them, and then they reached their conclusion: they would lie; surely Jesus would understand and forgive.

I turned and whispered quietly to my wife, "there is a sermon in that!"

One of the fundamental teachings of the Tanya is that there is, deep inside of every Jew, a particle of G-dliness called a neshoma. (Tanya was written by the founder of the Chabad Chassidic movement, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, 1745-1812.) This is how he explains that most adherents to our faith, even if far from any form of Jewish practice, would be ready to sacrifice their life before denying their belief in Hashem.

Over the centuries of Jewish history, there were occasions when our co-religionists were tragically asked to give up their lives "al kidush Hashem" (sanctifying Hashem's name)—for no other reason than their faith. There were times when Jews could have opted to hide their religion, or to walk away from it. Instead, they proudly declared their unwavering belief in G-d, at times marching to their death

singing "Ani Maamin" (I believe).

As Rabbi Schenur Zalman often taught, "A Jew neither wants, nor is able, to be separated from G-dliness."

In the early 1940s the Lubavitcher Rebbe (Rabbi Schneur Zalman's 7th successor as leader of Chabad) and his wife ended up in Vichy France. His advice was sought as to whether it was permitted to register as a Gentile with the authorities in order to avert a very frightening outcome. He refused to do so himself and also counselled all who asked his opinion to do the same.

This year 10 Shevat (Wednesday 5 February) marks 70 years of the Rebbe's leadership. Since 1950, the Rebbe made it his mission to find every one of those Neshoma particles, and to reveal them from deep inside their captivity. He rallied a veritable army of Shluchim, emissaries who have gone out to conquer the world and to reach out to every Jew in every corner of the globe.

Beyond the Rebbe's presence in this physical world, this mission has continued, unabated and will carry on until the very last Divine soul-particle has been released and reunited with its source. Then and only then, will the job be complete.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

Who does not love the idea of Royalty? The glitz and glamour, the royal chariots, the extravagant clothing, parties, homes and palaces. All quite fairy-tale like.

Mostly I am fascinated with their list of rules. The Royals have no free choice. They make no personal decisions about their food, clothing or jewelry. Every detail, down to the colour of their nail-polish, is dictated by royal protocol.

Just like the paparazzi, I have wasted lots of time discussing the various Royals, what they wore to an event, how they spoke to their spouses and how they treated the public.

It probably is not always fun to be a Royal. To live a life in the proverbial fish bowl. Because with privilege comes responsibility. While everyone dreams of being a "Princess" no one dreams of the demands that come with royal privileges.

So the great debate over Harry and Meghan's resignation from royal life... what a farce! None of us choose how we will be born, who we will be born to and what privileges, challenges and responsibilities we will be presented as we navigate our lives. You cannot resign from your birthright.

Real Royalty is when we take what we were given, enjoy the privileges and work out how to work with the responsibility. We Yidden are proud of our royal status. We cannot resign from our Royalty. We live with this privilege and responsibility, always.

Have a good month

Rivky

DVAR TORAH

The Rebbe: A Brief Biography

by chabad.org staff

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory (1902-1994), the seventh leader in the Chabad-Lubavitch dynasty, is considered to have been the most phenomenal Jewish personality of modern times. To hundreds of thousands of followers and millions of sympathizers and admirers around the world, he was — and still is, despite his passing — "the Rebbe," undoubtedly, the one individual more than any other singularly responsible for stirring the conscience and spiritual awakening of world Jewry.

The Rebbe was born in 1902, on the 11th day of Nissan, in Nikolaev, Russia, to the renowned kabbalist, talmudic scholar and leader Rabbi Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson. Rebbetzin Chana (1880-1964) was known for her erudition, kindness and extraordinary accessibility. Her courage and ingenuity became legend when during her husband's exile by the Soviets to a remote village in Asian Russia she labored to make inks from herbs she gathered in the fields — so that Rabbi Levi Yitzchak could continue writing his commentary on kabbalah and other Torah-subjects. The Rebbe was named after his ancestor, the

third Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, with whom he later shared many characteristics.

To Save a Life

There is a story told about the Rebbe's early life that seems to be almost symbolic of everything that was to follow. When he was nine years old, the young Menachem Mendel courageously dove into the Black Sea and saved the life of a little boy who had rowed out to sea and lost control of his small craft. That sense of "other lives in danger" seems to have dominated his consciousness; of Jews drowning in assimilation, ignorance or alienation—and no one hearing their cries for help: Jews on campus, in isolated communities, under repressive regimes. From early childhood he displayed a prodigious mental acuity. By the time he reached his Bar Mitzvah, the Rebbe was considered an illuy, a Torah prodigy. He spent his teen years immersed in the study of Torah.

Marriage in Warsaw:

In 1929 Rabbi Menachem Mendel married the sixth Rebbe's daughter, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, in Warsaw. (The Rebbetzin, born in 1901, was chosen by her father, the sixth Rebbe, to accompany him in his forced exile to Kostroma in 1927. For sixty years she was the Rebbe's life partner; she passed away on 22 Sh'vat in 1988.) He later studied in the University of Berlin and then at the Sorbonne in Paris. It may

have been in these years that his formidable knowledge of mathematics and the sciences began to blossom.

Arrival in the U.S.A.

On Monday, Sivan 28, 5701 (June 23, 1941) the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin arrived in the United States, having been miraculously rescued, by the grace of Almighty G-d, from the European holocaust. The Rebbe's arrival marked the launching of sweeping new efforts in bolstering and disseminating Torah and Judaism in general, and Chassidic teachings in particular, through the establishment of three central Lubavitch organizations under the Rebbe's leadership: Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch ("Central Organization For Jewish Education"), Kehot Publication Society, and Machne Israel, a social services agency. Shortly after his arrival, per his father-in-law's urging, the Rebbe began publishing his notations to various Chassidic and kabbalistic treatises, as well as a wide range of response on Torah subjects. With publication of these works his genius was soon recognized by scholars throughout the world.

Leadership:

After the passing of his father-in-law, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, in 1950, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson reluctantly ascended to the leadership of the Lubavitch movement, whose headquarters at 770

Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, New York. Soon Lubavitch institutions and activities took on new dimensions. The outreaching philosophy of Chabad-Lubavitch was translated into ever greater action, as Lubavitch centers and Chabad Houses were opened in dozens of cities and university campuses around the world.

The Rebbe keenly understood that our every action is part of a bigger picture. Every good deed we do brings humanity closer to the ultimate goal, the era of cosmic perfection and universal awareness of G-d, known in Judaism as the time of Moshiach. The Rebbe spoke tirelessly about this time, demonstrating how the world is heading closer and closer to this special era and how every person can actualize it by increasing in acts of goodness and kindness.

Uniqueness

With the Rebbe's teachings propelling them and his example serving as a beacon to emulate, Lubavitch has rapidly grown to be a worldwide presence, and all its various activities are stamped with his vision. Small wonder then, that many ask, "What is it about his leadership that was — and, in so many ways, still is — so unique? Why do leading personalities of the day maintain such profound respect and admiration for him?"

Past, Present and Future

Many leaders recognize the need of the moment and respond with courage and directions. This is their forte — and an admirable one. Others, though their strength may not lie in "instant response" to current problems, are blessed with the ability of perceptive foresight — knowing what tomorrow will bring and how to best prepare. Still other leaders excel in yet a third distinct area, possessing a keen sense of history and tradition; their advice and leadership is molded by a great sensitivity to the past.

But one who possessed all three qualities was truly unique, standing alone in leadership. Such was the Lubavitcher Rebbe — the inspiration and driving force behind the success of Lubavitch today. Radiating a keen sense of urgency, he demanded much from his followers, and even more from himself. The Rebbe led, above else, by example.

(This article was abbreviated due to space constraints.

For the full article go to www.chabad.org/therebbe)

SERVICE TIMES

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday & Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
<i>25 & 26/02: 7:00 (Rosh Chodesh)</i>	
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Sunday to Thursday	6:15
Friday	5:45
Shabbat	6:30
From 15/02	6:15

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Philip & Rilla Jacobson and Marke & Jeanette Markovitz on the birth of a great grandson in Jerusalem.
- Philip & Rilla Jacobson on the birth of a great grandson in America.
- Stan & Jennifer Smidt on the birth of a grandson.
- Blima Nudelman on the birth of a great granddaughter in New York.

- Adam & Lielle Cook, Alan & Karen Shkudsky and Marion Rapp on the birth of a daughter, granddaughter and greatgranddaughter

ENGAGEMENTS

- Madeleine Fane on the engagement of her son Lawrence to Alicia Zwiers in London

BIRTHDAYS

- Marke Markovitz on his 90th birthday on the 5th February.
- Cecil Kramer on his 70th birthday on the 27th February.
- Lily Sarembock on her 92nd birthday on the 28th February.
- Mark Meltzer on his 65th birthday on the 28th February.

ANNIVERSARIES

- Barney & Marion Gordon on their 70th anniversary on the 19th February.

**REFUAH SHLEIMA**

We wish a speedy recovery to:

- Bokkie Livshitz
- Louis Gecelter

BEREAVEMENTS

We wish long life to :

- Sylvia Lewison on the death of her sister, Cheryl Puterman
- David Jacobson on the death of his father, Alan.

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



PURCHASE A LEAF ON OUR “SIMCHA TREE”

***On the occasion of Tu B'Shvat
(New Year of the Trees, 10/02/20)***

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