

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 2020

Sivan 5780

SHABBAT TIMES

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

29 & 30 May – 7 Sivan
Shavuot (Day 2)

🕯 5:06 – 🕯 5:57

5 & 6 June – 14 Sivan

🔊 Nasso

🕯 5:05 – 🕯 5:57

12 & 13 June – 21 Sivan

🔊 Beha'alotcha

🕯 5:05 – 🕯 5:57

19 & 20 June – 28 Sivan

🔊 Shelach

🕯 5:06 – 🕯 5:58

26 & 27 June – 5 Tammuz

🔊 Korach

🕯 5:08 – 🕯 6:00

RABBI'S MESSAGE

We have all seen recent pictures of brides and grooms marking their special day around the world. There is something eerily absent in these celebrations: the crowd. Seeing photos of these ceremonies with barely a handful of invited guests fills us with sadness. But then we look at the sheer joy that fills the faces of the chatan and kallah. For sure, this is not the wedding of their dreams, the one they may have planned for months or even years, with perfect attention to every detail, from colour schemes, menus, décor down to the

exact list of invitees. No doubt there is disappointment that the day they had both been so looking forward to turned out to be an altogether different simcha. The happiness we see reflecting from the couple is the celebration of their marriage, of the absolute dedication they are pledging to their relationship and of the vows of mutual respect, love and care undertaken.

A few days ago, the editor of this newspaper contacted me to ask me to write a Shavuot column for the current edition. The brief sounded very similar to the one I had received, just a year ago, before Shavuot of 2019. I went back to her original email, which asked me to compose an article about the custom of "Tikkun Leil Shavuot," when communities get together for a late (or all-) night vigil studying Torah. This year's request was almost identical, except it was how we would observe the important customs of the Chag at a time when religious gatherings are banned by law.

I re-read last year's writing and my eyes welled up, as I recalled the remarkable programmes that our amazing

team of rabbonim have been putting together for this holiday over the years. All involved gatherings which are currently dangerous and prohibited by law. SA's rabbis have been incredibly creative in keeping their respective congregations together and active at this time, particularly through the use of technology. On Shavuot, of course, use of Zoom or other, real-time, electronic tools, is halachikally prohibited. How will we have a proper Chag this year?

Our current circumstances have forced us all to look at the core. The core of who we are, what we do, how we act and why we do things. The same will be true of the forthcoming holiday. What is Shavuot really all about? It is the celebration of the marriage of the Jewish Nation, bride, with her Groom, the Almighty G-d. The Torah, much like a Ketuba document composed prior to nuptials, is the document outlining the terms and the conditions of this union.

Each Shavuot, on the anniversary of the initial Covenant on Mount Sinai 3332 years ago, we celebrate this marriage once again. We

are accustomed to have large wedding gatherings for the occasion. But this year, no guests, just bride and Groom. And nothing can take away from the joy of this amazing union.

Over the years I have counselled countless brides and grooms to concentrate more on the forthcoming marriage and less on the wedding. A wedding lasts only a few hours but the marriage is for their lifetime. Does the same not apply to these Shavuot nuptials? Let us make this Yom Tov as happy as we can, just Hashem and us, in wedded bliss. Never mind who is or is not there. We have our Groom and we will rejoice with Him and pore over the minutiae of the Torah, our wedding contract, as we marvel on our absolute good fortune.

Our rabbis will do everything they can to prepare us, in advance of the festival, to make the day as special as it can be. But come Shavuot, it will be just the purity of this union, just Hashem and His people, together, alone.

It will be a wedding to remember. But, Hashem, this will not be the wedding of our dreams. Remember that and let us please celebrate, hopefully even this year, the way weddings should be celebrated.

Chag Sameach.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

This article first appeared in the SA Jewish Report, 21 May 2020.

FROM THE REBBETZIN

Everybody has had enough; we are fed up with our 4 walls even those of us who are happy at home are struggling with some of the rules;

- Can't breathe with a mask on
- Can't manage without a short a visit to the cousins
- Can't have Shabbos without wine

And so sadly many are simply breaking the rules.

The "funniest" however, is that whoever breaks a rule has a very good excuse. Each time the offender can give a full sermon explaining why it is ok for them particularly to break this rule or a twisted explanation on how they are not really breaking the rule.

I have thought so much about this, by personality I am a rule keeper. Probably, not because I am so good, but rather because I am a scaredy-cat, afraid of the consequences should I be caught. I don't want to spend the night in prison, nor do I want to pay a fine and really, I don't want to catch corona G-d forbid, nor would I want to be the one to pass it on to someone else.

Of course, I enter into deep deliberations whether or not the rules make sense, and if they are fair or not. But the real reason I keep them is because it is the law. It is not for me to understand or not, it is not for me to like or not. As a South African citizen my job is just to do.

In a few days is Shavout, we celebrate the receiving of the Torah complete with 613 rules. Some of them I love and some I don't like at all. Some I understand and some make no sense at all. But one thing I know is that it is the Torah that has kept us as a nation for 3000 years and so I will do my best to keep these rules even when I've had "enough".

I wish you a happy Shavout, may it be one where we celebrate the Torah and its rules in entirety. May Hashem watch over us all and keep us safe and healthy.

Rivky

SERVICE TIMES SHACHARIT (A.M.)

All Shul services currently suspended due to national lockdown. We hope and pray for their resumption.

Sunday & Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
<i>22 & 23/6 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00 a.m.</i>	
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Sunday to Thursday	5:15
Friday	5:20

DVAR TORAH**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS***by Menachem Posner (chabad.org)*

On Shavuot morning, 3,332 years ago, Heaven kissed Earth, and G-d communicated the 10 Commandments upon Mount Sinai. Every year we relive that experience when we read of this event (as it is recorded in the Book of Exodus) from the Torah during Shavuot morning services.

This year, we'll be reading the 10 Commandments ourselves, as our own living spaces have become our places of worship.

When: The ideal time for this reading is on Shavuot morning (May 29), as part of the services. However, it may be read later in the day as well.

Who: Every single Jewish woman, man and child should either read the 10 Commandments, or hear it read by someone else.

How: Since this is not an actual Torah reading, it may be read in Hebrew or English, or both. Have everyone stand around the designated reader, who will read the text (from Exodus 20) aloud in a clear voice. After the reading (and the conclusion of services), enjoy a celebratory dairy kiddush reception, during which you can discuss the significance of what was read and its relevance to us today.

The Hebrew text of the Ten Commandments can be found in an Artscroll Chumash on page 406, Lioving Torah page 352, Cohen page 457, Hertz page 294. It is also in the back of the Artscroll Siddur on page 967.

EXODUS 20, 1-14

1. "I am the Lord, your G-d, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

2. You shall not have the gods of others in My presence. You shall not make for yourself a graven image or any likeness which is in the heavens above, which is on the earth below, or which is in the water beneath the earth. You shall neither prostrate yourself before them nor worship them, for I, the Lord, your G-d, am a zealous G-d, Who visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, upon the third and the fourth generation of those who hate Me, and [I] perform loving kindness to thousands [of generations], to those who love Me and to those who keep My commandments.

3. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your G-d, in vain, for the Lord will not hold blameless anyone who takes His name in vain.

4. Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it. Six days may you work and perform all your labor, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord, your G-d; you shall perform no labor, neither you, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your beast, nor your stranger who is in your cities. For [in] six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.

5. Honor your father and your mother, in order that your days be lengthened on the land that the Lord, your G-d, is giving you.

6. You shall not murder.

7. You shall not commit adultery.

8. You shall not steal.

9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, or whatever belongs to your neighbor

10 POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Was the giving of the 10 Commandments a one-time event or something that is relevant to us today?

2. How are these 10 Commandments different from the rest of the 613 mitzvahs of the Torah?

3. Of all the 10 Commandments, which one do you relate to on a personal level?

4. Why did G-d choose to reveal Himself on a mountain? Why in the desert?

5. How did the people feel after the experience at Sinai, and how can we recreate that for ourselves?

6. What empowering lesson can we gain from the fact that we are forced to celebrate Shavuot in our homes?

7. What is the significance of 10? Where else does this number appear in Jewish tradition?

8. What meaning does the Giving of the Torah have to non-Jews?

9. Why was the Giving of the Torah accompanied by thunder, lightning and shofar blasts?

10. Why isn't Mount Sinai revered by Jewish people as a sacred place today?

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Rabbi & Rivky Chaikin and Mendel & Tzippy Chaikin on the birth of a granddaughter and daughter in New York.

BARMITZVAHS

- Mary Schneider on the occasion of her grandson's Barmitzvah in Cape Town.

ENGAGEMENTS

- Philip & Rilla Jacobson on the engagement of their granddaughter Sara Malka Fox to Mendy Shishler.
- Doris Samson on the engagement of her grandson Yonason to Shifra Lieberman from Gateshead.

BIRTHDAYS

- Jonathan Kramer on his 40th birthday on the 11th June.
- Gary Rutstein on his 55th birthday on the 19th June.
- Norma Wolpe on her 85th birthday on the 27th June.

ANNIVERSARIES

- Gary & Melanie Epstein on their 35th anniversary on the 23rd June.

**Thursday 5 Sivan (28 May) - Erev Shavuot**

- 📖 Prepare Eruv Tavshilin before Yom Tov begins

It is forbidden to cook on a Festival for the next day. When a Festival occurs on a Friday we are allowed to prepare food for Shabbat provided the preparations begin before the Festival. For this purpose we make an Eruv Tavshilin (literally "mingling of the foods") on the day preceding the Festival. An Eruv Tavshilin consists of a matzah, along with any other cooked food (e.g. meat, fish or egg), that we set aside before the Festival begins and then eat on Shabbat.

The Eruv foods are taken in the hand and the Bracha is made, followed by this declaration:

BA-RUCH A-TA ADO-NAI E-LO-HEI-NU ME-LECH HA-OLAM A-SHER KI-DE-SHA-NU BE-MITZ-VO-TAV VE-TZI-VA-NU AL MITZVAT ERUV.

THROUGH THIS IT SHALL BE PERMISSIBLE FOR US TO BAKE, TO COOK, TO PUT AWAY [A DISH TO PRESERVE ITS HEAT], TO KINDLE A LIGHT, AND TO PREPARE AND DO ON THE FESTIVAL ALL THAT IS NECESSARY FOR THE SHABBAT.

The Eruv is eaten at one of the Shabbat meals.

- 📖 Light 24-hour candle, to enable candle lighting Friday night
- 📖 Candle lighting: 5:06 p.m.
- 📖 Tikun Leil Shavuot in your own home. Study Torah (late) into the night

Friday 6 Sivan (29 May) - First Day of Shavuot

- 📖 Read the Ten Commandments (see page 3): 10:00 a.m.
- 📖 Candle Lighting: 5:06 p.m. (from a flame burning since before Yom Tov)

Shabbat 7 Sivan (30 May) - Second Day of Shavuot

- 📖 Recite Yizkor (Artsroll page Artsroll Siddur page 810, Singer page 436)
- 📖 Read the Book of Ruth
- 📖 Shabbat & Shavuot end: 5:57 p.m.