

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

November 2021

Kislev 5782

SHABBAT TIMES

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

5 & 6 October – 2 Kislev

🔊 Toldot

🕯 6:09 – 🕯 7:01

12 & 13 October – 9 Kislev

🔊 Vayeitzei

🕯 6:14 – 🕯 7:07

19 & 20 October – 16 Kislev

🔊 Vayishlach

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:12

26 & 27 October – 22 Kislev

🔊 Vayeishev

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:15

3 & 4 December – 29 Kislev

🔊 Miketz

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:23

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Which way does your compass point?

Theories abound about the Tembisa Ten. Something seems not quite so kosher surrounding the birth of those decuplets. There was something not so kosher about the first multiple pregnancy recorded in the Torah, Rebecca's twins Jacob and Esau.

What made the expectant mother really uptight was the peculiar behaviour of what she believed was a single foetus. Whenever she walked past the famous

Academy of Shem & Ever, the baby seemed to get really excited, as if longing to get out and join the learning. (Shem and Ever, the son and grandson of Noah, were teachers of monotheistic faith and trained their disciples in this belief.) However, much to her chagrin, the same behaviour repeated itself when she was in the proximity of the far more numerous centres of idol worship.

There was a certain sense of relief when it was prophetically revealed to her that she was to be the mother of two sons, who were already acting out their respective destinies in utero.

Mothers speak of their unborn babies reacting to outside stimuli. Some sounds make the foetus excited and unsettled, kicking away in the mother's stomach. Soothing music apparently calms the child. There have even been suggestions that listening to classical compositions, while expecting, will stimulate intellectual and emotional development, resulting in higher EQs and IQs! Schubert, Liszt and

Mozart top the pregnancy playlists. But how could Jacob know his mother was walking past a Yeshiva?

The answer is that sanctity attracts sanctity. Like the magnetic needle of a compass, inexorably drawn to the North, like the small flame pointing towards a nearby larger fire, holiness is pulled to holiness. The lofty soul of unborn Jacob could not help but feel tugged towards a place imbued with purity and Divinity.

In Psalm 119, King David tells us, "I considered my ways and I turned my feet to your testimonies." Vayikra Rabba explains: David said, "Master of the universe! Each and every day I would consider and say, 'To this place or to this home I am walking,' but my feet would bring me to the synagogues and to the Houses of Study."

So here is a question we all need to ask ourselves: In which direction is our internal compass needle irresistibly drawn?

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

This Dvar Torah originally appeared in the 3 November edition of the SA Jewish Report

FROM THE REBBETZIN

It amazes me how much work I accomplish when I am procrastinating! This morning I made a long "to-do" list. The main thing was to finish setting and typing my exams which must be handed in for moderation and printing on Tuesday. It is almost bed time again, and I have kept myself busy all day with laundry, tidying up the house, making more lists, changing things on the lists, making phone calls, and redoing the "to-do" lists and I still have not looked at the exams.

Hard to believe that it is this time of year again. The hectic-before-the-holiday-time, what a year we have gone through. Before Rosh Hashanah, our Jewish new year we have been taught to do a spiritual stock taking of the year that was. I think stocktaking would be advised as we come to the end of this 2021 year.

No matter how each of us dealt with the year and all its challenges, I don't think there is a single person who can say that they haven't changed. And whenever there is a change there must be introspection. I have started making a list of all the things I need to think about. Both the positive and negative changes. But right now I think I will leave that and go set my exams....

Have a good month.

Rivky

A STORY

Light in the Strangest of Places

by Batsheva Hirschman Frankel
(aish.com)

I had been spending Shabbat after Shabbat with Jonathan and Julie and we'd become close friends. Then one Shabbat lunch, Jonathan asked me out of the blue: "You've been enjoying Shabbat meals with our group for so long now, but I don't think I've ever asked: How did you find your way here?"

So I told him this story.

About a year and a half previous, it was Chanukah, and to my delight, The Grateful Dead were playing four shows in a row, two of which coincided with nights of Chanukah.

At the time, I didn't feel very connected to Judaism or the Jewish community. Even so, when I went to the "Dead show", I took my candles and menorah with me so I could at least light them in the parking lot before going into the concert. My non-Jewish friends were bemused, mostly because of the chocolate gelt and dreidels I brought. But they didn't really share in my "celebration." I felt very

alone and sad, like I was the only Jew in the world. But later that night an amazing thing happened.

Between the band's first and second set, I was walking around the arena, when someone handed me a piece of paper. I looked down to see a picture of the Grateful Dead icon skeleton wearing a kippah and lighting a menorah! Written on it were the words to one of my favorite songs:

Once in while you get shown the light in the strangest of places if you look at it right

I glimpsed again at my little flyer and reflected on its meaning. The message seemed so clear to me. Chanukah comes around during the darkest part of the year. And it is during this intense darkness that Chanukah tells us to always have hope, just as the lights of our menorahs break through the bleakness of the dark. When we gaze at the flames, growing brighter each night, we sense not only the miracles that occurred for our ancestors, but also the miracles that we experience in our lives today. No matter how down or stuck we feel, or even how disconnected

we seem, we should never give up or despair - because we can find the light even in the "strangest of places" -- if we keep our eyes and hearts open.

I broke away from my intense thoughts, trying to locate the guy who handed me the paper. I wanted to express my gratitude. Was that him walking away? He glanced back at me for a moment that seemed much longer, and all I saw was this big, sweet Cheshire-cat kind of grin as he disappeared in the crowd.

Suddenly, I felt so connected and special. Who was this Chanukah messenger who made me feel a part of the Jewish people again?

A few months later, my friend, Janeen, dragged me kicking and screaming (okay, maybe just kicking) to a Shabbat dinner at her friend Stuie's apartment. The thought of spending a Friday night with a bunch of "religious" Jews didn't sound so great to me at the time. Finally, she said the magic words, "Stuie's a Deadhead, too, you know."

"Hmmm, alright," I thought, "one little dinner won't kill me."

What an unforgettable night! I knew I would have to come back again. Everyone was singing the most beautiful tunes. Even though I had never heard them before, I felt like I had always known them. And then there was this rabbi from San Francisco. I had never heard a rabbi speak so deeply, yet humorously at the same time. Afterward, I felt compelled to tell him about my special Chanukah experience. He laughed and asked my host, Stuie, to tell me how he and Stuie had met.

Stuie related a story of several years previous, at Chanukah, when he was in the Bay Area for some Grateful Dead shows. The band played the song, "Scarlet Begonias" and when they came to the line, "Once in while, you get shown the light, in the strangest of places, if you look at it right," he had an inspiration. He thought it was a perfect line for what Chanukah -- the "festival of lights" -- is all about.

Stuie had an idea to make a little flyer and spread this Chanukah message to all the Jews who might come to the concerts, but he wanted to put a reference phone number on it. So Stuie asked this particular rabbi

if he could put the rabbi's number on it. Thus was the birth of not only their friendship, but the flyer that meant so very much to me. I couldn't believe that I was having the most awesome Shabbat dinner at the home of the very guy who conceived of that flyer!

The following Shabbat, I came back, even though my friend Janeen couldn't join me. And slowly I started to come more and more -- first once or twice a month and eventually, every week.

"So," I explained to Jonathan and Julie, "That's how I got here..."

When I finished my story, I looked up at my friends. How could I have missed it? There in front of me was Jonathan sprouting that big Cheshire cat grin, as he said to me, "I'm the one who handed you that flyer."

SERVICE TIMES

Please check with the office if you wish to come to shul on a particular day to ensure there will be a service.

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday & Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:30

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Sunday to Thursday	6:15
Friday	6:00
Shabbat	6:00

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Doris Samson on the birth of great granddaughter in Manchester.
- Louis & Sybil Gecelter on the birth of a great grandson in Israel.

BIRTHDAYS

- Clive Cohen on the occasion of his 75th birthday on the 4th November.
- Brenda Brick on the occasion of her 85th birthday on the 9th November.
- Willie Wittert on the occasion of his 95th birthday on the 9th November.
- Myrna Davidovitz on the occasion of her 85th birthday on 15th November.
- Marion Rapp on the occasion of her 80th birthday on 27th November.


BEREAVEMENTS



We wish long life to

- Lewis Neuburger on the death of his wife, Carole.
- Dora Knight on the death of her brother, Wilfred Ringo.
- Joe Davidovitz on the death of his sister, Miriam Shapiro.





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





CHANUKAH CANDLE LIGHTING SCHEDULE






 Sunday, 28 November - Light candle at 7:10 p.m.






  Monday, 29 November - Light candles at 7:10 p.m.







   Tuesday, 30 November - Light candles at 7:10 p.m.

    Wednesday, 1 December - Light candles at 7:15 p.m.

    Thursday, 2 December - Light candles at 7:15 p.m.

     Friday, 3 December - Light the Chanukah candles first (after 5:25 p.m.), then the Shabbat candles. Make sure the Chanukah candles are long enough (or sufficient oil is used) so that they will burn until at least 7:45 p.m.

     Saturday, 4 December - Light candles only after Shabbat is out (7:23 p.m.) and after Havdalah

      Sunday, 5 December - Light candles at 7:15 p.m.

*Always place the candles on the right of the Chanukiyah. When lighting, kindle from left to right (the newest candle first)
All times are for the Johannesburg area only. Please inquire about local times if you are elsewhere.*

