

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

November 2015

Kislev 5776

SHABBAT TIMES

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

20 & 21 November – 9 Kislev

🔊 Vayeitzei
🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:12

27 & 28 November – 16 Kislev

🔊 Vaishlach
🕯 6:15 – 🕯 6:51

4 & 5 December – 23 Kislev

🔊 Vayeishev
🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:28

11 & 12 December – 30 Kislev

🔊 Mikeitz
🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:33

18 & 19 December – 7 Tevet

🔊 Vayigash
🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:36

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It is hard to believe that a month has already passed since I was writing about community participation in our Shul. And, (apologies to any grammarians who might be reading) here I am again.

It is good to say that we had a successful participation in the Chief Rabbi's special Shabbos Project. But, where have you been since?

Your committee, at least, has been active. We have the bones of some exciting programmes planned, through to mid-2016. These programmes are, of course, the bonus added to our regular weekday, Shabbos and Yom Tov Shul services.

In any given week we offer Shiurim (study lectures) four times after morning services, on Saturday afternoons, before Mincha, and on Wednesday evenings. In totality, that is what Oxford is about. About striving to be a vibrant congregation serving the community. To achieve goals we need participation.

You, readers of this message, we need your participation. The participation of our 350 members and of all potential members. We need the evidence that the effort put in is worthwhile. Participate in whatever your Shul offers. If what is offered is not to your taste, tell us.

Percy Bloom

RABBI'S MESSAGE

A few days ago an early Sunday morning walk took me past our old street in Saxonwold. Passing no 6 Aldswold Road, I noticed a sign posted on the front gate. It was a notice announcing the new owner's intention to demolish the house and asking those with objections to lodge them within 30 days. My initial reaction was to make a note of the steps required for opposing and to immediately submit my protest. How could they? This was my home for the past 15 years, where so much had

happened and so many memories had been formed.

We knew our abode was fated for destruction. From the moment the estate agent arrived with a signed offer to purchase without the buyer ever having stepped foot inside the confines of the home, we were fairly certain that the structure was destined to be flattened. But it is one thing to know; it is another to see the application displayed in black and white on a big poster board.

Our last few days in the Saxonwold home we grieved. Not irrational, child-like stuff. Real pain at memories that were being left behind, the happiness that had resonated within those walls, the children we had raised there, now parents themselves. As excited as we were about our new home (which we love) there was real sadness at letting go.

Now I was looking at the dreaded demolition application sign. The outrage lasted mere seconds. As I looked up the driveway at the deserted house, I realised this was maybe our former house but no longer our home in any way. All emotional attachment to it was gone.

It dawned on me so clearly that homes are not edifices made of bricks and mortar. Homes are places where memories are made. Of

happy family times. Of Shabbos meals eaten together and Yomim Tovim celebrated. Of laughter echoing against the walls. Of family simchas. Of a child's first steps... And also memories of more challenging times in our lives and of having overcome.

All of this has come along into our new home. We threw away, gave away and sold off so many of our material possessions to squeeze into this much more compact residence. But all of the above, the stuff that really makes a home, has come with us.

The pictures are not yet up on the walls—hey it's only been six weeks—but it feels like home in every respect. It was really quick: the first meal, the first Shabbos, the first guests in the house, the first sound of laughter, the first ringing telephone... and even before we were fully unpacked we were home and this was the new Chaikin residence.

I shall not be objecting to the demolition application. The crew with the wrecking ball may come anytime. I will not be shedding a tear. I will be with my family, TG, in what is now my home in Riviera.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday and Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Sunday to Thursday	6:15
Friday	5:45
Shabbat	6:00
from 18/11	6:15

FROM THE REBBETZIN

At least the dinner table conversation has changed for now. For a long time we were consumed with our frequent load-shedding. We predicted doom and gloom for the country, while we all got emergency lights, gas cooking facilities and generators. We even started appreciating the early nights that "lights-out" forced on us.

Now it has been 90 days without load shedding. Our conversations have changed. Vuma! Digging up our streets and driveways. Are they efficient?

Have they spoiled our pavements? How do we walk anyway? But their teams are out, and they are fixing and cleaning and so now to our forever favourite, the weather!

Here in Jo'burg we are blessed with a most incredible climate. There is even a theory that the weather is the thing that South Africans struggle with the most on immigration. Whenever it isn't to our liking we quickly proclaim it unusual. "We never have cold/wind like this... ever."

And really we don't! We never have this kind of heat, ever, for so long, and without any rain.

We are so ruled by our weather, staying at home when it is cold and rainy. Doing nothing when it is hot and humid. Cancelling arrangements. Missing work. The weather even affects our moods and it should. Especially our present lack of rain.

It is serious, the crops have already been affected, water rationing have been implemented. Our economy is suffering. We take our

weather for granted. Especially our rain. Rainfall is supposed to inspire us, to make us realize how Hashem looks after us and His world. Lack of rain should make us look heaven-ward. Rather than moan, we should be turning to Hashem, and showing Him that we remember Him, and await His blessings.

Come to shul, let's daven together, and enjoy abundant blessings.

Have a good month

Rivky

CURRENT AFFAIRS

THE PARIS MASSACRE

by Rabbi Benjamin Blech
(www.aish.com)

The day is already called Black Friday – a day which will long be remembered for its barbaric cruelty and its attack on the very fibre of Western civilization.

On Friday night at least 129 people were brutally murdered and more than 350 people wounded in a coordinated series of attacks which rippled across a half-dozen locations in the city of Paris. In one of them, four terrorists armed with assault rifles shouting "Allahu akbar" stormed in during a concert by the US rock group Eagles of Death Metal and executed hostages one by one.

In the aftermath of the most deadly violence on French soil since World War II, the Eiffel Tower shut down "indefinitely." The Louvre closed its doors. A country of cherished secular freedoms outlawed public gatherings until at least Thursday.

France has vowed revenge for the attacks. President Francois Hollande deemed the shootings and bombings "an act of war." He declared a state of emergency and took the unprecedented step of closing all borders late Friday after gunmen opened fire at multiple locations. He said early Saturday, "We will lead the fight, and we will be ruthless."

Around the globe, people are gathering to mourn for the victims of Friday's attacks, holding candlelit vigils, singing la Marseillaise and leaving flowers and messages at French embassies the world over. Several national landmarks were also lit up in the French Tricolore.

The media is also suggesting a new slogan to express the shared pain and revulsion against these horrific acts of terrorism in France. It was just over ten months ago that the Western world declared that an attack on Charlie Hebdo, a satirical magazine, was an attack on all of us. A slogan swept the globe: "I am Charlie". Today the new refrain, offered by political leaders spanning countries around the globe, is "We are all France."

The one phrase which unfortunately is not given equal prominence and yet is far more relevant, the phrase which gets to the heart of this tragedy and identifies its root cause, is the one that in the aftermath of Black Friday needs at long last to shake the somnambulant statesmen from their indifferent reveries and wake up the silent leaders from their apathetic response to the terrorism which has been raging in the only democratic country in the Middle

East. The world needs finally to understand "We are all Israel."

It was no mere coincidence that Black Friday in Paris was also the day of a tragic funeral. The victims were Rabbi Yaakov Litman and his son Netanel who were slain on the way to a Shabbat celebration for the forthcoming wedding of the Rabbi's daughter Sarah. They were murdered in an Islamic terror attack in the Hebron hills by terrorists from a vehicle stopped on the side of the road. This time innocent Jewish victims died by gunfire. In the past weeks there were many other murders and woundings by stabbing, indiscriminate acts of violence brutally carried out with indifference to age, gender or location.

For them the world did not cry out in shared pain. For them the world looked only for "reasons" – the supposedly civilized way of justifying unforgivable acts of terror. For them the world was able to excuse the inexcusable, to pardon the unpardonable, to defend the indefensible.

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, speaking at the funerals of Netanel and Yaakov Litman, made the point clearly. Addressing hundreds of mourners, the president said there is no difference between terror attacks in Israel and those abroad.

"I do not distinguish between terrorism and terrorism. No terrorism is justifiable. There is no terrorism that is more justified or less justified. The scenes of death and bloodshed we have witnessed in Paris, throughout the Middle East, and here in our country, should serve as a warning to us all. Whether in

Paris or Hebron, Jerusalem or New York, we must fight a bitter and stubborn struggle against those who massacre innocent people, against those who murder in cold-blood."

That was well said. But what needs to be added is the clear linkage between the fanaticism which led to the horrific massacre in France and its predecessor in Israel to which the world closed its eyes because its victims were only Jews. How long will it take for Europe and the rest of the world to understand that "We are all Israel."

Jews have always been "the canary bird in the coal mine". It is a famous analogy which comes from coal miners who would carry a canary down into the mine tunnels with them, knowing that if dangerous gases such as carbon monoxide collected in the mine, the gases would kill the canary before killing the miners, providing a clear warning to act before they too would perish. History has shown us that Jews play the same role for civilization. Jews are invariably selected as first victims. All too often they are seen as expendable – victims whose murderers need not be punished. It took time before the world acknowledged that Hitler's final solution for the Jews was but a first step which threatened all of civilized mankind.

How long must we wait until the world understands that "We are all Israel" – and the fanatic extremists who shout Allahu akbar as they stab innocents in Jerusalem will all too quickly find their way not only to France but to all the surviving representatives of civilized values, faiths and cultures?

MAZALTOV**BIRTHDAYS**

- Clive Wolpert on his 80th birthday on 1 November.
- Allan Sher on his 80th birthday on 15 November.

- Clive Gilbert on his 70th birthday on 29 November.

BEREAVEMENTS

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



- Henry Ulfane on the death of his sister, Gertie Awerbuch.

Happy
Chanukah!



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday 29 November at 7:30 p.m. at Shul

Cooking demonstration with Sharon Shear

Friday 4 December at 6:00 p.m.

Oxfords Kids come into Shul to lead parts of the service. Bring along your children/grandchildren every Friday night before then to practice

Sunday 6 December

First night of Chanukah

Wednesday 9 December, 6:30 p.m. at Norwood Mall

Oxford will be celebrating Chanukah at Norwood Mall in conjunction with Chabad of Norwood. Our Rabbi, Chazan, and choir will be officiating at the lighting of the Menorah in the Centre Court of the Mall.

Friday 12 December, 6:00 p.m. at the Shul

Sixth night of Chanukah. Special Chanukah Service with Chazan and Choir.

