

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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January 2012

Tevet 5772

SHABBAT TIMES

🕒 Parasha - 🕒 Candle Lighting

🕒 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)

For service times see page 2

6 & 7 January – 12 Tevet

🕒 Vayechi

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:40

13 & 14 January – 19 Tevet

🕒 Shemot

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:40

20 & 21 January – 26 Tevet

🕒 Va'era

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:38

27 & 28 January – 4 Shevat

🕒 Bo

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:35

3 & 4 February – 11 Shevat

🕒 Beshalach

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:32

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

***Your future's so bright you
gonna need shades!***

The results are out and all one can say is "MAZALTOV and WELL DONE" to the matriculants. You have done your family, schools and community proud, that is for sure. As you head off into the University of Life, herewith a thought.

Abe Lincoln once said "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."

How true this is and how disappointing it is to review on the many leaders who have fallen into the 'power' trap. With the upcoming ANC conference and 100 year anniversary celebrations in Mangaung, Zwelinzima Vavi had a similar

view recently (3rd Jan 2012): "We are facing for the first time in the history of our struggle the biggest threat to these (finest) traditions. The 'me first' mentality and to hell with the majority and their poverty and unemployment is the single biggest reason why 17 years after democracy South Africa has not made progress."

So what is the story here? Why can't they get their act together?

Let's take a look at Joseph, who is probably the best example we have in a head to head comparison with today's leaders (and who coincidentally (or not) is the subject of the parshiot we've been reading). Joseph suffered unbelievable adversity, was sold into slavery, thrown into jail for 12 years and then rose to the heights of power in Egypt. During this time he neither forgot his roots nor religion. The power he was bestowed with was used responsibly, to secure Egypt economically and not for his own grandeur. He didn't put his family into cushy jobs nor lucrative tenders... in fact he settled them outside of the main centres and you can be sure he wasn't racing around Egypt with "blue lights" on his chariot!

Joseph teaches by example that his position was not one of power primarily but rather one of responsibility, the power being used as a tool to achieve the incumbent responsibility of his position! I think it would be only fair to say that Madiba, whom we wish good health and long life, had the same view as Joseph!

We all have an element of power and influence in our lives,

be it with ourselves, our families, friends, colleagues etc. and you will all be future leaders in one way or another. Remember the lessons of Joseph and don't fall into the 'me first' power trap. Remember to use your 'power' and influence responsibly to grow and improve your families, community, country etc.

While we all look to the future in 2012, please don't forget what we already have. A good place to start is with your beloved Shul, the icon of JHB. Come and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of its sanctuary on Shabbos. Use your influence... if you come to shul, your friends might too!! (PS: this is not restricted to matriculants☐)

If you like it more lively we are hosting the first of our Friday "Night" themes on the 3rd of Feb. The theme is Italian. You will enjoy a look into the Italian Jewish history, listening to some Italian music and taste Italian cuisine for your Shabbat dinner. (Contact the office and watch the Oxfordian for more details.)

Please also join us in celebrating Rabbi Chaikin's 50th birthday at the brocha after shul on the 21st of Jan. Mazaltov again Rabbi, to 120 +VAT in good health!

While speaking of responsibility, we are planning an AGM for March... dates yet to be confirmed.

May we all have success in our futures, act responsibly as Joseph did and maximise on the opportunities presented to us.

I wish everyone a fantastic 2012.

Salang Gabotse

Brian Levy

RABBI'S MESSAGE**WHEN MOSCOW
MET MELBOURNE**

Rabbi Meir Chaikin was born in 1907 in a small village near Snovsk, in the Ukraine. From a very young age, he showed a great thirst for Torah knowledge and outstanding talent. He studied at Yeshivot in Snovsk, Gomel (Belarus) and Nevel (Russia) and at the age of 21 took up his first rabbinical post. He held several such positions in various towns and cities in the Former Soviet Union.

After World War II, he managed to escape to Western Europe with his family. After a few years as rabbi of the Jewish community of Stockholm, he moved to Montreal. There he became the Head of the Tomchei Temimim Lubavitch Yeshiva, where he delivered many lectures and erudite shiurim to his students. He died just short of his sixtieth birthday. His disciples undertook at the time to edit and publish his scholarly works, but this project never came to fruition.

Forty years later, his eldest son, Rabbi Azriel Chaikin (my father), took on the project of this publication. He collated material from notes students had taken of his talks and had these edited into a book. "Tiferet Azriel," a 250-page tome of essays on Halacha and Talmud, was completed and printed in honour of Rabbi Azriel's 80th birthday in July of 2011. [The name of the book honours Rabbi Meir Chaim's own father, Azriel.] Copies of the book

were given out to all of the author's grandchildren and great-grandchildren (no mean feat, as they live spread out in literally all four corners of the globe) and also distributed to Yeshiva libraries around the world.

One of Rabbi Chaikin's great grandchildren is Moshe Winner. Moshe grew up in Melbourne, where his father Yaakov is a member of the faculty of the Yeshiva Gedola of Australia and New Zealand. At the beginning of the current academic yeshiva year, in August, Moshe enrolled at Yeshiva Beit David in the Western Negev city of Kiryat Gat. He had paged through his newly acquired volume of Tiferet Azriel and noticed that about a dozen essays were on the Tractate Kiddushin, which happens to be the tractate currently studied at this yeshiva. Moshe therefore packed his copy of the book in his suitcase.

Another student who started the term at the same yeshiva was Mendel Mondshine, from Moscow. His father Dovid is Director of Ohr Avner, the philanthropic foundation established by Israeli billionaire Lev Levayev. Mendel's paternal grandfather is the youngest son of Rabbi Meir Chaim Chaikin and the brother of Moshe Winner's maternal grandmother. The two cousins spent many weeks in the same study hall, but with their different surnames and hailing from such distant places on earth, never worked out that they were in any way related to one another.

Two months into the programme, a pupil from

South Africa joined the yeshiva in Kiryat Gat. Because the academic years differ between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, he could only leave after completing his Grade 12 Matric exams. Young Meir Chaim Chaikin (our son, who we named after his illustrious great-grandfather) met, for the first time, his two cousins from Moscow and Melbourne. Each of them, independently, easily worked out their respective kinship, through the namesake of the great-grandfather they had heard so much about. Meir Chaim was quick to point out to them that if they shared the same great-grandfather with him, they were also related to each other.

So the three cousins, united in our Holy Land, have now become friends. And they have set aside time to sit and study Torah together every week during their stay at the Kiryat Gat Yeshiva. And the subject they learn? You must have guessed it by now: they sit around Moshe's copy of "Tiferet Azriel" and pore together over the shiurim in Kiddushin their great-grandfather delivered in Montreal half a century ago.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday and Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00
25/01 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00	

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Sunday to Thursday	6:15
Friday	6:00
from 13/01	5:45
Shabbat	6:30
from 04/02	6:15

FROM THE REBBETZIN

One Friday afternoon, many years ago, I walked out of a friend's house into a real Cape storm. I had been sitting with her and her dying husband—I left the house quite obviously in a state. As I walked to my car I noticed that the lady next door had just returned from Pick 'n Pay and was unpacking the groceries from her boot.

I felt like screaming at her, "Why on earth are you doing something so ordinary? How can you be unpacking groceries when your neighbour is dying?"

Last week I made two identical meals, one to take to a young mother who had just given birth and one (ר"ל) to a home of mourning. This is the wonder of the world we live in, the co-existence of so many opposites: happiness and sadness; life and death; ordinary and extra-ordinary—all happening at the same time.

In our daily davening we refer to Hashem as מלך ממית ומחיה "the King who takes life and gives life."

My private prayer: Hashem if you can do both, please let us do the ordinary (the grocery shopping), let us cook meals to help for simchas; let us join together for life and happiness.

Have a good month

Rivky

STORIES**PROPHETIC WHEEL**

Everyone was eagerly awaiting the arrival of the rabbi of Ilya, who had said he would attend the wedding of Rabbi Chaim Volozhiner's daughter. He was very late. Finally, Rabbi Chaim told a horse rider to take the back wheel of a wagon and ride quickly on the road to Ilya. He would find the rabbi of Ilya on the road between Volozhin and Ilya with a broken back wheel on his wagon. The rider rode out, and that was exactly what he found.

The people began whispering about Rabbi Chaim having prophetic powers. He denied it. "I knew he would be on the way," he explained, "because he said he'd come. I knew the delay was not due to a broken front wheel because they are relatively easy to fix. So I sent a wheel for the back."

"But how did you know the delay was due to a broken wheel?" the people asked. "Perhaps his horse died."

"I sent a rider with a horse, didn't I?" answered Rabbi Chaim.

BLOCKED EARS

When Rabbi Dovid Luria went on trial in Russia, falsely accused of treason, the death penalty was lurking in the background. When the judges deliberated, they did so in French because no one else in the courtroom understood. Or so they thought. Rabbi Luria did know French, so he put his fingers in his ears to block out their conversation. To listen in without them knowing would be theft, he felt.

The judges demanded an explanation for his strange behaviour. When they heard it, they freed him immediately. They said it's impossible for someone with that level of commitment to truth to be guilty of treason.

MAZEL TOV!

A famous rabbi was once sitting in a meeting when the door opened and one of the students stuck his head in. "Rabbi!" he exclaimed excitedly. "Great news! Yechiel is engaged!"

"Oh, wonderful! Mazel tov, mazel tov!" exclaimed the rabbi. "Thank you so much for sharing the good news."

A few minutes later, another student entered. "Rabbi, did you hear? Yechiel is engaged!"

"Mazel tov! Thank you for that beautiful piece of news," said the rabbi with a big smile.

A few moments later yet another student popped his head in, and the exchange repeated itself.

One of those present couldn't contain his curiosity. "Why don't you just tell them you know already, instead of going through the whole charade over and over?"

"Don't you see how much joy each one has when he feels he's the bearer of good news? If I'd say, 'I heard already,' the person bringing the news would become completely deflated."

People wonder what they can do to become better liked. One place to start is by not using the expressions "I know" and "I heard." Try it. The effect is remarkable.

*By Dovid Kaplan
(www.innernet.org)*

MAZAL TOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Nachie and Tamar Levin on the birth of a daughter
- Cecil and Tamara Levy on the birth of a daughter
- Rene and Leon Levy on the birth of a granddaughter
- Sharon Margo on the birth of a grandson
- Bernard and Jillian Chipkin on the birth of a granddaughter

BIRTHDAYS

- Looky Braude on his 80th birthday on 4th January
- Zelda Schwartz on her 70th birthday on 11th January
- Barry Jammy on his 80th birthday on 16th January
- Joseph Sarembok on his 85th birthday on 17th January
- Michael Salomon on his 70th birthday on 26th January
- Madeleine Fane on her 65th birthday on 23rd January

ANNIVERSARIES

- Gary and Debbie Katzman on their 5th anniversary on 9th January

- Arnold and Marion Rapp on their 50th anniversary on 21st January
- Sam and Hazel Benard on their 50th anniversary on 28th January

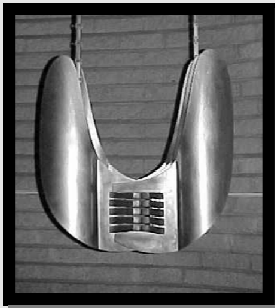
BEREAVEMENTS

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



- Sam Nudelman, Rochelle Borochowitz and Sharon Mervis on the death of their mother, Lorna Nudelman

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

**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 R540 for the first plaque ordered
R360 for subsequent plaques*

**PURCHASE A LEAF IN OUR
“SIMCHA TREE”**

In honour of Tu Bishvat, the New Year for Trees (8 February 2012)
to mark a happy occasion in your family

Cost of each leaf is R 360.00 - For details please contact the office

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 Lily at the Shul office

