

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

June 2019

Sivan 5779

SHABBAT TIMES

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

7 & 8 June – 5 Sivan

🕒 Bamidbar

🕒 5:05 – 🕒 5:57

14 & 15 June – 12 Sivan

🕒 Nasso

🕒 5:05 – 🕒 5:57

21 & 22 June – 19 Sivan

🕒 Beha'alotcha

🕒 5:06 – 🕒 5:59

28 & 29 June – 26 Sivan

🕒 Shelach

🕒 5:08 – 🕒 6:00

5 & 6 July – 3 Tammuz

🕒 Korach

🕒 5:11 – 🕒 6:03

RABBI'S MESSAGE

A picture's worth one thousand dollars.

A recent trip from Johannesburg to South Florida and back set me back the equivalent of \$1000. The occasion was the bris of our new born grandson, to Shmuly and Shoshy who live in Hallandale, just North of Miami.

It is a long way, but the moment the mohel confirmed that the ceremony could go ahead, I was booked and ready to go. I decided on the Johannesburg-New York route and the change of planes to a local flight there, as this

would give me the opportunity of a visit with my parents as well as lunch with some of my children while in transit.

I had discussed with my parents the possibility of them attending the bris, but they felt the journey was too difficult for them to undertake. At that age, the three-hour flight from New York to Fort Lauderdale airport would be as taxing for them as the 20 or so hours of flying, each way, were for me.

As soon as the flight touched down on the runway at JFK, I switched on my phone to let them know I was coming over for breakfast. To my pleasant surprise, there was a text message waiting, asking for my onward flight details to Florida, as my father had decided he wanted to join me and attend the bris. I was clearly ecstatic!

On a beautiful sunny morning, at Chabad of NE Hollywood, my sixth grandson was brought into the Covenant of Abraham as he was held by his sandek, his great grandfather. I was given the honour of 'standing sandek' and held the baby while he was blessed and named. This bris was special because for

the first time, both my father and I participated in the mitzvah. On the previous five occasions, only one of us had been able to be there.

As happens at simchas, the family sat around in the garden of the Chabad House after the rest of the guests had left. My daughter-in-law, phone in hand, was snapping informal shots of the gathering. Then she took the \$1000 photo: Newly-brissed Aba Nechemya, his father, grandfather and great-grandfather posing together, the naches clearly captured on camera.

I look at this picture on my phone nearly every day, a vivid illustration of the continuity of yiddishkeit across generations. As we prepare for the festival of Shavuot, when we re-experience the Gift of Torah for the 3330th time, this image becomes even more poignant. Only 100 generations of so separate us from Sinai, each comprising of great grandfathers, grandfathers, mothers and daughters.

A well-known Midrash relates that Hashem requested suretyship before He was willing to give the Torah, His most precious gift,

to the Jewish People. Suggestions that elders or prophets would act in that capacity were turned down. The offer that the children would guarantee the upkeep of Torah was, however, readily accepted.

It was a hectic week, with more time spent on aircraft and airports than on US soil. And the actual financial cost to snap that one shot was indeed about \$1000. But the actual worth of that moment when we stood, smiling at the camera, is invaluable. It depicts the story of millions of such links that have assured the continuity of our people over these 33 centuries. My father taught me Torah, I passed in on to my son, whose turn it is now do the same for his.

As I step up to the Bimah to read the Ten Commandments from the Torah on Sunday morning (9 June), first day of Shavuot, I will be carrying a printed version of this photo in my breast pocket, close to my heart. Be there, and bring your own photo.

Chag Sameach.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

SERVICE TIMES

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday & Public Holidays	8:00
<i>03/07 & 04/07 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00</i>	
Monday to Friday	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

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

FROM THE REBBETZIN

Our little grandson in Melbourne stood up and walked this week. I have watched the video clip over and over and I am a suitably proud grandmother! He is also proud, smiling and proclaiming "baby walking".

I have also started walking. Up until recently I was the penultimate couch potato. But my new phone records my daily steps and I am motivated to do better every day.

One of our friends spent a few months in a wheelchair following an injury. Only recently, after lots of physiotherapy and even more determination, BH, she is proudly walking again.

Walking, for most people is something to take for granted. Moving from one place to another without thinking about it. For others, each step is an accomplishment, something to applaud.

This is life. We take so much for granted, hardly giving a moment to stop and think how big the "little" things really are.

We measure our accomplishments, and often are only satisfied if they are big and obvious and only if the world appreciates or thinks highly of what we have done.

But in Yiddishkeit we are taught that great things happen step by step.

We need to be proud of things that may seem small and ordinary to the people around us, but are big and hard work for us.

Have a good month

Rivky

DVAR TORAH

THE FIFTIETH MIRACLE

*by Shlomo Yaffe
(chabad.org)*

No two festivals on the Jewish calendar are more coupled than Passover and Shavuot. And no two festivals seem further apart conceptually.

We proceed from Passover to Shavuot along the pathway of the 49-day Omer Count which delineates them both. The Omer period always begins on the second day of Passover and ends with Shavuot. Shavuot is defined by the Torah as the day following the Omer Count — the 50th day after Passover. Shavuot is thus the only festival on our calendar not set by the date of the month but by its position vis-a-vis another holiday: Passover defines Shavuot.

Yet when we look at these two festivals, we discover that they represent differing, even opposite, ideas. Passover is called by the Torah the festival of "leaping" (pesach). We leap out of exile on the heels of ten supernatural Plagues. We are guided across a sea that splits open and then engulfs our pursuers in a process that violates every law of physics and chemistry. A nation of slaves, uncoiled a mere six days from the fetishism of Egyptian idolatry, perceives "more than the prophets" and sings a sublime song of transcendent beauty!

In contrast, Shavuot is called by the Torah Chag Habikkurim "The Festival of the First Fruits". In the

Temple period it marked the beginning of the wheat harvest and the first use of the new crop by a communal offering of loaves of wheat-bread in the Temple as thanks for blessings of the harvest.

Shavuot also marks the giving of the Torah, which, though a supernatural experience, actually marked the beginning of the era of the natural, the human and the ordinary in Jewish life. From the moment the Torah was given to the Jewish people, G-d decreed that "It (the Torah) is not in the heavens" but in our world. Only human beings can interpret the Torah and its rulings. After Sinai, G-d's voice — by His own choice — cannot itself issue a ruling on the practice of Judaism. Furthermore, all of the Torah's precepts (mitzvot) are defined as certain actions that are done with certain objects in precise mandates of time, mass, volume and space — the very boundaries of the natural world.

Nevertheless, the primary name used for this festival, Shavuot ("weeks"), refers to the seven weeks of the Omer. Seven weeks of a seamless continuum which define Passover and Shavuot as a single entity.

We are told by the Talmud that a farmer "believes in the Life Source of the Worlds and (therefore) sows". At first glance this seems a poor example of faith — one sows because it is a fact of nature that sowing seed brings a harvest in its wake, and we all need to eat.

In truth, this is the whole point of the progression and growth that we experienced as a people in those momentous seven weeks between the first Passover and that first Shavuot.

To see G-d in the "fireworks" of the Egyptian Exodus is something that even a child can do. As our sages say, "A child at the splitting of the sea saw more than the prophet Ezekiel". Indeed, how could he not? It is obvious that the "Hand of G-d" is at work in the wholesale upending of the natural order.

Far deeper and more mature is the understanding that the natural cycle is no less a miracle than the splitting of the Red Sea and all the miraculous drama of the Exodus. Both flow exclusively from G-d's essence. The only difference between the natural and the miraculous is frequency.

It is an axiom of Judaism that creation is an ongoing process. At every moment, the flow of divine energy is being condensed into the stuff of our bodies and souls and of every entity in all universes; were it to cease for even a split second, we would cease to exist instantaneously and utterly — it would be as if we never had existed. So it is clear that no accomplishment can be made, no purpose attained, without the energy for it flowing from the Source of all life.

This is reality; we need only to look beneath the surface of things to perceive it. Sometimes it leaps above the surface on its own —

that is a miracle. When that happens, seeing is no longer a choice: it is there before our eyes.

When our perception is driven by the force of the novel and the spectacular, we are passive bystanders — we are "forced" into recognizing our relationship to G-d. But when we choose to see G-d's essence in the first green shoot of wheat, this is our accomplishment. We have found G-d not as an external force impacting our world, but as the very fabric of our (seemingly) ordinary being.

Nature exists because G-d chose the natural order as the "default" option for all time. Miracles, on the other hand, are a concession to the human need to see things from a different perspective in order to apprehend what they've already seen.

G-d entrusted us with a "natural" existence because G-d has faith in our capacity to find the essential reflected in each moment of our lives and in each strand of the natural world.

G-d takes us from the obviousness of Passover and impels us — with confidence in our success — to the subtlety of Shavuot. This is because as much as we think of "faith" as our belief in G-d, there is an equally significant faith — the faith G-d has in us. G-d knows that with the light contained within Torah we have sufficient illumination to find — and live — the G-dliness that is the core of each being and the fabric of every moment.

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Josh & Jordy Sevitz, Andrew & Lesley Meisler and Annette Wolk on the birth of a daughter, grand-daughter and great grand-daughter.

BIRTHDAYS

- Julie Lampert on her 80th birthday on the 11th June.
- Andrea Aaron on her 80th birthday on the 23rd June.
- Shaun Wingrin on his 50th birthday on the 26th June.

ANNIVERSARIES

- Phillip & Aileen Shifren on their 50th anniversary on the 8th June.

- Frank & Mirah Wilks on their 45th anniversary on the 23rd June.

BEREAVEMENTS

- Naomi Schmidt on the death of her sister Blanche Sessel.
- Freda Braude on the death of her husband, Looky

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



**SHAVUOT IS ON SUNDAY 9 JUNE
AND MONDAY 10 JUNE**



**TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE READ ON SUNDAY MORNING
YIZKOR IS ON MONDAY MORNING**

**Book *now* for our communal Yom Tov Dairy Lunch
on Sunday 9 June
by calling our office at 011-646-6020
or email info@oxfordshul.com**

Cost per person: R 100.00 (Adults & Children)