

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

20 North Avenue, Riviera
✉ P.O. Box 87406, Houghton, 2041

☎ 011-646-6020 ☎ 011-486-2214

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

📘 facebook.com/oxfordshul

June 2012

Sivan / Tamuz 5772

SHABBAT TIMES

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

15 & 16 June – 26 Sivan

🕒 Shelach

🕒 5:06 – 🕒 5:58

22 & 23 June – 3 Tamuz

🕒 Korach

🕒 5:07 – 🕒 5:59

29 & 30 June – 10 Tamuz

🕒 Chukat

🕒 5:09 – 🕒 6:01

6 & 7 July – 17 Tamuz

🕒 Balak

🕒 5:12 – 🕒 6:04

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

There I was happily contemplating my relatively free night when I received a reminder from the Rabbi that the Chairman's message was needed ASAP. Now in all fairness, I wasn't being remiss, but thought the Chairman's message for the AGM would cover for the month as well... after all, how many messages can one chairman write in a month?!

Not having much in addition to write about, I decided to GOOGLE 'Shul Chairman's message' and returned 24500 hits. None of the ones I looked at seemed even remotely appropriate.

We had a lovely Shavuot Dinner and well done to the Rabbi, and speakers. One is supposed to be on a spiritual high, especially on the morning when the 10 Commandments are read.

However, I want to speak of another high starting 80 odd minutes into the Champions league final that was played two weeks before Shavuot. If you

didn't watch the game, Chelsea equalised in the few remaining minutes against a team that was outplaying them, forcing extra time. Despite a Bayern Munich tactical error in sending off one of their strikers in the second half when they were in the lead, they out played Chelsea in extra time as well and even won a penalty in the box which they missed (miraculously), and the game went to penalties. Chelsea started these off badly but somehow managed to come back and win. To top it all off, the match was played in Bayern's home stadium (another massive disadvantage for Chelsea).

It was clear by all accounts that Chelsea should not have won, notwithstanding the fact that critics believe Chelsea was lucky to have made it to the finals in the first place. What was very interesting to me were the commentators' comments. For example, "it is destiny", "their name was written on the cup before the game started (figuratively speaking)", "it's a miracle they won (or Bayern lost depending on who you supported)". Even the crowd interviewed after the game said the same thing, "it was meant to be!" Billions of people around the world were all saying and thinking the same thing, loosely translated as "Min-hashmayim, beshert, unbelievable, miraculous etc." Without admitting it people were reaching a spiritual high in believing in something other than chance, luck or 'cause and effect'. I think it would have been an opportune time, for the Moshiach to have arrived! :-)

Don't forget our AGM on the 18th June.

Laduma!!

Brian Levy

RABBI'S MESSAGE

The full Shul this past Motzei Shabbat (Saturday night) was absolutely awesome. The music coming from the many voices who took part in the Choir Festival was fabulous—from the sweet young children in the Boys' Choir to the various talented chazonim and shul choirs who took part, culminating in the combined massed choir whose sound sent chills down everyone's spine.

[A huge Yasher Koach to Devorah Nates who convened and organised the whole event, to "the inimitable" Evelyn Green and to all the choirmasters, chazonim and choristers involved. And of course, thanks also to all who braved the icy weather to attend. It was truly a night to be remembered.]

I chose the adjective "awesome" intentionally as the crowded pews felt like one of the Days of Awe. (Does that explain the JJMC's choice of "Hayom Hayom" followed by a Yom Kippur medley?)

But then came the morning after. There's always a letdown after planning a big event. Then it's over and you ponder, what now?

Well my morning after, I was sitting in the small shul, waiting... for a minyan!

Few know that the hardest day of the year to get ten men into shul is, quite ironically, the morning after Yom Kippur. One would think that after the inspiration of the Holy Day, throngs of non-regulars would flock, at least on the first day, to translate that inspiration into deed. The reality is that everyone is tired after a whole day spent in

synagogue followed by a late night at breaking-the-fast events. So few know how hard it is to get a minyan that morning because few are actually there.

The Sunday morning after that awesome night the mercury registered -2 degrees. And the wind was howling. And nobody was rushing out of bed. So the climax of the packed shul was followed by the anti-climax of nine men, sitting and waiting for a tenth to arrive. And there was someone with yartzeit, wanting to say Kaddish.

Well, we got a minyan, eventually.

You know, it's really important for a shul to have a daily minyan. That is what makes it into a real shul. Because Judaism is not a once-a-week religion. Judaism is practiced seven days a week, 365 days a year. So we need to have services every day, morning and evening, and not only to provide an opportunity for those who want to say kaddish—many days there is nobody present with that obligation. The services are there because communal worship is something we do every single day.

You know, it's really important for you to come to shul on a day other than Shabbat (at least sometimes). Not just because we need your help with the minyan, which we do. Because coming once (or more times) during the week or on Sunday, morning or evening, makes you a real Jew.

This is why I invite you to commit yourself to come—once a week, once a month, whatever. And I extend the invitation to the women as well, as our small shul has a spacious ladies' section.

Making this appeal in June may not be the most ingenious thing to do—perhaps I would be more persuasive in summer. But now is when we need you—when Shacharit starts while temperatures are still in the single digits and Mincha while many are still at work. This is when we struggle, but virtually always succeed, in getting a minyan.

See you in shul, tomorrow.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

Shavuot turned out to be a really good Yom Tov, despite the Erev-Yom-Tov stress. You see, a mouse (I like to think of it in singular, although I am quite sure they aren't solitary creatures) took up residence behind my fridge and every time I got all enthusiastic about doing my cooking it would make a dash across the kitchen for the dishwasher. I tried to reason with it, screech at it, bribe it, threaten it and eventually resorted to an exterminator. My husband still landed up being the hero when he caught it under a bucket and took it outside. Hopefully it doesn't come back (despite the freezing weather) and tell its friends and acquaintances how we treat guests that we don't want!

This little mouse made me think, made me wonder: Why we are so scared of such a little mouse, and not so scared of such a big G-d.

It made me wonder: why we are so embarrassed about something we can't always control, and didn't do, but not embarrassed about the things we can control and should be doing.

It made me wonder why the mention of a mouse gets such a big reaction and so many big things go unnoticed.

It surprised me how many people also have mouse trouble, but only share when they hear about yours. Yes, everyone has challenges, and we can all support each other.

Have a good month

Rivky

SHACHARIT (A.M.)	
Sunday and Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00
20/06 & 21/06 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00	
MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)	
Sunday to Thursday	5:15
Friday	5:20
Shabbat	5:00

A SMILE

PARAPROSDOKIANS FOR THE ARTICULATE JEW

By Marnie Winston-Macauley
(www.aish.com)

What is a paraproisdokian? It's a figure of speech in which the first part of a phrase or sentence seems normal, even complimentary ... and the second, or last part, shocks and shakes the first part to its tenuous foundation. It can also extend the meaning of Part One. "Of course I agree with you... Now we'll both be wrong."

I've created and collected paraproisdokians that we Jews can use with a lot of impunity, never mind impudence.

"Darling, for our anniversary let's go eat someplace we've never been before... the kitchen."

"Mamala, this time you should have the last words. How about... 'Yes dear.'"

"Freida, I owe you thanks. I always saw the good in people till you taught me... there's an exception to everything."

Darling that outfit, the dress, the shoes, the hat, you wore to my David's Bar Mitzvah, I never saw anything like it... and please G-d, I never will again."

"Mamala, there's nothing wrong with you mentally... that a team of psychiatrists in Switzerland can't cure."

"They made that suit to order? Oy, so the man never picked it up."

"She got her good looks from her father... the plastic surgeon."

"Mamala, you've always had an open mind... so nu, isn't it time you closed it for repairs?"

"Darling, did I say it was your fault? No. I said I was blaming you."

"I've had a wonderful night – unfortunately, this wasn't it."

"Going to a shul doesn't make you a Jew, anymore than standing in a bakery makes you a babka."

For the full list visit
www.aish.com/jfs/Jewish_Paraproisdokians.html

A STORY

TEFILIN AFTER 72 YEARS

www.chabad.org

Last week at the Western Wall, I asked an elderly man to put on tefillin. He strongly refused.

I asked him, "When was the last time you put on tefillin?"

He smiled and proudly said, "72 years ago!" He held out his arm to show me the fading tattooed numbers. "1938," he said. "It was the day of Kristallnacht. Do you know what Kristallnacht is?"

"Of course I do," I told him.

"Two hundred and sixty-seven synagogues were burned down in one night. They burned down our synagogue, too. My tefillin were burnt up, and I have never put them on again," he said.

"I have a friend who was in the camps, too," I quickly said, "and he not only puts on tefillin today, but he even put them onto others inside the camp! Do you want to hear how he got tefillin into the camp?"

"Yes," he said strongly. "How did he get them in there?"

"His name is Laibel. Whenever he comes to Israel, he prays with our minyan at sunrise. He also has numbers tattooed on his arm. When we first met, he asked me, 'What do you do around here?' and I responded, 'I put tefillin on people here at the Western Wall.'

"Oh yeah?" he said, "Well, I put tefillin on people in the death camp."

"I stared at him. There was nothing I could say. I was dumbfounded. I asked him, 'How did you get the tefillin in there?'"

"He began his story. The Nazis had come to the ghetto and grabbed 137 young boys.

He told me that only five of them survived. Only five.

"He was thirteen and a half years old. He was wearing the high boots that his father had bought him, and when he saw them coming, he stuffed his tefillin into one boot and his prayerbook in the other.

"They pushed the boys into a cattle car and drove them to the death camp, not far from the ghetto. When the train stopped, they slid open the side of the cattle car and immediately began pushing them toward the open door of the gas chamber. The boys were frightened and cried out. They asked Laibel, 'What should we do?' He told them, 'We're going to stand in rows five across, and we're going to march right into that gas chamber singing a song of faith, the "Ani Maamin.'" And they did just that. They stood in rows five across, and started singing and marching right into the chamber.

"The guards became so confused that they did not know what to do. They screamed, 'You can't do that! No one has ever done such a thing before. Stop it! Stop it at once! Here! Go over there to the showers instead!'"

"They pushed them over to the showers, and forced them to undress and throw their clothing into a pile in the middle of the floor. They made them empty their shoes, and the tefillin and prayerbook fell out onto the pile.

"After the shower, when they were dressed in camp clothes and were being pushed out, past the pile of their clothes, Laibel saw his tefillin and prayerbook lying there. He wanted so badly to run and pick them up, but terrifying guards were watching. He said to the boys, 'I did something for you, so now you do something for me.'

"Whatever you want,' they said. 'You saved our lives.'

"He said, 'When I give the signal, start a fight and scream out loud. Okay . . . now!' The boys started to fight and scream. The guards ran over and tried to pull them apart, but they wouldn't stop fighting. In the confusion, he ran over and grabbed his tefillin and prayerbook, and hid them under his arms.

"Later, he was in the barracks, and wanted to put on the tefillin. He was able to put the arm-tefillin on without anyone seeing, by pulling his sleeve over it, but how could he put on the head-tefillin? There were guards all over. He opened the window and stuck his head outside so he could put on the head-tefillin. A guard came by and screamed, 'Who said you could open that window?' He told him that he was sick and throwing up, and if he made him close the window he would throw up inside, too. The guard left him. And he looked me in the eye and said, 'And I put tefillin on other men, too.' I started to cry, and I kissed him on his yarmulke.

"The day after Laibel told me his story, there was a soldier at the Western Wall who wouldn't put on tefillin. No matter what I said, he simply refused. Then I told him Laibel's story, and he quickly said, 'Okay, I'll do it.'

"And you can do it, too," I said to the elderly gentleman who hadn't donned tefillin in 72 years, as I gently slid the tefillin I was holding onto his arm. He said the blessing and started to cry. We said the Shema, and he prayed for his family. He began to smile even while the tears were streaming down his face. A crowd gathered around and congratulated him on overcoming all those years of rejection.

You do not always succeed, but you always have to try.

MAZAL TOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BAR/BATMITZVAHS

- Hymie and Judith Feinberg on the barmitzvah of their grandson, Adam Feldman
- Maish Brenner on the barmitzvah of his grandson, Jesse Nathan

ENGAGEMENTS

- Eddie and Carol Pokroy on the engagement of their daughter, Keren, to Gary Braude

MARRIAGES

- Justin and Maxine Abratt on the marriage of their son, Jonathan, to Kim Richardson on 5th June in Israel
- Millicent Sacks on the marriage of her granddaughter, Talya Sacks, to Jethro Solomon

BIRTHDAYS

- Joe Pollack on his 91st birthday on 13th June
- Mandi Strimling on her 30th birthday on 15th June
- Fruma Bakman on her 65th birthday on 19th June
- Joe Davidovitz on his 80th birthday on 24th June
- Bram Meyerson on his 50th birthday on 28th June

ANNIVERSARIES

- Barry and Valerie Sinclair on their 60th anniversary on 1st June
- Brian and Robyn Levy on their 10th anniversary on 16th June
- Allan and Sandra Sher on their 50th anniversary on 17th June
- Stanley and Norma Wolpe on their 55th anniversary on 23rd June
- Max and Raynor Brodie on their 60th anniversary on 29th June

BEREAVEMENTS

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



- Annette Angel on the death of her husband, Aubrey
- Lisa Cohen on the death of her mother, Gail Goldberg
- Maish Brenner on the death of his sister, Chana Kopelowitz
- Gwenda Kretzmar on the death of her father, Teddy Cohen

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

Annual

Notice to all permanent seatholders:

THE 68th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

Will be held in the foyer of the Shul
on Monday 18th June 2012 at 7:30 p.m.

Elections will take place for the positions of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and ten committee members.