

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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October 2013

Cheshvan 5774

SHABBAT TIMES

🕒 Parasha - 🕒 Candle Lighting

🕒 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)
For service times see page 3

11 & 12 October – 8 Cheshvan

🕒 Lech Lecha

🕒 5:54 – 🕒 6:44

18 & 19 October – 15 Cheshvan

🕒 Vayera

🕒 5:58 – 🕒 6:48

25 & 26 October – 22 Cheshvan

🕒 Chaye Sara

🕒 6:02 – 🕒 6:52

1 & 2 November – 29 Cheshvan

🕒 Toldot

🕒 6:06 – 🕒 6:57

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It's been a jam packed month with all the chagim. If you were in Shul on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur I'm sure you'll agree that the services were great and attendance higher than we experienced last year. Even our children's service had increased numbers and the kids really had fun.

We then moved into Succot and the preparations thereof starting with a kids' Succah decoration making party... check out the photos on Facebook and in the Shul foyer. Then Succot with Sushi in the Sukka, Shmini Atzeret with Yizkor and the Prayer for Rain (which only our Chazan and Choir can do so well) and then Simchat Torah with Hakafot celebrations in Shul followed by dinner and again the next morning followed by lunch. We even had a Chossen (or rather two) in the house—Mazaltov to Allan Sher and Colin Bliss.

Now none of this happened spontaneously and a heartfelt thank you must go to the Rabbi for keeping things together and

ensuring the smooth functioning of everything from seats, to mailers, to services, to function coordinating-catering-serving and on and on and on. As they say in the classics, behind every good Rabbi is a Rebbetzin telling him what to do, and a big thank you must go to Rivky as well for her behind the scenes organising and helping and catering.

Thanks must go to Cecile and Lily as well as to Petrus, Chicco and Connie for their tireless efforts, always with a smile. (This sounds like the Oxford Oscars!)

Thanks and sheceiach to the Chazan and Choir, especially for the slightly longer break on Yom Kippur... given me some ideas for next year!

Colin, smoothly run as always... thank you!

Amir and the CSO team... there were a lot of shifts to cover. Thanks very much to everyone.

To Menachem, Yossi and Chanala for organising and running the children's services, and for helping with the succah decoration party. The kids absolutely adored you and had the best time.

Thanks to Betzalel (whose idea it was) and Debbie Katzman who drove the idea and organised the Succah decoration making party. Thanks also to Hané Gollach for her help in decorating the succah.

Sheceiach to OXFORD and everyone who helped make the succah a work of art... we won the Succah of the year competition!!!

Now while this was going on there was also a serious amount of admin issues being dealt with and for that you'll have to wait for the upcoming AGM which believe it or not will happen before the end of the year!

Wishing you all a year filled with brocha and simcha.

Brian Levy

RABBI'S MESSAGE

How did Noah and his family feel in the Ark? I guess it must have been very scary to be confined in a ship while a Deluge was heaving utter destruction upon the earth and its inhabitants. At the same time they must have felt really privileged to be the ones saved from the calamity.

Inside, it was a miraculous life. All the animals co-existed in peace, like the Messianic prophecy of the wolf lying with the lamb. There was a sufficiency of food and sustenance for humans and animals alike. Every moment they all felt they were under Divine protection, truly sheltered by Hashem and surrounded by His benevolence.

Then came the moment when they were told to leave the Ark. "Go out of the Ark," said Hashem, "and take everyone out with you." Noah was told that those who were reluctant to come out must be coerced to do so. Would every one not be rushing out, having been cooped up in tight confines for an entire year? It seems not. This was the existence they were accustomed to, it felt safe and they had enjoyed the Embracing Arms of Hashem that had surrounded them all this time. They were apprehensive about coming out and facing the real world once again.

Tishrei has just come to an end. What a month! We truly felt surrounded and sheltered by Hashem every step of the way. The Baal Shem Tov taught us that the Hebrew for Ark, teivah, also means word—a reference to the words of our Holy Prayers.

Hence “come into the teivah” also means enter and immerse yourself in the words of the prayerbooks. So Tishrei kicks in with Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and their respective machzorim weighing in at 1000+ pages each.

Then there is Sukkot when we are literally surrounded by the walls and roof of the Sukkah, reminiscent of the Divine shelter offered to us in the desert as we left Egypt. Another form of Ark.

For an entire month we felt connected to Hashem through numerous prayers to recite, rituals to observe. Around the Bimah seven times; shake the Four Kinds in six directions; eat a festive meal; eat another; beat willows on the ground. For every day of Tishrei another set of instructions to help us be better Jews and to help us reach closeness with our Creator.

Then Tishrei ends and the current month of Cheshvan begins. Always around the time we read the story of the Great Flood and Noah’s miraculous rescue. Into the Ark... but now out of the Ark. Now we’re on our own. We’re still expected to sustain intimacy with Hashem but we’re not getting any help any longer. It’s a little daunting...

So here’s the good news: We have not been left totally stranded out there. Every week a small but still very powerful lifeboat comes along begging us to step in. It arrives every Friday, just before sunset and beckons us to accept its refuge. For just one day we can escape into the Ark called Shabbat, protected from the storms of the world. When night falls 25 hours later, we are ready to face the week ahead—spiritual batteries refreshed, recharged and raring to go.

This year, immediately after the Shabbat when we read of Noah’s expulsion from his boat, the Chief Rabbi calls on our community to step into the Ark. Come experience Shabbat—this week and hopefully beyond!

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

‘What does a bat mean?’

One of my matric network books was *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens. We had an exceptional English teacher and I can still picture the castle, with Miss Havesham decaying in her chair. I can ‘see’ the spider webs and the rotting wedding cake. I can imagine the bats flying around. So I was most horrified to see a real bat for the very first time in our sukkah one night.

When I told my father he asked me, “what does a bat mean?” While I am not sure of the exact intention of his question, he made me think.

Everything we see or experience means something to us. For me, roaches mean dirt; an apple pie baking means love; jasmine means summer (or at least the end of winter)... and so on.

We have just finished a month of yom tov and I wonder what does that mean to me and to each of us.

When I think of yom tov, does it mean I think of quality family time or quality time with G-d? When I think of davening, does it mean I feel bored or does it mean I feel connected? When I say shul, does it mean coming to a place full of friends or a place I come to simply out of guilt? When I say yom tov, does it mean a warm and happy time or a time of dread and relief that Pesach is still six months away.

Thank G-d this Yom Tov season has left me recharged and secure, ready to face the new year (I just need a few hours of sleep first).

Please G-d a good meaningful year for all.

Have a good month.

Rivky

DVAR TORAH

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SHABBAT

By Yanki Tauber (chabd.org)

1. Creation

“In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1)

For six days G-d created. “G-d saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good; it was evening and it was morning, the sixth day. The heavens and the earth were completed, and all their host. G-d completed on the seventh day His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

“G-d blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because in it He rested from all his work which G-d had created, to make.” (Genesis 1:31–2:3)

2. Sarah’s Shabbat Lamp (Hebron, 18th century BCE)

Thirty-eight centuries ago, Abraham and Sarah embarked on a journey to bring the idea and morals of monotheism to a predominantly pagan world. Their journey took them from their native Ur Casdim to Charan (Mesopotamia), and from there to the land of Canaan, where they settled first in Hebron and later in Beersheba. They pitched their tents at the desert crossroads, and offered food, drink and lodging to all wayfarers of every tribe and creed. Wherever they went, they taught the truth of the One G-d, creator of heaven and earth. (Genesis ch. 12; Talmud, Sotah 10a; Midrashim)

In Sarah’s tent, a special miracle proclaimed that the Divine Presence dwelled therein: the lamp she lit every Friday evening, in honor of the divine day of rest, miraculously kept burning all week, until the next Friday eve. When Sarah died (1676 BCE), the miracle of her Shabbat lamp ceased. But on the day of Sarah’s passing, Rebecca was born. And when Rebecca was brought to Sarah’s tent as the destined wife of Sarah’s son, Isaac, the miracle of the lamp returned. Once again, the light of Shabbat filled the tent of the matriarch of Israel and radiated its holiness to the entire week. (Bereishit Rabbah 60)

3. A Day of Rest (Egypt, 1373 BCE)

Sarah and Rebecca’s descendants are now in Egypt, slaves of a cruel king. Moses, their destined leader, is

rescued from the river by Pharaoh's daughter, and is raised in the royal palace. "Then it came to pass in those days that Moses grew up and went out to his brothers, and saw their suffering." (Exodus 2:11)

The Midrash relates: "Moses saw that they had no rest, so he went to Pharaoh and said: 'If one has a slave and he does not give him rest one day in the week, the slave will die. These are your slaves—if you do not give them one day a week, they will die.' Said Pharaoh: 'Go and do with them as you say.' So Moses ordained for them the Shabbat day for rest." (Shemot Rabbah 1:32)

4. **Mitzvah at Marah** Marah, (24 Nissan, 1313 BCE)

G-d appears to Moses in a burning bush, and empowers him to take the Children of Israel out of Egypt. After ten plagues and much nudging, Pharaoh finally lets them go. They cross the (miraculously split) Sea of Reeds, and come to Marah. "There G-d gave them statutes and laws"—including the commandment to observe the Shabbat. (Exodus 15:25; Talmud, Sanhedrin 56b)

5. **Double Manna** (Zin Desert, 15 Iyar, 1313 BCE)

A month after the Exodus, the matzah that the Children of Israel took with them from Egypt was finished. For the next forty years, the Israelites were sustained by the manna. "In the morning, there was a layer of dew around the camp. The layer of dew went up, and behold, on the surface of the desert, a fine, bare substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, 'It is manna,' because they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them: 'This is the bread that G-d has given you to eat.'" (Exodus 16:13–15)

The manna came each day, and provided that day's precise needs. "Whoever gathered much did not have more, and whoever gathered little did not have less; each one according to his eating capacity, they gathered." Indeed, it was forbidden to leave manna from one day to the next. (Exodus 16:18–19)

Every day, that is, except Friday. "It came to pass on the sixth day that they gathered a double portion of bread, two omers for each one. The leaders of the community came and reported it to Moses. And [Moses] said to them: 'That

is what G-d has said: Tomorrow is a rest day, a holy Shabbat to G-d. Bake whatever you wish to bake, and cook whatever you wish to cook, and all the rest leave over to keep until morning.' So they left it over until morning . . . And Moses said, 'Eat it today, for today is a Shabbat to G-d; today you will not find it in the field.'" (Exodus 16:22–26)

"See, G-d has given you the Shabbat. Therefore, on the sixth day, He gives you bread for two days. Let each man remain in his place; let no man leave his place on the seventh day.' So the people rested on the seventh day." (Exodus 16:29–30)

Today, we place two challah loaves on the Shabbat table and cover them with a cloth, to represent the dew-covered double portion of manna that came down from heaven in honor of Shabbat.

6. **"Remember" and "Keep"** Mount Sinai, (6 Sivan, 1313 BCE)

"Moses brought the people out toward G-d from the camp, and they stood at the bottom of the mountain. And the entire Mount Sinai smoked, because G-d had descended upon it in fire . . . and the entire mountain quaked violently. The sound of the shofar grew increasingly stronger . . . And G-d spoke all these words, saying . . ."

Ten Commandments were spoken that day at Sinai, ten mitzvot that form the core of the Torah. The fourth commandment concerned the Shabbat:

"Remember the Shabbat day to sanctify it. Six days may you work and perform all your labor. But the seventh day is a Shabbat to the L-rd your G-d; you shall do no work—neither you, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your beast, nor your sojourner who is in your cities. For [in] six days G-d made the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day. Therefore, G-d blessed the Shabbat day and sanctified it." (Exodus 19:17–20:1; 20:8–11)

When Moses reviews the Ten Commandments (in Deuteronomy ch. 5), the fourth commandment begins: "Keep the Shabbat day . . ." The Talmud explains: "Zachor ('remember') and shamor ('keep') were said by G-d in a single utterance—something which the human mouth cannot articulate, and the human ear cannot hear . . ."

We remember the Shabbat by proclaiming its sanctity over a cup of wine in the kiddush and havdalah rituals; we keep the Shabbat by abstaining from work. But the "positive" and "negative" aspects of Shabbat are one—two faces of its singular essence—as demonstrated by the two-as-one divine utterance.

7. **The Tabernacle: Work Defined** (Sinai Desert, 11 Tishrei, 1313 BCE)

"You shall do no work" was the divine command. But what constitutes "work"?

Four months after the revelation at Sinai came the request from G-d, "They shall make for me a Sanctuary, and I shall dwell amidst them," accompanied by detailed instructions as to how this sanctuary is to be constructed. And on that same occasion, the commandment to keep the Shabbat was reiterated: "Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day you shall have sanctity, a day of complete rest to G-d" (Exodus 35:2). Teaching us—explain our sages—two things: 1) That the work we are enjoined and empowered to do six days a week is, in essence, the work of making a home for G-d out of the materials of our physical lives; 2) That this work is the work we must cease on Shabbat.

Studying G-d's detailed instructions to Moses for the making of the Sanctuary, the Mishnah (Shabbat 73a) identifies thirty-nine melachot—categories of creative work—that were involved in the making of the Sanctuary. These include: all stages of agricultural work, from plowing and sowing to reaping and winnowing and baking; weaving and sewing, writing, building, and lighting a fire.

The 39 melachot and their derivatives form the basis and core of the laws of Shabbat rest.

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday and Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00
04/11 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00	

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Sunday to Thursday	6:00
from 03/11	6:15
Friday	5:45
Shabbat	5:45
from 02/11	6:00

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Joel Katz on the birth of a grandson
- Edeline Kantor on the birth of a great grandson
- Romaine and Sandra Orlin on the birth of a grandson

BAR/BATMITZVAHS

- Philip and Rilla Jacobson on the barmitzvah of their grandson in Israel
- Stanley and Lucille Kaplan on the barmitzvah of their grandson, Joshua, in Australia on 12th October

MARRIAGES

- Frank and Irene Salomon on the marriage of their son, Gary, in Toronto on 14th October

BIRTHDAYS

- Alicia Thomas-Woolf on her 40th birthday on 4th October
- Gary Epstein on his 55th birthday on 14th October
- Gert Elsbach on his 85th birthday on 25th October

ANNIVERSARIES

- Gerald and Roselyn Rubenstein on their 15th anniversary on 28th October

REFUAH SHLEMAH

We wish a Speedy Recovery to:



- Mark Saks
- David Lieberman

BEREAVEMENTS

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



Roy and Glenda Schneder on the death of their daughter, Janine Hochman

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

OXFORD SHUL IS KEEPING IT TOGETHER**FRIDAY NIGHT 11 OCTOBER**

☺ **Candle Lighting (when Shabbat begins): 5:54 p.m.** ☺

If would like us to arrange home hospitality for Friday night (accommodation & meal) or wish to stay in a B&B near the shul and eat with a family please let us know and we will arrange this for you. If you wish to leave your car parked near the Shul we will arrange 24-hour security to guard the vehicle. We can also arrange a security escort to follow you home after the service. Please contact the Shul office by Thursday 10 October at noon latest for these arrangements.

Mincha followed by Kabbalat Shabbat at 5:45 p.m. -- Special "Carlebach-style" Shul Service

SHABBAT DAY 12 OCTOBER

Shacharit followed by Musaf: 9:00 a.m.

Kiddush-Brocha after the Service: 11:30 a.m.

Communal lunch in the Simon Kuper Hall: 1:00 p.m.

Booking is required and there is a nominal payment of R50 per person

Doctor, Doctor... It's Shabbos! - (Dr Brian Levy)

Panel discussion: Shabbat Changes My Life

Relaxing Shabbat afternoon with social activities in the Garden of the Shul

Child care will be provided so you may relax

Mincha: 5:00 p.m.

Seudah Shlishit in the Garden with spirited singing and talking

☺ **Shabbat ends: 6:44 p.m.** ☺