

# THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

March & April 2023

Adar & Nisan 5783

### SHABBAT TIMES

🕒 Parasha - 🕒 Candle Lighting

🕒 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)

For service times see page 2 & 3

24 & 25 March – 3 Nissan

🕒 Vayikra

🕒 5:57 – 🕒 6:45

31 March & 1 April – 10 Nissan

🕒 Tzav (Shabbat Hagadol)

🕒 5:49 – 🕒 6:37

7 & 8 April – 17 Nissan

Shabbat Chol Hamoed Pesach

🕒 5:42 – 🕒 6:30

14 & 15 April – 24 Nissan

🕒 Shemini

🕒 5:35 – 🕒 6:24

21 & 22 April – 17 Nissan

🕒 Tazria & Metzora

🕒 5:28 – 🕒 6:17

28 & 29 April – 8 Iyar

🕒 Acharei Mot & Kedoshim

🕒 5:22 – 🕒 6:12

### RABBI'S MESSAGE

Absolutely everybody is talking about artificial intelligence these days. So I decided to ask one of the robots a question that is frequently put to me. It is a sensitive issue and I do not always appreciate it. But a machine does not have feelings, so it would not get upset. And if I did not like the answer, I could dismiss it with, "what does a computer know about that anyway."

So I typed the following words, "How much longer will the Oxford Synagogue in

Johannesburg continue to operate?"

It took a few seconds to get an answer, which felt like eternity. Was my query being shared with my colleagues across town for them to weigh in? Was every member of the Shul being polled?

Finally an answer: "I'm sorry, as an AI language model, I do not have access to current information and predict the future. However, I can tell you that the longevity of the Oxford Synagogue in Johannesburg depends on several factors such as its community members, financial stability, and maintenance of the building. It is ultimately up to the synagogue's leadership and members to decide the future of their institution."

Or, in one sentence, it's up to us!

Thank G-d, the community is extremely supportive. Members believe in Oxford's continued existence and ensure its financial stability through ongoing generosity. So on that front, nothing to worry about.

As far as the bricks and mortar of the magnificent

edifice, Oxford was built in the 1960s, when materials were solid. It is likewise strong and good to go for decades ahead.

The leadership (I think that's me?) is committed and doing everything possible to assure the Shul's existence in the years ahead.

AI was the stuff of science fiction when Rivky and I looked at accepting the calling from the Oxford community, back in 2000. But the humans we queried were less enthusiastic than the computers of today. "Five years, at a maximum, maybe seven or eight, then you'll be in the market again, but it's okay, you are still young!"

I think the artificial intelligence left out one important factor in a congregation's longevity: attendance. But that is fine, because you can all fix that. By translating your commitment, in principle and financially, into a proverbial "bum on a seat."

Pesach is a couple of weeks away. And... COVID's over. So see you in Shul.

Wishing you Chag Pesach Kosher Vesameach.

*Rabbi Yossi Chaikin*

**FROM THE REBBETZIN**

Someone in our complex burns their supper every night!

I grew up in a free standing house, I lived most of my life in a one-family home, quite a distance away from any neighbour. The closest we knew about their lives was when we met them walking their dogs or playing in their gardens (those who didn't have big tall walls between us). We certainly didn't smell their cooking! Then we moved into our present home, (which we love BH) and had to get used to having neighbours close by. For the first while I whispered at home, sure that they could hear everything we said to each other. (Now I don't care anymore.)

I love to hear the sounds of children playing. I like to know that there are people near by. I am awed at the kindness of strangers who offer us cables when we need to jump start a vehicle, to pick herbs from their gardens if we want and to look after deliveries if we aren't home. Pirkei Avot tells us how precious good neighbours are!

Often I smell their cooking. We comment about their curries and their baking. This week more than once I smelled their suppers burning.

One night it was late when I smelt onions frying. I guessed they were cooking in advance At 10 o'clock they were still frying onions. At 11 they were burning onions. I was no longer impressed. I was commenting about their lack of cooking ability. At 11h30 I was getting ready to go into bed. I went into my kitchen... The onion soup I had served for supper was now a burnt onion pot!!!

I learnt a little lesson in human behaviour, look first into your own pot before you judge others.

*Rivky*

**DVAR TORAH****NO BREAD**

*by Yanki Tauber (chabad.org)*

Bread is life. There are other components to the human diet, and technically we can subsist on other foods. But there is something about bread which marks it as the quintessential food, and as the metaphor for all that nourishes our existence.

Yet for eight days and nights each spring, the Jewish home is transformed into a bread-free zone. For the duration of the festival of Passover, not a breadcrumb crosses our lips, and every trace of the offending substance is removed from our domain. On Passover, bread is more treif than pork.

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Of course, it is not bread per se that we banish from our lives, but rather chametz, or leaven. Passover has its own version of bread: matzah. Matzah is bona fide bread, made by mixing flour with water and baking it in an oven. The difference is that instead of being allowed to ferment and rise before baking, matzah is mixed, rolled and baked in a lightning-fast process that produces the flat, cracker-like bread we encounter on the Seder table. Matzah is bread without the body, without the sponginess, without the flavor. In a word, bread without all the things that make bread "bread."

Chassidic teachings explain that leavened bread represents ego and self-aggrandizement, while matzah represents humility. Thus, matzah is called "the bread of faith" and "the bread of healing." The person who is pumped full of self, whose being is swelled by pride, leaves no room for a higher truth to enter his or her life. Instead, the bloat of ego becomes the festering ground for every spiritual and material ill. On the other hand, the humble soul is a soul receptive to faith, and humility is the healing force that restores the person's spiritual health and neutralizes the maladies of material life.

And yet, nothing is more critical to a life of meaning and productivity

than a sense of self and self-significance. The Talmud tells the story of how the sages of Israel, identifying the ego as the source of all evil, decided to kill the inclination for selfishness in the heart of man—until they realized that if they succeeded in this endeavor, the world would quite literally grind to a halt.

Hence the paradoxical nature of our relationship with bread—with the leavened sort, that is. On the one hand, for eight days each year it is eschewed, banned, eradicated. Yet for the rest of the year it is consumed, embraced, even celebrated.

When ego and self-interest form the basis of our lives, then everything built upon that foundation will be flawed, unsustainable, and ultimately corrupting. Life must be predicated on the acknowledgement that we exist in order to serve something that is greater than ourselves. Once that foundation is in place, we must erect upon it an edifice that includes an appreciation of our own significance, a confidence in our abilities, a conviction that we can make a difference in our world, and the joy and satisfaction that come with a life of achievement and purpose. The foundation may be as flat as the self-effacing matzah, but the structure built upon this foundation is as robust and flavorful as a loaf of the richest bread.

Passover marks our birth as a people, the very ground of our existence. As such, it is the festival of the matzah, a time to celebrate our humble faith in our Creator and our commitment to serve Him. Upon that foundation comes the rest of the year, when the bread of life attains its body and consistency, its savor and zest.

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

Monday & Thursday 7:15  
 Shabbat & Festivals 9:30

**MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)**

Friday 6:00

## PESACH 5783 TIMETABLE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SHABBAT
<b>Wishing You a Kosher and Joyous Passover</b> <b>חג פסח כשר ושמח</b>		4 April 13 Nissan	5 April 14 Nissan	6 April 15 Nissan	7 April 16 Nissan	8 April 17 Nissan
		<i>Last day to sell Chametz Checking for Chametz in the evening</i>	<b>EREV PESACH</b> <i>Eat Chametz until 10:00 a.m. Burn &amp; Annul Chametz by 11:00 a.m. Eruv Tavshilin Mincha/Maariv: 5:45 p.m. First Seder in the evening</i> ז"ל 5:44 p.m.	<b>1<sup>st</sup> DAY PESACH</b> <i>Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:45 p.m. Second Seder in the evening</i> ז"ל 6:32 p.m.*	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> DAY PESACH</b> <i>Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:45 p.m.</i> ז"ל 5:42 p.m.*	<b>CHOL HAMOED</b> <i>Shacharit: 9:30 a.m.</i> ז"ל 6:30 p.m.
9 April 18 Nissan	10 April 19 Nissan	11 April 20 Nissan	12 April 21 Nissan	13 April 22 Nissan	14 April 23 Nissan	15 April 24 Nissan
<b>Second Day Chol Hamoed</b> <i>Shacharit: 8:00 a.m.</i>	<b>Third Day Chol Hamoed</b> <i>Shacharit: 8:00 a.m.</i>	<b>Fourth Day Chol Hamoed</b> <i>Shacharit: 7:00 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:45 p.m.</i> ז"ל 5:38 p.m.	<b>7<sup>th</sup> DAY PESACH</b> <i>Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 5:45 p.m.</i> ז"ל 6:26 p.m.*	<b>8<sup>th</sup> DAY PESACH</b> <i>Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. Yizkor: 10:45 a.m.</i> ז"ל 6:25 p.m.	<i>Mincha/Maariv: 5:45 p.m.</i> ז"ל 5:35 p.m.	<i>Shacharit: 9:30 a.m.</i> ז"ל 6:17 p.m.
ז"ל Candle Lighting -- * Light from pre-existing flame – ז"ל Shabbat or Chag ends (Havdalah)						

## WHAT TO DO, AND HOW TO DO IT

## ★ Sale of Chametz (Must be completed before Wednesday 5 April at 8:30 a.m.)

During the eight days of Pesach one may neither eat nor own any Chametz (leavened food). It is not practical to consume or to physically get rid of all Chametz before the onset of Pesach. One may however sell all Chametz to a non-Jewish person - if the sale is valid according to Jewish law then the Chametz is not 'owned' during Pesach.

The technical details of this sale are involved because the goods do not physically change hands. It is highly recommended that you appoint a rabbi as your proxy to sell your Chametz before Pesach. The rabbi will also re-purchase your Chametz from the Gentile at the completion of Pesach

## ★ Bedikat Chametz (Tuesday 4 April in the evening)

This is the traditional search for Chametz (leaven and leavened products), using a candle, wooden spoon and feather. It is customary to hide ten pieces of bread around the house. These are then "found" when the search is performed.

Before starting recite the following Bracha

BARUCH ATA ADO-NAI ELO-HEINU MELECH HA-OLAM ASHER KIDESHANU BEMITZVOTAV VETZIVANU AL BI-UR CHAMETZ.

When the search is complete, recite the following formula to annul any Chametz that you have not found (original Aramaic text can be found in the first pages of most Haggadot):

ANY FORM OF LEAVEN THAT IS IN MY POSSESSION WHICH I HAVE NOT SEEN OR HAVE NOT REMOVED, OR HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF, SHALL BE NULL AND DISOWNED AS THE DUST OF THE EARTH.

## ★ Burning of Chametz (Wednesday 5 April before 11:00 a.m.)

Any Chametz found in the course of the previous evening's search and any other leftover Chametz is burnt at this stage.

There will be a fire available at the Shul's service entrance (North Avenue side) for burning of Chametz between 10:30 and 11:00 a.m.

## ★ Annulment of Chametz (Wednesday 5 April before 11:00 a.m.)

The second formula for annulling the Chametz is recited after the Chametz has been burnt (Here again the original Aramaic text can be found in the first pages of most Haggadot.)

ANY FORM OF LEAVEN THAT IS IN MY POSSESSION WHICH I HAVE SEEN OR HAVE NOT SEEN, WHICH I HAVE REMOVED OR HAVE NOT REMOVED, SHALL BE NULL AND DISOWNED AS THE DUST OF THE EARTH.

## ★ Eruv Tavshilin (Wednesday 5 April before 5:45 p.m.)

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 challah roll or 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 the Shabbat meals.

**MAZALTOV**

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

**BIRTHS**

- Philip & Rilla Jacobson on the birth of a great grandson born to Zevi and Shani Fox in Johannesburg.
- Cecil Kramer on the birth of twin granddaughters.
- Philip & Rilla Jacobson and Jeanette Markovitz on the birth of a great grandson born in Israel.
- Doris Samson on the birth of a great grandson in Gateshead, England.
- Ygal Mencer on the birth of a grandson in Manchester, England.

**BIRTHDAYS**

- Clive Strimling on the occasion of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March.
- Leah Lange on the occasion of her 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday on the 13<sup>th</sup> March.
- John Brick on the occasion of his 89<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 25<sup>th</sup> March.
- Frank Wilks on the occasion of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 5<sup>th</sup> April.
- Judith Feinberg on the occasion of her 85<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 25<sup>th</sup> March.
- Philip Jacobson on the occasion of his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 25<sup>th</sup> April.

**ANNIVERSARIES**

- Stanley & Jennifer Smidt on the occasion of their 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the 31<sup>st</sup> March.
- Maurice & Rose Oskowitz on the occasion of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the 8<sup>th</sup> April
- Anthony & Danielle Fobel on the occasion of their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the 26<sup>th</sup> April

**REFUAH SHLEIMA**

We wish a Speedy recovery to:



- Rene Gamsu
- Theo Rutstein
- Jules Schneid
- Tanya Manoim



It is an old and widespread custom to give Tzedakah during the first part of the month of Nissan to enable the less fortunate to celebrate Pesach in an adequate and dignified manner. This is in keeping with the declaration we make at the beginning of the Seder, "all who are hungry, let them come in and eat." Collections are thus taken up by our welfare organisations, and in particular by the Chevra Kadisha, specifically for this purpose. To assist those in need within our community, now is a good time to make a contribution to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund. This can be done via EFT to ABSA account 38043260534 (Branch code 632005) or by secure credit card at [pay.oxfordshul.com](http://pay.oxfordshul.com). Please use "Pesach" as the reference.

## DELEGATION OF POWER FOR SALE OF CHAMETZ

I, the undersigned, fully empower and permit Rabbi Chaikin to act in my place and stead, and on my behalf to sell all Chametz possessed by me, knowingly or unknowingly as defined by the Torah and Rabbinic Law (e.g. Chametz, possible Chametz, and all kinds of Chametz mixtures).

Also Chametz that tends to harden and adhere to inside surfaces of pans, pots, or cooking utensils, the utensils themselves, and all kinds of live animals and pets that have been eating Chametz and mixtures thereof.

Rabbi Chaikin is also empowered to lease all places wherein the Chametz owned by me may be found, particularly at the address/es listed below, and elsewhere.

Rabbi Chaikin has full right to appoint any agent or substitute in his stead and said substitute shall have full right to sell and lease as provided herein.

Rabbi Chaikin also has the full power and right to act as he deems fit and proper in accordance with all the details of the Bill of Sale used in the transaction to sell all my Chametz, Chametz mixtures, etc., as provided herein.

This power is in conformity with all Torah, Rabbinic and Civil laws.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address/es:

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*Sale of Chametz can be done:*

- **In person** (ideal method)
- **By fax:** ☎ 086-580-2624 or **by email** ✉ info@oxfordshul.com
- **By telephone** or **WhatsApp:** ☎ 011-646-6020
- If unable go to <https://tinyurl.com/OxfordChametz> and complete form

This process must be complete by Wednesday 5 April at 8:30 a.m.