

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

20 North Avenue, Riviera
✉ P.O. Box 87406, Houghton, 2041
☎ 011-646-6020 📠 086-580-2624
🌐 www.oxfordshul.com 📧 info@oxfordshul.com
facebook.com/oxfordshul

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER May 2020 Iyar 5780

ג'י"ה

SHABBAT TIMES

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

8 & 9 May – 15 Iyar

🕒 Emor

🕒 5:15 – 🕒 6:05

15 & 16 May – 22 Iyar

🕒 Behar & Bechukotai

🕒 5:11 – 🕒 6:01

22 & 23 May – 29 Iyar

🕒 Bamidbar

🕒 5:08 – 🕒 5:59

29 & 30 May – 7 Sivan
Shavuot (Day 2)

🕒 5:06 – 🕒 5:57

5 & 6 June – 14 Sivan

🕒 Nasso

🕒 5:05 – 🕒 5:57

RABBI'S MESSAGE

THE SOLO

There is nothing more beautiful than the music produced by a symphony orchestra performing a magnificent masterpiece by one of the world's most talented composers. Woodwind, brass, percussion, and string instruments combine, under the baton of a talented conductor, to form an absolute delight to the ear and soul. Each, in their own right, produce a pleasing sound but the combination of all, carefully blended, playing in rhythm, produces an experience that exceeds the sum of its parts. Individual noises are not clearly audible

in the process but that is where the beauty lies.

At some point in the concert, the conductor will order virtually his entire orchestra to stop playing, turning his and the audience's full attention to one individual instrumentalist. The talented virtuoso will rise up to the challenge and perform, on his own, the best that he can, allowing all to appreciate the beauty of the sound that this one instrument, played well, can produce.

We all enjoy listening to a good choir. The harmony produced by the voices of the sopranos, altos, tenors and basses singing, in harmony, the four parts of a choral composition is what creates the most sublime experience. The talented choir master will know how to blend the voices, each delightful in itself, to create music that will raise us to spiritual heights. We hear not one specific sound but rather a delightful combination, but that is a choir.

In the middle of a song, the choir master will point his tuning fork towards a particular chorister, stilling all the other voices. All will delight in hearing the gifted vocalist, most likely with a golden voice, showcase his individual talent and the full range of his ability. His solo performance may be followed by applause from the listeners and possibly even a standing ovation.

The power of a community's combined congregational prayer is tremendous. So much so that we are told that Hashem cannot refuse the entreaties of an assembly. It is always possible to find fault with the petition of an individual (Is he or she worthy of Divine mercy or assistance in this case? Was the prayer said with a full heart or just recited by rote?) but when a request is made by a group it is more difficult to discount it.

It is precisely because a congregation is made of many different types of persons that it is so powerful. Different people from different walks of life join in a sanctuary, many with little in common. Their social standing, financial position, outside interests differ but all together they are calling out to Hashem for the same things: good health, sustenance, deliverance from challenges and redemption.

Even their levels of piety may vary. The Hebrew word for a congregation is prayer is צדיק, בינוני, רשע, an acronym for צדיק, בינוני, רשע (righteous, average or wicked). It is the harmony of the very holy Jews, the regular guys and those whose behaviour could use improvement that creates a true community.

Over the years I have had worshippers coming to discuss with me that they were uncomfortable praying in my shul because they had a

fallout with another member. My counter argument was always that when Hashem looked down at the two of them davening together in the same place their prayer was so much more likely to find favour in His eyes.

But the Conductor on High has now silenced our symphonies. No longer can He hear the harmony of our voices blending in prayer to Him. He has now chosen to still the sound of combined prayer with a ציבור. For almost two months we have been unable to gather in His Home and call out to him together.

Instead it seems it is His will to spotlight each of us individually and to listen to our entreaties. Our personal pleas will not get lost in the crowd. For in the Vast Eternal Plan, which none of currently understand, He, in His wisdom has decided to point His Baton directly to each of us. Is He not saying, you are a virtuoso, I love the sound of your voice and I want to hear you all on your own? Let us give our solos the best shot we can. Let us storm the Heavens and say to Him, עד מתי, "how much longer"—we want immediate and total redemption, now!

Hashem, please listen.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

SERVICE TIMES

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

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday & Public Holidays	8:00
<i>23/05 & 24/5 (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

FROM THE REBBETZIN

I have started to hear cars on the highway again and it is making me nervous. I think I could easily become a hermit. Happy in my own little space, blocking out the big issues of the world outside. I am trying to focus on the mundane tasks of laundry, cooking and of course teaching rather than thinking about the magnitude of the effects of the virus (G-d forbid) itself or the disaster of the economy. I get shaken up thinking of the people alone or the people who are physically starving or the people whose lives have been forever changed.

But I am not ready yet to leave my bubble and return to the world. All the motivational speakers who have been working so hard to provide us with the silver lining of this big horror ...the unity of the people, the kindness of the people toward each other, the quality of time, the quiet and the calm yet I am grappling to accept or understand why we need to learn these lessons through such a horror

There is one extra prayer that I include each day – and that is that, when we do emerge from our homes eventually and go back to our regular routines, we remember the lessons we are learning now, and continue to be kinder, friendlier, more considerate and more spiritual, so that quarantine, isolation and lockdown will not have been for naught.

May Hashem watch over and protect us all.

Stay safe and healthy

Have a good month

Rivky

DVAR TORAH

AN OPEN LETTER FROM G-D DURING CORONAVIRUS

by Batya Levy (aish.com)

Because He knows how hard it is and every single step you're taking.

My Dear Child,

I just wanted to check in and say hi. As this quarantine continues on, with tensions rising and uncertainty mounting, I just wanted to remind you that I'm here for you and that I love you.

My dear child, I wanted to remind you that you're doing a really great job and that I'm noticing and loving you so much for your efforts. I see you. Amongst the constant mess and endless noise that comes from a bustling home filled with kids, I see you. Amongst the painful loneliness and deafening silence that comes from an empty home, I see you. Amongst the restlessness and cabin fever and everyone getting on everyone's nerves. I see you and the growth you're making and the strides you're taking to deal with your situation. I see you and I love you so much for the huge effort you're making to stay positive in these challenging times.

My dear child, I know how hard this is for you right now. I know you're feeling sad. I know you're feeling overwhelmed. I know you're worried and stressed and anxious. But please, my dear child, express it to Me. Talk to Me, let Me in. Tell Me how you're feeling. Tell Me what's on your mind. I'm your Father, and love and care for you so much. I want to help you. Tell Me how hard you're finding this situation. Tell Me that you hate this. Tell Me that you hate being alone. Or that you hate being with your

family. Or that you hate that you can't go out. Shout at Me. I don't care. I just want to hear from you. Don't cut Me out now that there's no structure in your life.

I know I've shut all the shuls, I know I've made it way more challenging for you to connect. But please, I beg of you, don't think I'm not here. I'm closer than ever and I still want to hear from you, now more than ever. My dear child, I created you, I love you more than anything else in the world. I know these are challenging times and that sometimes you let your guard down and say things you shouldn't, or do things you normally wouldn't if you had less time or more of a schedule, or that sometimes you behave in a way that you later regret because you're just spending way too much time with the same people and it's all feeling a bit too much. I just want to remind you, there is nothing, and I mean nothing you can do that will change how much I love you. My beautiful precious child, no matter how far away you feel, know I am right here beside you and I'm never leaving your side. No matter what you've done, however bad you think it was, I still love you. My love for you is unconditional and no one loves you more than I do. Hear it. Believe it. Feel it.

My dear child, you're so confused, and that's okay. You have conflicting emotions. On the one hand you feel you just can't survive this; it's too overwhelming; you can't cope. But on the other hand you're trying so desperately to keep it all together. Just know this - I only give you a challenge that you can overcome. So the fact that you're placed exactly where you are right now means I believe in you. You can deal with this situation.

You can even thrive. I know how much potential you have and I so desperately want to see you actualize it. I know it's so hard for you right now, and that it's really difficult to internalize, but believe Me, I know you can do this. I believe in you. I always have, I always will.

My dear child, I know you feel that the world is so unsafe right now. I know you're scared. I know how unsettling it feels, not knowing what tomorrow will bring. Not knowing how many more people will die. Or get infected. Not knowing who you will be saying goodbye to next. Not feeling safe going to the shops or going for a walk. Having that safety net pulled out from under you is very unsettling. But My sweet precious child, know this: I am your safety net. And I know it's hard but I want you to trust Me. Trust that I'm holding you. Trust that I know what's best. Trust that I can get you through this. That together we can pull through and succeed. Together.

My dear child, I know you're scared but feel My warmth. Feel My arms around your shoulders comforting you. Feel My presence holding you. Feel Me carrying you through this. Feel Me here, like I've been here with you your whole life. You're overwhelmed right now. And that's okay. Life is overwhelming right now. But remember that I'm quarantined with you. When it's getting too much just look to Me and I'll be here, waiting for you. You're not alone. I'm right here, listening. And I'm not going anywhere. Ever. You can rely on that.

My dear child, I am so proud of you right now. For what you're achieving. For what you're learning through this process. I am so proud of your

progress. I see every tiny step forward you make. And though you may think it's tiny, in My eyes it's a massive deal. I'm rooting for you. I know you can do this. I know you can make this quarantine amazing. I know you have it within you to do what you can do best.

My dear child, I know you better than you know yourself and better than anyone else knows you. So stop comparing yourself to everyone around you when they talk about all the activities they've thought up for their kids or all the food they've made or all the new skills they're learning or all the things they're ticking off of their bucket lists. Stop beating yourself up and putting yourself down and telling yourself that you should be doing better. You're wrong. I know how much effort you're putting in. I know that you're giving it your absolute all. I know how much you're struggling. I know how much you're achieving. I know how much you're holding back. I see your innermost heart. I see your desires. I see what you're doing and what you're holding yourself back from doing, and My dear child, I am so proud of you.

I'm telling you again so that you'll believe Me when I say you're doing such a fantastic job. You're amazing. And when all this is over, I hope you can come out with your head held high, feeling proud of what you achieved. And I really hope we can maintain the strong bond we've formed during these challenging times. I hope our connection can take you through to when we're no longer in quarantine. I hope you won't forget Me.

Signed, with so much love and admiration for all your efforts,

Your Loving Father

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Tzvi & Tanya Gudelsky on the birth of a daughter.
- Philip & Rilla Jacobson and Marke & Jeanette Markovitz on the birth of a great granddaughter in Johannesburg.
- Philip & Rilla Jacobson and Marke & Jeanette Markovitz on the birth of a grandson in Johannesburg.
- Michoel & Chaya Mushka and Rabbi & Rivky on the birth of a son and grandson in Melbourne.

- Naomi Schmidt on the birth of a great grandson in the USA
- Mazaltov to Doris Samson on the birth of a great grandson in Israel.

BARMITZVAHS

- Frankie Auerbach on the barmitzvah of her grandson.
- Norman Hirschowitz on the barmitzvah of his grandson

BIRTHDAYS

- Hadassah Kobrin on her 98th birthday on the 7th May.
- Calmon Sarachik on his 95th birthday on the 12th May.
- Lewis Goldblatt on his 85th birthday on the 30th May.

ANNIVERSARIES

- Henry & Carole Stock on their 50th anniversary on the 12th April.
- Marke & Jeanette Markovitz on their 67th anniversary on the 3rd May.

REFUAH SHLEIMA

We wish a Speedy recovery to:

- Percy Bloom
- Hilly Kahn

**BEREAVEMENTS**

- We wish long life to Hillary Kaplan on the death of her husband, Raymond.

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

Stay safe.
Stay Strong
and Stay Home.