

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER February 2023

Shevat/Adar 5783

SHABBAT TIMES

🕒 Parasha - 🕒 Candle Lighting
🕒 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)
For service times see page 2

10 & 11 February – 20 Shevat
🕒 Yitro
🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:26

17 & 18 February – 27 Shevat
🕒 Mishpatim (*Shekalim*)
🕒 6:16 – 🕒 7:21

24 & 25 February – 4 Adar
🕒 Terumah
🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:14

3 & 4 March – 11 Adar
🕒 Tetzaveh (*Zachor*)
🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:07

RABBI'S MESSAGE

"He set boundaries for darkness" (Job 28)

Darkness has descended upon our country. I am not referring to the intermittent supply by a utility company that shall remain nameless. I mean the spirit of gloom and sadness that has taken over all of us who live in this beautiful country.

The energy crisis has become pervasive... dominating all our conversations, invading our minds and thoughts, controlling our emotions.

We need to stop and change course and

direction. I am not in any way dismissing the damage the power cuts are causing to the economy, the traffic, the productivity and the national mood.

But there is little benefit and a lot to lose by constant moaning and the obsession about the current situation (pun intended). It will not get the lights on. It will, however, contribute to send us deeper into the abyss of despair and despondency.

What we need is more light. The type we can create ourselves (without inverters, solar panels or generators). A radiance that each of us can exude. A shine that will combine with that of many more around us to create a spirit of positivity.

Let us start by smiling. This is free and highly contagious. Let us greet one another, even strangers in the mall, at the bank. Inquire how the other is and wish each other a nice day. Find something to compliment them about. All these little lights will combine, creating a huge torch of good energy.

Let us delight in the Shabbat and its powerful spiritual glow. Ushered by lighting candles and brought to a close by kindling a Havdalah flame. A synthesis of physical and spiritual light.

"A Mitzvah is a candle and the Torah is light" (Proverbs 23).

The performance of every Divine precept brings additional radiance into our lives and an aura of good energy into our environment. None more than the study of Torah, the place where Hashem hid the primordial Light of Creation, allowing all of us to access it and refract it through our learning.

In the words of Job, we must put an end to the darkness. Filling ourselves with positivity, optimism and confidence will not power the appliances in our home or the traffic lights at the intersections. But it will give us the energy to get out of the mental and emotional gloom that could otherwise easily suck us up and destroy us.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

This is a public thank you note.

A big thank you to two of my daughters and one grandson who flew across the world to visit us and gave us a week of absolute joy.

A big thank you to their husbands and children (especially the husbands) who let them go.

A big thank you to Hashem who gave them the idea to come, and the safe travels here and back home.

If you cannot find nougat, and Ina paarmans spices, and Mexican chili chips, and Woolworths dried mango, anywhere, it is because we bought it all out!

Family is so precious, take any and every opportunity to talk and laugh and enjoy each other, whenever and however you can, always..

Have a good month.

Rivky

SERVICE TIMES
SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Monday & Thursday	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:30

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Friday	6:00
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JEWES AND ATOMIC ENERGY
***The little-known story of
the Jewish impact on
nuclear energy.***

By Rabbi Ken Spiro (aish.com)

The number of Jews involved in splitting the atom in the 20th century is truly staggering. For better or for worse nuclear fission, that gave birth to nuclear energy and the atomic bomb, has been one of the greatest scientific discoveries of all time, unleashing immense power for energy and destruction.

The term “nuclear fission” was coined in Germany in 1939 by a female physicist named Lise Meitner. But being both a woman and Jewish, she was denied credit for her research which was given solely to her fellow German researcher, Otto Hahn, who later received the Nobel prize for his work. Meitner fled to Sweden to escape Nazi persecution and continued her research in Stockholm.

In the first half of the 20th century, Germany was the world-leader in science and innovation and once the Nazis came to power in 1933, they directed much of this German knowhow toward their military-rocket technology and weapons of mass destruction. It was precisely this fear that Germany would be the first country to get a nuclear weapon that led the Jewish Hungarian physicist, Leo

Szilard, to convince the great Albert Einstein, who was a pacifist, to co-write a letter to President Roosevelt urging him start a nuclear research program in the U.S. and beat the Germans to the A-bomb. The two physicists were refugees from Nazi persecution living in the US. This letter played a key role in convincing Roosevelt to launch “The Manhattan Project,” America’s program to build an atom bomb.

The number of Jews involved in the project was astounding; the vast majority of the scientists were Jewish. Almost all of them were German, Hungarian or Austrian refugees. The list included: J. Robert Oppenheimer, Project director and nicknamed “The father of atomic bomb,” Edward Teller, Leo Szilard, Otto Frisch, Niels Bohr Felix Bloch, Hans Bethe, John von Neuman, Rudolf Peierls, Franz Eugene Simon, Hans Halban, Joseph Rotblatt, Stanislaw Ulam, Richard Feynman, and Eugene Wigner. One of the few prominent non-Jews involved in the project, Enrico Fermi, left Italy to save his Jewish wife from fascist persecution.

There is little doubt that had the Nazis been more tolerant of Jews, Germany would have had an atomic bomb first.

Chaim Weizmann,
himself a prominent

chemist and Israel's first president later wrote:

"Very few people ... have any notion of the role which Jews have played in modern science, and particularly of their astounding share in the development of nuclear physics. ... I have heard Einstein speak of ninety percent. ... I am continuously struck by the utter disproportion of the Jewish contribution."

These scientists realized the profound implications of creating such a weapon of mass destruction. As Oppenheimer witnessed the first test detonation of an atomic bomb on July 16th, 1945, he quoted from Hindu Bhagavad Gita, "Now I become death, the destroyer of all worlds," yet he never expressed any regret about the Manhattan Project. He, like many others in the scientific and military communities recognized the urgency of getting the bomb before America's enemies and realized that the war would have dragged on for far longer with far greater American casualties had the US military been forced to conquer Japan with conventional ground forces.

In his farewell speech to the Association of Los Alamos Scientists in November 1945, Oppenheimer summarized the necessity of the US creating the A-bomb:

"...all over the world men would be particularly ripe and open for dealing with this problem because of the immediacy of the evils of war, because of the universal cry from everyone that one could not go through this thing again, even a war without atomic bombs. And there was finally, and I think rightly, the feeling that there was probably no place in the world where the development of atomic weapons would have a better chance of leading to a reasonable solution, and a smaller chance of leading to disaster, than within the United States."

The Jewish people's relationship with the atom didn't end with the Manhattan project:

David Lilienthal was appointed the first chairman of the United States Atomic Energy Commission in 1946;

Edward Teller and Stanislaw Ulam created the hydrogen bomb in 1952;

Admiral Hyman Rickover was the architect of the Polaris Nuclear Submarine fleet in 1954.

The innovative and transformative impact of the Jewish people is disproportionate to their tiny size. Just .2% of the world's population, Jews have won 22% of all Nobel prizes since 1901

British historian Paul Johnson, who recently passed away, wrote:

For the Jewish impact on humanity has been protean. In antiquity they were the great innovators in religion and morals. In the Dark Ages and early medieval Europe they were still an advanced people transmitting scarce knowledge and technology...Breaking out of the ghettos, they once more transformed human thinking, this time in the secular sphere. Much of the mental furniture of the modern world too is of Jewish fabrication.

Jews do not have a monopoly on innovation and not all Jewish "contributions" have been positive, but it seems that part of the collective "spiritual DNA" of the Jewish people is to challenge accepted norms, think outside the box, create and innovate. "The Manhattan Project" is yet another example of a group of Jews, with little or no Jewish education, who embodied the core value: "thou shall innovate."

Perhaps Rabbi, Lord Jonathan Sacks said it the best: "To be Jewish, to be a child of Abraham, is to have the courage to be different, to challenge the idols of the age, whatever the idols and whichever the age."

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Mendel & Tzippy and to Rabbi & Rivky Chaikin on the birth of a granddaughter, in New York.
- Philip & Rilla Jacobson and Jeanette Markovitz on the birth of a great grandson born to Gavi & Dissi Markovitz in Israel.
- Philip and Rilla Jacobson on the birth of a great grandson, born to Mendy and Sara Malka Shishler in Johannesburg.
- Philip and Rilla Jacobson on the birth of a great granddaughter, born to Eliezer & Chava Moshel in Melbourne.

BAR-MITZVAH

- Alan & Karen Shkudsky and Marion Rapp on the Bar-Mitzvah of their son and grandson, Benjamin, on 28th January

BIRTHDAYS

- Ronald Katz on the occasion of his 80th birthday on the 31st January.
- Vivienne Frame on the occasion of her 84th birthday on the 4th February.
- Stanley Abkiewicz on the occasion of his 75th birthday on the 23rd February.
- Lily Sarebock on the occasion of her 95th birthday on the 28th February.

MARRIAGES

- Doris Samson on the marriage of her grandson, Yehudah Stein to Shifrah Santhaus in Manchester on 25th February

ANNIVERSARIES

- Stan & Riva Stein on the occasion of their 57th anniversary on the 8th February.
- Maxine & Justin Abratt on the occasion of their 52nd anniversary on the 21st February.

REFUAH SHLEIMA

We wish a Speedy recovery to:

- Colin Bliss
- Stan Stein
- Hazel Benard
- Sybil Gecelter

**BEREAVEMENTS**

We wish long life to:

- Lawrence Fane & Claude Heimann on the death of their mother and sister, Madeleine Fane.

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

SPONSOR A BROCHA

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

For details and bookings contact the Shul office

