

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

June 2018

Tammuz 5778

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SHABBAT TIMES

🔊 Parasha - 🕯 Candle Lighting

🕯 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)
For service times see page 3

15 & 16 June – 3 Tammuz

🔊 Korach

🕯 5:05 – 🕯 5:57

22 & 23 June – 10 Tammuz

🔊 Chukat

🕯 5:07 – 🕯 5:59

29 & 30 June – 17 Tammuz

🔊 Balak

🕯 5:08 – 🕯 6:01

6 & 7 July – 24 Tammuz

🔊 Pinchas

🕯 5:11 – 🕯 6:03

13 & 14 July – 2 Av

🔊 Matot & Masei

🕯 5:14 – 🕯 6:06

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Year ago, I visited the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv and for obvious reasons, spent a lot of time looking at the exhibits on synagogues and prayer.

One particular small model caught my attention. It was a typical morning scene in a shul—nine men were busy with their talis, tefilin or siddur but were facing the back, looking towards the door. The description on the glass case read, “Waiting for the Tenth...”

The display resonated with me... It was a scenario I had watched repeated in real life since my childhood. As a very young child, going with my father to shul on very dark, icy, snowy mornings at the

Machazikei Hadas Shul in Copenhagen. Then, growing up in Brussels—where the temperatures may have been milder but the weather even nastier, all year round—the minyan at Machazikei Hadas (same name!) in Brussels sometimes also tarried.

Then, following in my father's footsteps, I accepted the call to become the leader of Constantia Shul in the Cape Peninsula. The memories came flooding back... not just the dark, blustery winter mornings of my childhood but also the daily 7:00 a.m. gathering of men staring expectantly at the door.

Years passed and I accepted a pulpit at a much larger shul, the prestigious Oxford Synagogue. A congregation several times the size of my previous posting. Nostalgia quickly came back to haunt me, as I occasionally witnessed the worshippers' furtive, hopeful stares towards the back door.

It seems that, irrespective of the size of a congregation, the responsibility to ensure a daily minyan will always fall on a select few.

I am sure by now, gentlemen, you have worked out exactly where this is going. I am very proud of the fact that our community maintains a daily minyan, morning and evening. So should you all be. Not only because this enables people

to say kadish when they need to but also because that is what a shul is about, twice a day, seven days a week. There are many congregations in our side of town that fail, or do not even try. We, mostly, succeed. But it can only happen if everyone does their bit.

I am going to be reaching out to you to ask you to commit to regular attendance. Once a week or if that is not possible, then alternate weeks. But we need good men to make commitments, not to say “I will try.” But you do not have to wait for me to contact you. You know where we are and service times are on page 2 in this newsletter. Just come along.

One recent Rosh Chodesh, I was absolutely determined that we would get a minyan for the morning service. We had missed a few in the preceding days and I was determined. I spent my evening sending out many text messages begging people to come. (The result was a 19 worshippers!). At the end of the service I extended a special thanks to all those who had responded to my call by attending. But, I added, the bigger yasher koach goes out to those who arrived spontaneously.

Gents, you belong in one or the other group. The choice is yours...

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

Don't be fooled by the clear blue sky and the shining sun. There is a definite chill in the air and when you leave the house you really do need a jersey or a jacket.

We Jo'burgers are so blessed with the best weather. Mostly neither too hot or too cold. During the summer the temperature goes down at night to bring us relief and during the winter, the temperature goes up in the day to make the winter bearable. And when we do get a very cold or miserable or dark and gloomy day, we fall apart. We put ourselves to bed (have you noticed that we do not go out when it is cold and raining?). We moan, complain, and forget about the other approximately 300 days that are beautiful!

This is so typical of us humans, to focus on the negative and forget all the blessings we have. I am learning the book of Esther with the grade 11 girls. We are up to the part where Haman actually verbalises this. He tells his friends how wealthy he has become, how he has been promoted in his job, and that he has many children to be proud of. But all this is worth nothing when he sees Mordechai refuse to acknowledge him. Worth nothing!!!

As we learnt this, I could not help thinking how often we do exactly the same as Haman. Instead of focusing on all our blessings, we choose to focus on one negative thing: a faribel; a president we don't like; or even just the cold weather—and we sigh and moan... Let us rather count our blessings!

Have a good month.

Rivky

DVAR TORAH**WHY ARE TEN MEN NEEDED FOR A MINYAN?**

By Shmuel Kogan (chabad.org)

The biblical source for the requirement of ten men to complete a minyan (lit., "count" or "number") is Numbers 14:27. Moses sent spies to scout the land of Canaan. Ten of them returned and issued a report concluding that it was not a conquerable land. G-d was extremely disappointed with their lack of faith in His abilities. He turns to Moses and Aaron, telling them: "How long will this evil 'assembly' provoke [the Jewish nation] to complain against Me?" From here it is deduced that an "assembly" is comprised of ten men.

Now, in Leviticus 22:32 G-d says, "I shall be sanctified amidst the children of Israel." Employing a method of biblical exegesis known as *gezerah shavah*, wherein two verses with identical terminology are compared to each other,¹ this verse is matched up to another verse (Numbers 16:21): "Separate yourselves from amidst this assembly." The *gezerah shavah* teaches us that an "assembly" must be present when G-d is being sanctified. Examples of such sanctification are the recitation of *kaddish*, *kedushah* and *barchu*, or

the public reading of the Torah.

Upon pondering this concept for a moment, one comes to realize a great truth: the power of each individual Jew. There can be a group of nine of the greatest Jews, men who complete all of the commandments and understand the depths of the Torah's secrets, yet they do not have the ability to complete a minyan on their own. However, add to the group the simplest Jew, someone who perhaps cannot properly read his prayer nor does he relay understand what he is saying, yet when he walks into the room he has now transformed to entire group and made them complete—a minyan. It is because of him that they are now able to recite those parts of the prayer that can be read only with a minyan. Never underestimate the potential of the individual Jew.

Numbers 14:27 was read on Shabbat 9 June. Numbers 16:21 will be read on Shabbat 16 June.

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

Sunday and Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
<small>13/07 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00</small>	
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Sunday to Thursday	5:15
Friday	5:20
Shabbat	5:00

STORY

The Taxis & the Minyan

Rabbi Avrohom Rapoport
(rabbicandybox.blogspot.com)

A man living in Jerusalem was saying kaddish for a parent who had died. Each day he would say kaddish at the daily services in the synagogue. It was his way of connecting to the soul of his loved one.

Returning home one night at 3:00 a.m. from a wedding, he fell into bed exhausted. As soon as he had turned out the light, he realized that he hadn't prayed Ma'ariv, the evening prayer. He missed the kaddish for his beloved mother.

With tremendous effort, he dragged himself out of bed and started to dress.

Where to find a minyan at this time of the morning? 3:00 a.m.

No problem. As anyone who lives in Jerusalem can tell you, day or night, you can always find a minyan at the *shteibelach*—the small synagogues in the Zichron Moshe neighborhood.

That night there was a miracle. Zichron Moshe was totally deserted; no one was there; nary a hobo, nada.

Taking out his cellular phone, he dialed the number of a large taxi company.

"Hello! Can you please send six taxis to the

shteibelach in Zichron Moshe?"

"Adoni (my dear sir)! It's three o'clock in the morning! You think I have six taxis? What do you think I am, a magician? ...I only have five."

"Okay. So send five!"

He dialed another number. "Hello, please send five taxis to Zichron Moshe..."

"Your crazy? *Atah meshugah?* I only have four!"

"okay so send four."

Within twenty minutes, there was a procession of nine taxicabs parked neatly outside the *shteiblach*.

"*Adoni*," said one of the drivers, "Why do you need nine taxis? There's no wedding here, no Bar Mitzvah, nothing."

"I want you all to turn your meters on and come inside with me. We are going to pray together the evening prayer — *arvit*"

"I will pay each of you just as if your giving me a lift. For every minute you are here, I will pay you."

Dusty yarmulkes (skullcaps) emerged from the glove compartments of the taxis, some woken from a hibernation that stretched back to their owners' own bar mitzvah.

It wasn't easy. Despite being obviously fluent in Hebrew, the drivers had no idea how to pray: what and

when to answer; when they should pray aloud and when in silence.

It took them quite a while. But the kaddish man, showed them exactly what do do.

They had the most incredible, moving prayer at 3:30 a.m. in Jerusalem, and he said kaddish for his mother.

When they had finished, everyone went out to the taxis; the meters in the cars were pushing upwards of 90 shekels in each car. The drivers turned off their meters and the man pulled out his wallet. He would have to dish out around 800 shekel to all the drivers to pay them for their time.

"How much do I owe you?" he said to the first taxi driver in the line.

"*Adoni*, what do you take me for? Do you honestly believe I would take money from you who just gave me such an opportunity to help my fellow Jew say kaddish?"

He moved down the line to the second driver. Identical reaction. "Do you know how long it is since I prayed?" you want me to take money from you?

And the third and the fourth, all the way down the line to the ninth...

Not one would take a penny.

They embraced and they drove off to a new morning in the holy city of Jerusalem!

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Philip & Rilla Jacobson on the birth of a great grandson.
- Philip & Rilla Jacobson and Marke & Jeanette Markovitz on the birth of a great grandson.
- Doris Samson on the birth of a great granddaughter in Manchester.

MARRIAGES

- Sonia Genn on the marriage of her grandson, Darryl Genn

to Tana Guinsberg on 10th June.

BAR/BAT-MITZVAH

- Doreen Kapeluschnik on her grandson's barmitzvah.
- Justin & Maxine Abratt on their granddaughter's batmitzvah in Istraël.

BIRTHDAYS

- Melanie Mograbi on her 70th birthday on the 29th June.

ANNIVERSARIES

- Alan & Fern Zev on their 45th anniversary on the 3rd June.

REFUAH SHLEIMA

We wish a Speedy recovery to:



- Fern Zev
- Danny Sack
- Lily Sarembock
- Ralph Aronowitz
- Annette Wolk
- Lee Asefovitz

BEREAVEMENTS

We wish long life to

- Myron and Gary Pollack on the death of their father, Joseph.
- Linda Master on the death of her mother, Marlene Mitchell.

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



PURCHASE A LEAF ON OUR "SIMCHA TREE"

To mark a happy event in your family
Cost of each leaf is R 540.00 – For details please contact the office



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 R720 for the first plaque ordered, R540 for subsequent plaques