

# THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

July 2012

Tamuz / Av 5772

### SHABBAT TIMES

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

6 & 7 July – 17 Tamuz

⇄ Balak

🕯 5:12 – 🕯 6:04

13 & 14 July – 23 Tamuz

⇄ Pinchas

🕯 5:15 – 🕯 6:07

20 & 21 July – 2 Av

⇄ Matot & Masei

🕯 5:18 – 🕯 6:10

27 & 28 July – 9 Av

⇄ Devarim (Chazon)

🕯 5:22 – 🕯 6:13

3 & 4 August – 16 Av

⇄ Vaetchanan (Nachamu)

🕯 5:25 – 🕯 6:16

### CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

So the AGM went off without a hitch, except for having to wait a few minutes for a quorum. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Martin Lewison, Lance Cohen, Dawn Nates, Simon Woolf, Amir Livneh, Percy Bloom, Karen Shkudsky and Dr Willie Spark for remaining on the committee. I would like to welcome Arnold Rapp to the committee and thank Rayanne Jacobson and Clive Gilbert for the time, energy and expertise they gave to the shul while on the committee.

The choir festival was a huge success and it was fantastic seeing the shul so

full. A special thank you goes to Dawn Nates who organised and coordinated the event and Amir Livneh for his help with posters and for standing outside offering security on probably the coldest night of the year. To the ladies in the office and the volunteers who helped with tickets on the evening also a huge thank you. Thanks must also go to Maish Brenner who was the lead sponsor as well as to Evelyn Green and all the choristers, choir masters and chazonim who participated. Last but not least to the Rabbi for his support and help as well.

You may have heard various rumours around town, or read articles, about a remedial school opening up at Oxford. To keep you in the loop, an initiative is underway to start a much needed remedial school catering for Jewish children. Our nursery school premises suit their needs perfectly and we are doing all that we can to assist this initiative and bring the school to fruition on the Oxford campus.

I wish you all an easy "three weeks" coming up.

Regards

Brian Levy

### RABBI'S MESSAGE

A couple of days ago I lifted my children to Gan Yisrael Day Camp, which they are attending these school holidays. Instead of just dropping them at the gate, I parked my car, got out and watched as the children stood in rows according to their "bunks" for morning lineup, singing, cheering and warming up for the day. This evoked strong nostalgia.

In the mid-eighties, as Youth Director for Chabad in Johannesburg, I ran Gan Yisrael Day Camp. It was a huge undertaking and a lot of work. We enrolled 600+ every winter holidays (the annual June/July pilgrimage to Umhlanga was not yet mandatory in our community and most Jews stayed home).

I often wondered what I accomplished with this mammoth job every year. Keeping this number of children fed and entertained for seven hours a day over a period of two weeks was not easy. Of course parents appreciated it—particularly those who had to go to work and needed to keep the children supervised and busy. I also knew that I was being true to the wishes of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who felt strongly that children must be stimulated and educated even in school holidays and therefore founded the chain of Gan Yisrael camps worldwide.

For a few weeks those children were in a Jewish environment, davened and

learnt a bit but mostly played a lot. Was there any effect when camp was over? Were the campers influenced in any way long term?

I think this is a question rabbis ask themselves often, as they preach sermons, give shiurim and dispense advice: "am I making a meaningful impact?" I think it is a question everyone asks himself from time to time, "do I make a difference?"

It is now a generation later and my youngest son is currently a counsellor in the same camp I ran back then. Yesterday he came home with the following story, heard from a mother who enrolled her child this year. She is from a totally secular background and her own connection with yiddishkeit appears quite tenuous. So why did she enrol her child as a camper in Gan Yisrael? Because 25 years ago, she was herself a camper at Gan Yisrael. And to date the camp songs still echo in her head and she remembers the whole bentching because it was sung every day after lunch by all the girls in her division.

So my years as Camp Director were not wasted after all—even if it kept only one Jewess connected with her people (and no doubt there are more).

In a recent sermon I quoted the late Chief Rabbi Harris, who said that preaching from the pulpit was the same as standing at the top of a skyscraper and throwing an aspirin down, with the hope that there was someone with a headache below who was standing with their mouth open.

So here comes the postscript to the late Chief's parable: sometimes there is someone there, who swallowed the pill and got better.

*Rabbi Yossi Chaikin*

## FROM THE REBBETZIN

At the end of a morning of study and an afternoon of work, I would wrestle with all the other users of NYC public transport for a place to stand and hold onto as the bus bumped us home. After 20 minutes or so, we would arrive at the corner of Troy and Schenectady Streets and the door would open and belch out the whole lot of us. On many of those days instead of turning left and trudging back to my apartment, I would turn right and go up to visit Rabbi and Mrs Wineberg, my safe place in New York. They always seemed genuinely happy to see me and I loved to sit at their kitchen table to tell them about my day or to share my plans and dreams while Mrs Wineberg served salami and eggs.

The Winebergs were a part of my life for as long as I can remember. Many of you may remember Rabbi Wineberg, as he visited South Africa annually from 1948 to spread yiddishkeit and to fund raise for a yeshiva in America. He and his wife came into our home like another set of grandparents. We loved them and learnt from them. Theirs was a truly beautiful marriage. I always smile when I recall Rabbi Wineberg standing up from whatever it was he was busy with, to go ahead of his wife into their room to close the window so she shouldn't feel a draught.

This week I feel like a piece of my earth has been uprooted with the passing of Rabbi Wineberg. The world has lost a real icon – a teacher, a chassid, a father and an advisor to so many.

May his merits protect us and may he continue to be a good advocate for all of us.

Have a good month

*Rivky*

## A STORY

The Holy Ruzhiner (Chassidic master Rabbi Israel of Ruzhin, 1797-1851) rejected all feelings of sadness, even of bitterness. So his chassidim would engage in all sorts of practical jokes on the Ninth of Av (in order to mitigate the sadness of the day). They would throw burrs at each other. Then they conceived of the following prank: they opened a skylight in the roof of the study hall and dropped a snare; when someone walked into the study hall, they would yank on the rope so that the snare fastened itself around him, and pull him up to the roof.

It happened that the Ruzhiner himself walked in to the study hall. Those who were up on the roof could not see clearly who was coming in, so they pulled him up. To their dismay, they saw that they had pulled up their rebbe! As soon as they recognized who it was, they let him down.

Cried out the Ruzhiner: "Master of the Universe! If Your children are not properly observing Your 'festival,' take it away from them!"

*(www.chabad.org)*

### SHACHARIT (A.M.)

<b>Sunday and Public Holidays</b>	8:00
<b>Monday to Friday</b>	7:15
<b>Shabbat &amp; Festivals</b>	9:00
<i>20/07 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00</i>	

### MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

<b>Sunday to Thursday</b>	5:15
<b>from 30/07</b>	5:30
<i>08/07 &amp; 29/07 (Fast days): 5:00</i>	
<b>Friday</b>	5:20
<b>from 27/07</b>	5:30
<b>Shabbat</b>	5:00
<b>from 21/07</b>	5:15
<i>28/07 (Erev Tisha B'Av): Mincha: 12:45; Maariv: 6:45</i>	

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## A SMILE

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### MY TISHA B'AV FANTASY

By Rabbi Nechemia Coopersmith  
(www.aish.com)

**Imagine taking Ahmadinejad to the Third Temple that just descended on Jerusalem.**

I have this fantasy.

I gather together Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Nasrallah, Mahmoud Abbas and Ban Ki-moon and take them to visit the brand new Beit Hamikdash, the third holy Temple that just descended onto Jerusalem's Temple Mount. There they witness the coronation of the new king of Israel, and the Vatican's return of the ancient gold menorah, to be reinaugurated by the Kohen Gadol, the High Priest.

Imagine how that would affect negotiations and the claims that the Jewish people "have no historic ties to Jerusalem."

My fantasy continues. I take Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens and Stephen Hawking, leaders of the new atheism, on a tour of the new Temple where they have a chance for the first time in their lives to directly experience the transcendent power and majesty of the Divine. G-d's palpable presence is inescapable, and they leave with an entirely different outlook on life. So much for *The G-d Delusion*.

And finally I imagine myself entering the gates of the Temple. My internal doubts, questions about suffering, and the veracity of

Divine providence simply vanish as I come into direct contact with the overwhelming reality of G-d Almighty Himself.

But there is no Temple, and we live in a world where Israel is embattled from within and without, where G-d and His Torah are ridiculed, where confusion and licentiousness reign. . And that's why I mourn on Tisha B'Av.

Tisha B'Av does not commemorate the pain of the destruction of the Temple that happened 2,000 years ago. Pain doesn't last that long. It dissipates. The point of Tisha B'Av, and the Three Weeks leading up to it, is to connect to the pain we are in right now because we don't have the Temple. The loss affects us today.

Compounding the tragedy is that most of us don't really feel that we are missing anything. We are like the sick child who has spent his life in a hospital. He doesn't even realize his existence isn't normal, that there is a whole different way one ought to be living.

Tisha B'Av gives us the opportunity to refocus and remember that life today is not whole. We can bring that down to earth by thinking about the major conflicts afflicting the Jewish people today – the existential threats, the Mideast conflict, religious-secular divide, rampant assimilation, confusion and dissent – and realize none of them would exist today if we had the Temple in our midst.

When we had the Temple, there was no

question about who had rights to the Land of Israel and to Jerusalem. No one doubted the existence of G-d. The Jewish people en masse strove to uphold and integrate the teachings of the Torah, becoming the role models of what it means to live a meaningful life. The world recognized Jerusalem as a unique fount of wisdom and connection to the transcendent.

In order to feel the loss of the Temple today, try this exercise. Write down a list of those things in the world that cause you the greatest pain. Write out the greatest threats, physically and spiritually, facing the Jewish people today. And make a list of your own personal issues.

Now think about how each and every one of these items would change if we had the Temple, G-d's dwelling place, right here, right now. Create your own Tisha B'Av fantasy. We are suffering from all these travails because the Temple was destroyed thousands of years ago.

The Talmud says, "All who mourn over (the destruction of) Jerusalem will merit to see her in her joy" (Ta'anit, 30b). If we realize what the enormity of the loss, we will achingly yearn for it and fully appreciate it when it is rebuilt. May it happen speedily in our days.

*The "Three Weeks" of mourning begin on the Fast of 17 Tammuz (observed on Sunday 8 July) and culminate with Tisha B'Av, the Ninth of Av (observed on Sunday 29 July).*

**MAZALTOV**

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

**BAR/BATMITZVAHS**

- Greg and Beulah Spark and Willie Spark on the barmitzvah of their son and grandson, Josh

**MARRIAGES**

- Clive Berman on the marriage of his son, Sascha, to Tali Ovadia on 1<sup>st</sup> July in Cape Town
- Sarah Copelowitz on the marriage of her granddaughter in the USA

**BIRTHDAYS**

- Meyer Chafkin on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on 7<sup>th</sup> July
- Max Port on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on 8<sup>th</sup> July
- Rebecca Flekser on her 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday on 10<sup>th</sup> July
- Rhona Beck on her 75<sup>th</sup> birthday on 10<sup>th</sup> July
- Stanley Wolpe on his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday on 13<sup>th</sup> July
- Isidore Bronstein on his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday on 15<sup>th</sup> July
- Yanir Grindler on his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday on 26<sup>th</sup> July
- Solly Jossel on his 98<sup>th</sup> birthday on 27<sup>th</sup> July

**ANNIVERSARIES**

- Cecil and Tamara Levy on their 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 29<sup>th</sup> July

**REFUAH SHLEMAH**

We wish a Speedy Recovery to:

- Maureen Meyerson

**BEREAVEMENTS**

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



- Stephen and Michael Davimes on the death of their mother, Vera
- Esme Kahn on the death of her brother, Lionel Hirsch
- Herbert Rajak and Carmel Chanarin on the death of their mother, Julia

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



Have you visited the Shul's page yet?  
[www.facebook.com/oxfordshul](http://www.facebook.com/oxfordshul)

Make sure to click on the  button at the top of that page and Oxford notices will start appearing in your own news feed.

**OXFORD'S BIKKUR CHOLIM PROJECT**

Do you know of someone who is ill or alone and would appreciate an occasional telephone call or visit?

Would you like someone to call on you?

Do you have some time to volunteer and give of yourself to the community?

Marion Rapp is the co-ordinator of this latest Oxford initiative.

Call her for more details on 082 871 3756

