

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

July 2024

Tammuz 5784

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SHABBAT TIMES

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

12 & 13 July – 7 Tammuz

🔊 Chukat

🕯 5:14 – 🕯 6:06

19 & 20 July – 14 Tammuz

🔊 Balak

🕯 5:17 – 🕯 6:09

26 & 27 July – 21 Tammuz

🔊 Pinchas

🕯 5:06 – 🕯 6:01

2 & 3 August – 28 Tammuz

🔊 Matot-Masei

🕯 5:24 – 🕯 6:15

9 & 10 August – 6 Av

🔊 Devarim (Chazon)

🕯 5:27 – 🕯 6:18

RABBI'S MESSAGE

The Rebbe has been an integral part of my life as long as I can remember. I first "met" him in 1968, when I visited New York for the first time, as a young child. I saw the Rebbe several times when I went to Shul at iconic 770 Eastern Parkway, on that trip. We also had the great privilege of a private appointment as a family in his study, known as yechidus. Though the Rebbe spent most of the time there discussing matters of which I understood nothing at the time, he interacted directly at our level with me, my sister and my brother, taking a keen interest in our Judaic studies at school.

We visited the States frequently during the summer holidays in subsequent years, each time being blessed with the opportunity of such meetings. The depth and length of his questioning on my Torah learning increased as I got older. I remember one such occasion

when the Rebbe asked me if I could recite by heart sections of the Mishna I had been learning at school. I easily complied but hesitated when he asked me to translate the words. We had been speaking in Yiddish but the medium of instruction at the Brussels primary school I attended was French. I explained that I would only be able to translate in that language. The Rebbe smiled; my father encouraged me to proceed with a nod of the head; I thought I would be able to get away with anything as there was no way this old man was francophonic. To my great surprise the Rebbe gently prodded me, helping me when I was unsure of a word. (I later learnt the Rebbe had lived in France from 1933 to 1940, studying at the Sorbonne.)

As I got older, I had the privilege of attending his Shabbat afternoon farbrengens regularly. It was with his blessing that I spent two years as a student shliach (intern) in Seattle, Washington. It was once again with his blessing that Rivky and I came out as his shlichim to South Africa in 1986.

So today, 3 Tammuz, is a day that fills me with intense pain, as the world marks his 30th yartzeit. Virtually an entire generation has passed when none of the above has been possible. I think back with tears in my eyes of the many blessings and opportunities I merited over the years.

The Zohar teaches us that weeping can be lodged in one side of the heart while joy is simultaneously lodged in the other. Sometimes it is the same event that is causing both conflicting emotions. (See

Rebbetzin's message for an illustration thereof.)

Today, 3 Tammuz, is also a celebration of the Rebbe's life and his achievements during the three decades that followed his physical departure from this world. Chabad-Lubavitch has grown exponentially, with the number of Shlichim who have taken up positions since 1994 far exceeding the total number as of that date. Many of those young men and women were not even born then. Thousands are leading their lives true to his vision and the marching orders he left us.

How do we explain this phenomenon?

The Rebbe was never content with prior achievements. When someone reported to him on his own accomplishments, expecting a pat on the back, he was sure to receive an exhortation to do more instead. Over and over he encouraged increased Torah learning, increased Tzedaka, increased outreach.

From the day he took on the leadership, on the 10th of Shevat in 1951, he made it clear that he would be pushing his Chassidim, not do their job for them. He emphasized that we need to learn how to be self-sufficient and self-reliant in all areas of our Divine service. To quote Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks (z"l), the Rebbe did not create followers, he created leaders.

Today we cry. At the same time, we celebrate a life and a mission, in the past, in the present and undoubtedly also in the future.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

I have long been fascinated by the Kabbalistic concept that deep emotions all come from the very same place. This means that extreme sadness and extreme happiness originate from the very same source.

I have often pondered, discussed and debated this, and then, last night, I tasted it.

My niece gave birth to a baby boy in New York. We watched the bris online. I held my breath as this new little boy was given a name. I held my breath again when I heard his name. Of course we had all hoped that he would be called Avraham Koppel for my father, and when he was it hurt so much.

Galus (exile) is so confusing. This mix up of happy and sad.

There is so much to be happy and grateful for. But with the happiness come reminders of the sadness we have too.

I so wanted to call my dad and tell him that a great grandchild has been named after him. I wanted to tell him what big shoes this baby has to fill. I wanted to tell him how much we love and miss him. How every grandchild wants to have a child that carries his name and his greatness. How happy we are to have the gift of new life, of the next generation. And how sore it is that he isn't here to see this with us.

Yes, definitely happiness and sadness are there in the exact same place.

Have a good month

Rivky

SERVICE TIMES**SHACHARIT (A.M.)**

Monday and Thursday	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Friday	5:45
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DVAR TORAH

13 Ways the Lubavitcher Rebbe Changed the World Forever

By Mordechai Lighthouse (chabad.org)

Born in 1902 in Nikolaev, Ukraine, the life of the Lubavitcher Rebbe encompasses many of the epochs of the 20th century: The rise and fall of the Soviet Union, the Holocaust, modern Israel, the cultural revolution of the 1960s and the dawn of the Internet age.

The Rebbe believed that every person—regardless of background or knowledge—could be empowered as a conduit to spread goodness and kindness wherever they were. Together, those combined acts could illuminate the world, elevating it and bringing true transcendence.

The following offers a glimpse at how the Rebbe, through great vision, has categorically changed the Jewish world.

1. Speak to the Youth

Judaism has always placed a vital role on education as the key to continuity. The Rebbe, however, clarified the importance of experience and interaction as key to bringing these valuable lessons to future.

Rather than view children as merely unfinished adults, the Rebbe recognized the vigor, openness and pursuit of truth among youth as unique advantages they could teach and inspire their world-weary elders. The Rebbe would dedicate special talks to children, engaging their minds and hearts with Torah.

From public rallies in the 1950s to the gamification of Jewish involvement with the Tzivos Hashem network in the 1980s, the Rebbe understood that it was through action that the innate energy of youth could be catalyzed and focused, ultimately inspiring grownups as well.

2. Rebellion Is Revelation

The Rebbe was an orthodox rebel, a traditional radical. In the Sixties, the rest of the Jewish establishment looked on in disdain at what was happening to their youth and cried: Student unrest! Hippies and freaks! This is certainly a deranged and lost generation.

The Rebbe's approach declared: Finally, the iceberg of America is beginning to melt! Finally, its young people are demonstrating that conformity is not the sum of life's goals! They have smashed the idols of false progress; they need now only be led back to the living waters of their heritage.

3. The Power of the Feminine Soul

The Rebbe was once visited by an influential New York politician and his wife. Seeing that the wife, an accomplished lawyer in her own right, was silent during the conversation, the Rebbe turned to her and asked: "Why aren't you saying anything? These are the days of women's rights . . ."

When the world struggled with including women in the rubric of Jewish tradition, the Rebbe had long empowered them to be leaders and thinkers, masters of the Jewish future and bringers of light into the world.

4. No Person Is Too Far Gone

The Rebbe viewed every person as comprised of inherent goodness at the core and possessing a unique role in the world. That meant that even someone imprisoned for crimes could not be overlooked or ignored, and can and should be rehabilitated and activated for good.

While many in the Jewish community wanted to wash their hands of anyone they deemed beneath their dignity, the Rebbe encouraged the rehabilitation of these people. Inmates' families should also be supported, and

preventative education fostered for those at risk.

5. Knowing Joy

Joy has always been an essential component of Jewish spiritual life. Yet all too often, the Jewish experience has been associated with the negative, especially when it comes to a history of persecution, made most horrific by the Holocaust.

The Rebbe sought to imbue joy throughout the spectrum of Jewish life. Every moment, every good deed, every experience could reflect a sense of pride and a time for rejoicing. Judaism deserved not to be mourned and eulogized, but to be celebrated.

6. Always Practical

The Rebbe created a 10-point mitzvah campaign focusing on simple, practical and actionable deeds that could be performed anywhere.

Combining his philosophy of taking Jewish action to the streets and understanding the importance of experience, the Rebbe married these two beliefs in the pragmatic request that people do a limited immediate action. Take a moment and put on tefillin; light Shabbat candles; eat kosher. What you did until now—and what you'll do tomorrow—is not the focus. Right here, right now, it's about doing a good deed. That connection, even if seemingly transient, is transcendent and eternal.

7. Judaism in the Public Square

Today, giant Chanukah menorahs are a common site from Midtown Manhattan to the South Lawn of the White House, from the Eiffel Tower to the Hawaiian beaches, and beyond.

For centuries, Jews were conditioned to hide their Judaism. The Rebbe celebrated America's freedom to serve G-d and brought not only Chanukah, but every Jewish holiday and almost every commandment, front and center in public life.

To be Jewish is not something that takes place only in synagogue, but everywhere a Jew goes, spreading light and goodness in even the darkest winter nights.

8. Identify!

In 1974, the Rebbe introduced the world to the "Mitzvah Tank": trucks or RVs converted into mobile Jewish centers where Jewish pride could be writ large—bold, brash and ready to engage the public. Being Jewish was no longer was a passive experience. Instead, the fight for Jewish identity and continuity was an active one in which every Jew could take a positive stand.

9. One Community

Judaism is relatively unique in its belief that gentiles need not become Jews to gain transcendence. Each of us, following our unique callings, can live an upright and ethical life.

But history did not often give Jews the position of serving as a "light unto nations," partners in creating a just and upright world.

The Rebbe, however, encouraged all mankind to follow the universal moral principles entrusted to us by G-d, known as the "Seven Noahide Laws."

Each individual has a path within a path. Yet there is one universal basis for us all.

Through such cooperation, the Rebbe believed the world could reach its ultimate *raison d'être*.

As the Rebbe told former New York City Mayor David Dinkins: "We are one side. We are one people, living in one city, under one administration and under one G-d."

10. Harness Technology

People often view traditional Judaism, especially as practiced by Chassidim, as anachronistic and opposed to modern technology.

And yet, the Rebbe propelled a view of Jewish life not in contradiction to technological

advances, considering the burgeoning field a valuable component to achieving greater good.

Using the latest means of communication, the Rebbe encouraged that radio in the 1950s, satellite in the 1980s and Internet in the early 1990s all be used to advance knowledge and education. When technology was harnessed properly, he taught, it wasn't negative, but itself a portent of greatness and goodness in the world.

11. Lamplighters

Spreading Jewish knowledge isn't something that should be left only to the Jewish professionals or clergy. The Rebbe would exhort that if all you know is alef, then teach alef!

Each of us has the power to instruct and inspire others. What is more, we're tasked to not just teach others, but to fully empower them so that they, in turn, can teach others. Like a lamplighter kindling a flame, once the wick is fully lit, it can be used to kindle other lights to come.

12. Think Globally . . .

The Rebbe pushed forth the call of Ufaratzta, that Jews should travel to communities around the world, under the principle that 'even if you know just the letter Alef, teach Alef,' affording every last individual access to his or her heritage. Heading this call, some 5,000 Chabad-Lubavitch emissary couples in over 100 countries around the world run 4,000 institutions.

13. ... Act Locally

Despite the global reach of the Chabad movement, emissaries form a holistic part of the communities they serve. This concept extends to all involved; every Jewish person has agency to spread Jewish knowledge. Each community—and each individual in it—is empowered to perform the final word, thought or action that can tip the scales, and bring redemption to the entire world.

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHDAYS

- Alan Lieberman on his 65th birthday on the 9th of July
- Glenda Schneider on her 80th birthday on the 13th of July
- Lilian Benard on her 30th birthday on the 26th of July

BIRTHS

- Doris Samson on the birth of a great grandson in Manchester.
- Phillip and Rilla Jacobson on the birth of a great granddaughter, born to Mendel & Menucha Marrus in Pretoria

REFUAH SHLEIMA

We wish a speedy recovery to:

- Rene Gamsu

BEREAVEMENTS

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



- Brenda Brick and to Laurence, Stephen and Petra Brick on the death of their husband and father John Brick.
- Stanley Abkiewicz on the death of his brother, Aubrey Abkiewicz
- Susan Friedman, Ruth Aharon and Rosemary Green on the death of their father, Solly Burgin.
- Lindy Hoffmann on the death of her father, Natie Aremband



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