

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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May 2013

Sivan 5773

SHABBAT TIMES

🔊 Parasha - 🕯 Candle Lighting

🕯 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)

For service times see page 2

10 & 11 May – 2 Sivan

🔊 Bamidbar

🕯 5:14 – 🕯 6:04

17 & 18 May – 9 Sivan

🔊 Nasso

🕯 5:10 – 🕯 6:01

24 & 25 May – 16 Sivan

🔊 Beha'alotcha

🕯 5:07 – 🕯 5:58

31 May & 1 June – 23 Sivan

🔊 Shelach

🕯 5:06 – 🕯 5:57

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear fellow Oxfordians

With the Sfirah almost over we are literally counting down the days to Shavuot and figuratively speaking (although some may say literally again) receiving the Torah. Please come and join our Shavuot dinner on Tuesday night. As you may already know there is only a nominal fee for you, Oxford's stalwart members, which is a gesture of our appreciation for your continued support.

Also just a reminder of our second annual Choir Festival which is happening on the 25th May. There will be eight

choirs participating and is set to be another great evening. Tickets are available at the Shul.

In an attempt to raise money on an ongoing basis we have started allowing people to use the space available in the nursery school building. There is still a lot of space available so if you know of anyone looking for premises / rooms etc. please contact the Shul.

Winter seems to have arrived so stay warm (physically) but don't forget your soul... come warm it at Oxford!

Regards

Brian Levy

RABBI'S MESSAGE

So winter has arrived. The cold always comes, accompanied by arctic, piercing winds, just around Shavuot time. This always makes it a real challenge to spend the first night of Shavuot awake, studying Torah right through.

Of prime concern, when winter is here, is to keep warm. There are basically two ways to do this:

By dressing warmly, we can heat ourselves only. The other possibility is to switch on a heater or to

make a fire, heating the whole room in the process.

If you are the one paying the electricity bill, you will be tempted to use the first method. Out of concern for all members of the household and occasional visitors however, it might be more sensible to heat up the entire room.

The heat of Yiddishkeit must likewise be maintained. We live in a world that is cold, because its value system is not supportive of a life lived according to Torah. We are subjected to a storm of alien notions that threatens to destroy our foundation, to uproot our Tree of Life, the Torah, and to smash our window to the world, the teachings of our Fathers. We need to keep the temperature up in order to protect ourselves.

There are obviously two options. We can worry about the preservation of self. We can make sure that our beliefs are solid, that our own observance of the precepts is sufficient, that our personal knowledge of Yiddishkeit is adequate. That is the equivalent of putting on another layer of clothing.

The other way is to heat up the whole house. It is the more costly way, and it

requires more effort. It is easier to be concerned with oneself than to care about a community. But the former is the Jewish way.

When the waters of the Flood were threatening to come down from the Heavens and wreak havoc on the world, Noah built an Ark and saved his skin, and that of his immediate family. He did not attempt, in a meaningful way, to influence, and thus rescue, the entire world. He remains known as the Tzadik in Pels (Tzadik in a fur) who, when cold, dresses himself warmer.

In the days of Abraham a deluge of fire and brimstone threatened to engulf the valley of Sodom. Abraham, who had spent his years in Canaan trying to teach as many people as he could about the One G-d, viewed this as a personal failing. He pleaded with Hashem to save them. There had to be a way to make the Sodomites see the truth. Abraham is the one who is called the Father of the Jewish Nation.

Join us for the Tikkun Leil programme on 14th May, first night of Shavuot. The Torah we will share will keep everyone warm, as will the hot tea and coffee. We have an exciting programme lined up. See back page for more details.

Have a great month, a happy Shavuot and of course, keep warm, in every way.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

We just spent seven intense days in the USA. I say intense because every time I looked at any of our beloved children or grandchildren and family, I had to catch my breath and re-organize my brain as we re-acquainted ourselves over again with these parts of our family.

One afternoon we went with Batsheva and her family to have a barbecue (braai) in our nephew Mendy's yard (garden) and so had the bonus of getting to see him and his wife and meet his family too. I laughed as I watched Mendy and his wife conversing. They reminded me so much of his parents as they were some 25 years ago. I realized once again this is the story of life. As King Shlomo famously said “

...

—one generation goes and another generation comes... there is nothing new under the sun.”

I watched as my daughters ran their homes, dressed, fed and disciplined their children. I watched the men work and learn and daven.

I watched and listened as they planned their days, their shabosses and their summers. While I miss them more than ever now (strange how that happens when you have just seen each other again) I am filled with a certain contentment and huge gratitude for the precious continuity I was privileged to witness.

Have a good month.

Rivky

DVAR TORAH

THE TWO-WAY MIRROR

Yanky Tauber (chabad.org)

Does G-d care if I cheat on my taxes? Am I going to be a better husband/wife/parent if I keep kosher? Are these the same question?

The 613 mitzvot ("commandments") of the Torah are commonly divided into two categories: 1) laws that govern the relationship "between man and G-d" (bein adam la-makom); and 2) laws that legislate the proper conduct "between man and his fellow" (bein adam la-chavero). Even the Ten Commandments were inscribed on two separate tablets, one containing commandments such as "I am G-d your G-d" and "Remember the day of Shabbat," and the other proclaiming laws like "Do not kill" and "Do not steal."

But is this division a legitimate one? Let us examine the evidence.

On the one hand, we have the aforementioned two tablets (though one still needs to explain how "honor your father and your mother" ended up on the "between man and G-d" side). On the other hand, we have the famous story the Talmud tells about the prospective convert to Judaism who came to Hillel asking to be taught the entire Torah while standing on one foot. "What is hateful to yourself," said Hillel, "do not do to your fellow. This is the entire Torah; the rest is

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday and Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00
<i>15/05 & 16/05 (Shavuot): 9:00</i>	

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

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

commentary." (But how is putting on tefillin a commentary on "Love your fellow"?). There's also the statement by the Zohar that the divine instruction, "I am G-d your G-d... You shall have no other gods beside Me," is the essence of all 613 commandments and prohibitions of the Torah. (Meaning that helping my neighbor shovel his car out of a snowbank proclaims the oneness of G-d and disavows the existence of any other gods beside Him?)

The masters of the mystical wisdom of the Kabbalah insist that, ultimately, there is no essential difference between the Torah's "civil" laws and its so-called "religious" laws. Each mitzvah, whether it's visiting the sick or waving a lulav on Sukkot, is a facilitator of the flow of desire and gratification between G-d and creation -- a flow that sustains all of the created existence and fulfills

the divine intent in creating it in the first place. So a crime against G-d (which causes a disruption in the flow) is a crime against all of His creations; and a crime against a fellow creature is also a crime against G-d (for the same reason). A kindness to a fellow is a kindness to G-d, as it contributes to the realization of His desire in creation; and a positive "personal" relationship with G-d has a positive effect on His relationship with creation as a whole and with each and every citizen of His world.

So why did G-d deliver His Torah to us in two tablets? Maybe it's because He wants us to understand that there are two sides to life. Life is not an uninterrupted spiritual experience, nor is it exclusively a social exercise. Life means dealing with people, but also conversing with oneself; it means meditating and praying, as well as digging neighbors'

cars out of snowbanks.

G-d is the absolute oneness, and human life is the endeavor to express His oneness. But true oneness is not uniformity. True oneness tolerates, indeed embraces, various and even opposite particulars. For there is no greater expression of oneness than the ability to see opposites reflected in each other.

So G-d divided the divinely-ordained blueprint for life into a "between man and G-d" column and a "between man and man" column. And then He granted us the ability to see each side reflected in the other. To see a fellow's needs peering out to us from the pages of our prayerbook. And to see G-d's face smiling to us from a beggar's mumbled gratitude, from the wonder in a child's question, from a loved one's trusting eyes.



SHAVUOT IS ON WEDNESDAY 15 MAY
AND THURSDAY 16 MAY

TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE READ ON WEDNESDAY MORNING

YIZKOR IS ON THURSDAY MORNING

Book now for our communal Yom Tov Dinner
on Tuesday evening 14th May catered by Stan & Pete
by calling our office at 011-646-6020

Cost per person: R 200.00

Special price for paid-up Oxford members (and those who have made a payment plan for 2013):

Adults R 50.00 – Children (12 and under) R 25.00

(strictly for bookings made by 10th May at noon)

*The Dinner will be followed by a Tikkun Leil Shavuot Study Programme
An evening not to be missed!*

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Bradley and Justine Sandler and Maish and Lily Sandler on the birth of a daughter and granddaughter

- Moshe and Gila Tobias and Gerald and Shoshana Kaplan on the birth of a son and grandson

BAR/BATMITZVAH

- Rose Selesnik on the barmitzvah of her grandson, Ryan Selesnik

BIRTHDAYS

- Peta Kaplan on her 60th birthday on 6th May

- Hadassah Kobrin on her 91st birthday on 7th May
- David Sussman on his 65th birthday on 15th May
- Michael Young on his 70th birthday on 16th May
- Melanie Epstein on her 50th birthday on 21st May
- Freda Bloch on her 90th birthday on 27th May

REFUAH SHLEMAH

We wish a Speedy Recovery to:



- Enid Melamet
- Frank Wilks
- Bea Golembo

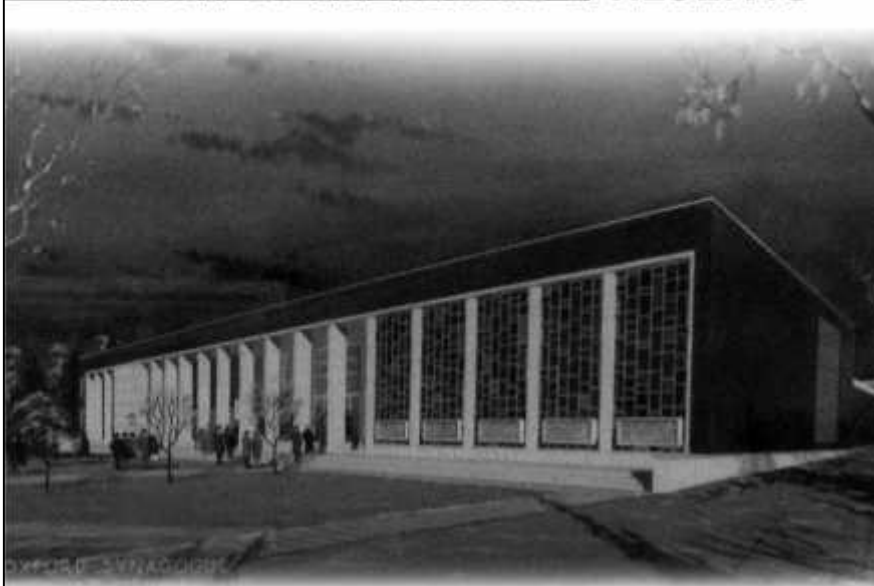
BEREAVEMENTS

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



Zelwyn Goldsmith on the death of his sister, Faith Yates

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

**OXFORD SYNAGOGUE PRESENTS**

a night of *Song*

DATE : SATURDAY NIGHT
25TH MAY 2013

TIME : 20H00

VENUE : OXFORD SHUL

PRICE : R60

TICKETS FROM:

OXFORD SHUL 011 646 6020
INFO@OXFORDSHUL.COM

PERFORMANCES BY:

- OXFORD SHUL CHOIR
- JOHANNESBURG JEWISH MALE CHOIR
- PINE STREET SHUL CHOIR
- PRETORIA SHUL CHOIR
- SYDENHAM HIGHLANDS NORTH CHOIR
- STAR BOYS CHOIR
- WAVERLEY SHUL CHOIR