

# THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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June 2026

Sivan & Tammuz 5786

## SHABBAT TIMES

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

12 & 13 June – 28 Sivan

🕒 Shlach

🕒 5:05 – 🕒 5:57

19 & 20 June – 5 Tammuz

🕒 Korach

🕒 5:06 – 🕒 5:58

26 & 27 June – 12 Tammuz

🕒 Chukat-Balak

🕒 5:08 – 🕒 6:00

3 & 4 July – 19 Tammuz

🕒 Pinchas

🕒 5:10 – 🕒 6:02

10 & 11 July – 26 Tammuz

🕒 Matot-Massei

🕒 5:13 – 🕒 6:05

## RABBI'S MESSAGE

There was a task I had to do. For some reason, I delayed it as long as possible, until I could no longer do so. Clearly, it was something I really did not want to do, so instead of just getting it over with, I kept postponing the uncomfortable few moments it would take.

I am not referring to writing this newsletter article. I admit I have delayed this in the past and pushed against deadlines, but it is something I enjoy doing. This, however, was something I was not looking forward to.

I have just done it, and now procrastination is on my mind. I was relieved to find out that I am in good

company. In his 2010 book, *The Procrastination Equation: How to Stop Putting Things Off and Start Getting Things Done*, Dr. Piers Steel shares a comforting figure. He cites surveys showing that about 95 percent of people admit to procrastinating at least some of the time. (Most likely, the remaining 5 percent are still getting around to responding.)

Rabbi Yosef Karo, in his *Code of Jewish Law (Shulchan Aruch)*, begins this *magnum opus* with the following words: "One should strengthen himself like a lion to get up in the morning to serve his Creator. He should rise early enough to welcome the dawn." This is based on the teaching of Judah ben Tema in *Ethics of Our Fathers*: "Be strong as a leopard, swift as an eagle, fleet as a gazelle, and brave as a lion, to do the will of your Father who is in heaven."

Indeed, Rabbis Karo and Judah ben Tema reflect the very first struggle we face each morning as we begin our day: the battle with the snooze button. Especially on these frigid winter mornings, the temptation to delay the start of the day, even if only for a few minutes, can be very difficult to resist. However, if an exciting activity is on the agenda, we

throw off the covers and jump up eagerly to get ready for it.

Thus, the quality of *zerizut* (best translated as alacrity, haste, or swiftness) is lauded in our ethical works as highly desirable in the service of Hashem. Not only does it help us stay focused and get the job done, but it is also indicative of how we feel about the responsibilities that lie ahead as we conduct our day according to the dictates of the *Code of Jewish Law*. It is more than just a matter of timing; it is a measure of our enthusiasm for being a Jew and of the pride we take in the way we have been commanded to lead our lives.

Our very first act upon awakening, therefore, is to recite the words of *Modeh Ani*: "I offer thanks before You, living and eternal King, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me; great is Your faithfulness." Thinking about Hashem and verbalising our gratitude to Him sets the pace for the day from the very first moment of consciousness.

Having completed this task, let me now move on, with alacrity, to the next item on my to-do list.

*Rabbi Yossi Chaikin*

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**FROM THE REBBETZIN**


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This week, our family was blessed with a new Koppel Bacher. Although we are blessed with a few Koppels, TG, this is the first Koppel with the Bacher surname. This has really made my heart and head work. It is very special each time one of their great-grandchildren has been named after either my mother or my father.

We are proud to use our Jewish names. Neither my mother nor my father had modern, popular names. When our daughter Chanala named her son Koppel, a work colleague asked her what she was planning to call him. When she responded "Koppel," the lady said, "Wow, you must have really loved him." And that is one of the reasons our children have chosen to name their kids after their grandparents. But, even deeper than the love, is the knowledge that they are part of a precious cycle of life—part of a family, of a tribe that came before them, and will continue for generations to come.

My father, for some reason, was mostly called by his name **and** surname, "KoppelBacher." So now that there is a new KoppelBacher, may he grow to follow in the ways

of his great-grandfather, quietly doing good and great things together with all the Avraham Koppels, and Sima Ronyas, and their siblings and cousins. May they bring nachas and merit to us all, and especially to my parents' neshomas.

Have a good month.

*Rivky*

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**JEWISH LIFE**


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**The Day My Kids  
Encountered  
Antisemitism in the Park**

*By Rabbi Shlomo Landau  
(aish.com)*

A group of boys shattered my children's innocence. But what they learned that afternoon was not what those boys intended.

This past Friday was a beautiful day in central New Jersey. My wife decided to take the kids to a nearby park for a few hours -- a friend had recommended it.

The park did not disappoint. My children were having a wonderful time. One of my sons was on the swings with his younger brother nearby when a group of ten 14-year-old boys rode over on their bikes and began bothering them.

At first, it seemed like nothing more than typical teenage mischief. When one of my older children

stepped in and asked them what they were doing, the boys backed off.

But within a few minutes they returned. This time, with words.

"Heil Hitler."

"Dirty Jew."

My children were stunned.

Growing up in a predominantly Jewish community, they had never personally encountered antisemitism. To them, antisemitism belonged to history books and faraway places. It was something associated with the Holocaust, with Communist Russia, with attacks in Paris and London. Not here. Not in a park in New Jersey.

In a strange way, my children's shock was itself a testament to the blessing of the world they have known.

Yet it was also a painful reminder. Antisemitism has not disappeared. It has merely changed addresses. Sometimes it marches in the streets. Sometimes it hides behind a keyboard. And sometimes it arrives on a bicycle at a neighborhood playground located in a comfortable upper class neighborhood teeming with manicured lawns

and swimming pools. In all likelihood, these children come from educated families. Their parents are college graduates, professionals, successful members of society.

And yet, when these kids encountered visibly Jewish children enjoying a sunny afternoon in the park, something inside them turned toward hatred.

I don't know where these boys were exposed to such Jew hatred -- if it was online, or inside their homes.

But one thing is clear: antisemitism is not just a fringe phenomenon. It's being passed from one generation to the next around dinner tables, in living rooms, and in casual conversations that children absorb far more readily than adults realize.

That should concern every decent person, Jewish or not.

We often comfort ourselves by imagining that education and affluence are natural antidotes to prejudice. History has repeatedly shown otherwise. Hatred can flourish in poverty and prosperity alike. It can wear the face of ignorance, but it can also wear the face of sophistication.

My children were shaken by what happened. We eventually contacted the police and took the incident seriously. And once the initial shock wore off, I sat them down and spoke to them about the age old reality of antisemitism.

I did not present them as victims. On the contrary, I wanted them to understand something far more important.

I spoke to them about values, about kindness and tolerance. About treating every human being with dignity, regardless of their background, beliefs, or appearance. I spoke to them about the privilege of growing up in a home where compassion is celebrated, where helping others is admired, and where respect is not reserved only for those who look or think like we do.

Then I asked them to consider the contrast.

Here were children their own age who apparently found entertainment in humiliating strangers and spewing hatred. And here were my children, whose idea of a good afternoon was playing peacefully in a park, enjoying the sunshine, and spending time together.

Which life would they rather live? Which values would they rather carry with them?

If my children are going to encounter antisemitism, and sadly, in today's America it seems increasingly likely that they will at some point, then I want those moments to strengthen them rather than weaken them.

My children learned that hatred still exists. They discovered that there are people who will judge them before knowing them.

And they also learned that being Jewish means carrying a story far older and far stronger than the people who oppose it. A story of resilience, faith, family, learning, and hope. A story that has outlived every empire, every tyrant, and every movement that sought to erase it.

The boys left with their hatred. My children left with pride in their identity.

If history is any guide, only one of those things is built to last.

<b>SERVICE TIMES</b>	
<b>SHACHARIT (A.M.)</b>	
Monday and Thursday	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:30
<b>KABBALAT SHABBAT (P.M.)</b>	
Friday	6:00

**MAZALTOV**



We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

**BIRTHDAYS**

- Gertie Feinstein on her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June.

- Deborah Jankelow on her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June.
- Jeanette Markovitz on her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June.
- June Berger on her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June.

- Norma Wolpe on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June.

**BIRTHS**

- Mazal Tov to Charles and Grace Magoro on the birth of a daughter.




**PURCHASE A LEAF ON OUR  
“SIMCHA TREE”**

to mark a happy event in your family  
Cost of each leaf is R 360.00 - For details please contact the office

**SPONSOR A BROCHA**

at the Shul on the occasion of a personal or family Simcha, to commemorate a Yartzeit, birthday or anniversary.

*For details and bookings contact the Shul 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. 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*