

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

October 2015

Cheshvan 5776

SHABBAT TIMES

⇄ Parasha - 🕯 Candle Lighting

🕯 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)

For service times see page 2

16 & 17 October – 4 Cheshvan

⇄ Noach

🕯 5:57 – 🕯 6:47

23 & 24 October – 11 Cheshvan

⇄ Lech-Lecha

🕯 6:01 – 🕯 6:51

30 & 31 October – 18 Cheshvan

⇄ Vayeira

🕯 6:05 – 🕯 6:56

6 & 7 November – 25 Cheshvan

⇄ Chayei Sarah

🕯 6:10 – 🕯 7:01

13 & 14 November – 2 Kislev

⇄ Toldot

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:07

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Congregants,

At the time of writing we have just been through the Shul reading of Kohelet (Lamentations). One of the many aphorisms expressed by King Solomon, so well-known for his great wisdom, reads: "There is nothing new under the sun."

In the relatively miniscule lifespan of a generation however, change is known as the only constant. In the time span of the Oxford Synagogue Centre, there have been many periods of considerable change. Some of these periods have been ones of phenomenal growth.

Others have, perhaps, been less favourable.

At the present time, Oxford is, again, in a phase of change. Whether the future will judge our current period of change as positive, will depend only upon ourselves. By "ourselves" I refer to our elected office bearers, our employed officials and staff, and, above all, I include you, our members.

Our future situation will depend on US collectively. To avoid stagnation, we need the effective participation of us all.

Right now, your COMMITTEE needs additional people to do things. To accept responsibility to assist in the monitoring of financial matters, to administer essential maintenance, to look to the future of Oxford.

I call on you to phone the Shul office (011 646 6020, weekday mornings) and offer your assistance.

Our thanks to those who have administered change in recent years. To do so has required detailed, onerous planning and execution. The residence occupied by the Rabbi and his family has been sold. In the week of writing, the

Chaikins will be relocating to the new Shul-house in North Avenue.

This change has enabled some funds to be invested in the interests of the Shul's future. Other changes are in the pipeline, but discussion of these is for the future.

Previous committee member, Simon Woolf, has been able to stabilise Shul finances for the present, but constant vigilance and cash flow from the community is required to avoid a critical situation arising.

Oxford has regular, beautiful and inspiring services provided by our Rabbi, Chazzan, Choir, Torah Reader and by our dedicated Honourary Shamos. All these and our other staff are thanked for their efforts to make Oxford a great place to be at.

It is up to us all to make these efforts worthwhile. We need participation, we need more attendances, we need to incorporate newcomers to come and enjoy our wonderful facilities.

Be sure to let us hear from you.

Sincerely,

Percy Bloom

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Rabbi Shalom Ber of Lubavitch once related an incident he observed while travelling through Italy. While waiting at a train station he observed a brand-new powerful locomotive being prepared for a journey. There was much activity around the mighty machine—people running to and fro, shouting instructions, shovelling coals, planning and executing. After much preparation the engine was ready to go. With waving flags, and the sound of a whistle, the stationmaster instructed the driver to leave the station. The horn blew, a huge puff of steam was let out, and the locomotive slowly made its way down the tracks... leaving behind the entire train. Nobody had remembered to couple the wagons!

Upon his return to Russia, Rabbi Shalom Ber told the story to the Chassidim. The moral was self-evident.

The month of Tishrei we have just left behind us is just that: the Head of the Year, the locomotive that drives the eleven months that follow. It is replete with bells and whistles: moving renditions of powerful prayers, inspiring services, and soul-nourishing rituals. We serve G-d with all of our emotions—fear on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur; joy on Sukkot and Simchat Torah. We dance in circles, prostrate to the ground, shake the lulav and etrog in all directions, bang willow branches to the ground. Some days we eat a lot, on others nothing at all. The Shul is fully packed, and people are running around giving or following instructions.

And so... the Tishrei locomotive leaves the station. If we are honest with

ourselves, we must ask the question: does it leave behind eleven wagons, named Cheshvan, Kislev, Tevet, Shevat, Adar etc.?

It is easy to be inspired to more charity, to more regular Shul attendance, to self-improvement when the steam is blowing and the flags are being waved. It is somewhat more difficult to translate all that into action when things have quietened down and we have returned to our regular routine.

That is what the current month of Cheshvan is all about. A quiet month, with no festivals or special observances, giving us ample opportunity for quiet reflection and implementation.

Remember: let's couple the wagons to the engine!

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

Right before Sukkos we were blessed with another precious granddaughter, to add to our growing (KAH) tribe. Little Shterna was born with a host of medical issues (some of which we knew about before her birth, due to the wonder of modern medicine). She is busy recovering from surgery, presently. She has also been diagnosed with Down's syndrome - which will be a lifelong challenge.

Of course, when people think of pregnancy, birth and babies we imagine pink and blue blankets, Elizabeth Anne shampoo, rocking chairs and soft music. When things don't quite turn out like that we land up filled with so many conflicting emotions. So many questions, but, what is so clear, to me, is that there is no question at all about our love for Shterna – in fact, it is

stronger and fiercer than any other.

Some years ago I was pregnant and threatening to miscarry. The doctor tried to "comfort" me by telling me that often babies with problems are the ones that are miscarried. I remember exactly where I was standing as I prayed and bargained with Hashem – begging Him that I should keep this pregnancy. I remember feeling and saying – "Hashem, even if there is something wrong, I want this baby."

We all paint pictures of how we anticipate our lives. We draw the picture, colour it in... and go on our way. Sometimes, Hashem makes us adjust the pictures and the colours. It may not be the same picture we had imagined, but it can be beautiful none the less.

It is still early on. Right now Shterna must get well P.G. and then, without a doubt, she will bring brocha, joy, love and laughter to the family in colours that we never knew were so beautiful and so pretty.

Of course there will be challenges as there are always in life. Although this may not be how we imagined our picture, we will frame it with love.

Have a good month

Rivky

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday and Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
<small>12/11 & 13/11 (Rosh Chodesh)</small>	
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Sunday to Thursday	6:00
from 01/11	6:15
Friday	5:45
Shabbat	5:45

CURRENT AFFAIRS

SEVEN RESPONSES TO TERROR

by Dr. Jacob L. Freedman
(www.aish.com)

In discussing the horrific terrorist attacks in Israel, a patient asked me, "What can I do? What should I do? How do you respond to these tragedies?"

In truth, nothing can replace our dear brothers and sisters who have been tragically ripped away from their families. That being said, there are things that every single Jew can do to in response to the recent events. I've created a brief list of seven things to consider. Of course these are not the only proper responses but rather some thoughts and suggestions.

1. Be a better person. For every parent killed by Arab terror, we can be more dedicated children to our own parents. In memory of everyone who lost a child to terrorist attacks, we can be better parents and cherish the precious time we have with our children. In the memory of those we've lost, we can strive to be more empathic in our interactions with our friends and loved ones and to strengthen connections with our fellow Jews. Participating in the upcoming worldwide Shabbos Project on October 23rd and 24th is a perfect example of what we can do to be closer with the rest of Am Yisrael.

2. Be politically active. Global support for Israel's war on terror is never guaranteed. Even in America, diplomatic aid is no longer a given when Israel

seeks to defend its citizens. Contacting public officials about supporting Israel has a disproportionate effect on the government's foreign policy positions by showing them that their voting constituency cares about this issue. Call your Congressmen, Senators, and Representatives now and tell them to aid Israel's fight for survival. Additionally, biased media coverage of the unfolding events only serves to further inflame the situation. Organizations like Honest Reporting are dedicated to fighting media inaccuracies in the Middle East and programs like Hasbara Fellowships help train dedicated Pro-Israel advocates to wage necessary battles in the media to support the Jewish State.

3. Grow spiritually. In the merit of the holy souls that have been taken from us, growing spiritually has always been an appropriate Jewish response. For example, to remember Na'ama Henkin, start lighting Shabbat candles every Friday night. To remember Rabbi Yeshayahu Krishevsky, start learning his beloved Hassidic texts with other members of the community. The Torah that they loved so dearly is yearning for new students to fill the void left after these and too many other holy souls were taken from this World.

4. Support Israel economically. Israel's economy remains strong in part due to tourism which is negatively influenced by terrorism. Responding to terrorists by visiting our Holy Land not only supports our fellow Jews

financially but also shows the terrorists that they cannot prevent people from coming to Israel. Likewise, international efforts to delegitimize Israel through Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) should be met with renewed efforts to support Israeli businesses. This is not connected to the fact that SodaStream makes a great seltzer machine and that everyone could eat a bit more Sabra Hummus...

5. Reach out to our brothers and sisters in Israel. Let them know that you care. Call your friend in Petach Tikvah and tell him how much you miss him. Email your family in Azure and let them know you are looking forward to spending Shabbat with them soon. These check-ins are tremendously appreciated by your fellow Jews living in Israel.

6. Give Tzedakah. Many non-profit organizations are dedicated to preventing terrorist attacks and many more are aimed at caring for survivors of these terrible events.

7. Be prepared. Preventing further terrorist attacks is the responsibility of everyone. By staying on the alert for suspicious behavior and knowing the right people to call in event of an emergency, communities both inside and outside of Israel can avoid disaster. Communities, synagogues, and day schools with an active security plan in place are less likely to be targeted by a terrorist threat.

Be safe, be well, stay strong, and pray for the protection of the Jewish people.

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Rabbi and Rivky on the birth of a granddaughter, born to Batsheva and Yehuda Glick.
- Avril Wolpert on the birth of a grandson in Jerusalem.
- Craig & Gabi and Sam & Jill Nudelman on the birth of a daughter and granddaughter.

WEDDINGS

- Mazal Tov to Jonty and Robyn Lazerow on their marriage on 11 October. Mazal Tov to Cecil Kramer on the marriage of his son, Jonty
- Hillel Kahn and Beverley Dworkin on their marriage on 18 October.

BIRTHDAYS

- Harold Mograbi on his 70th birthday on 3 October.
- Naomi Schmidt on her 85th birthday on 15 October.

BEREAVEMENTS

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



- Willie Wittert on the death of his wife, Esther.
- Jeff and Michael Golembo and to Lindy Udwin on the death of their mother, Bertha.
- Glenda Schneider on the death of her husband, Roy.

**The
Shabbos
Project**
KEEPING IT TOGETHER

FRIDAY 23 OCTOBER

SHABBAT 24 OCTOBER

FRIDAY

Candle Lighting: 6:01 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat: 5:45 p.m.
Special Children's service: 6:00 p.m.
Soup and Perogen after the Service

SHABBAT

Shacharit: 9:00 a.m.
Children's service: 10:15 a.m.
Brocha after the service
Cholent Lunch to follow (all welcome)
Mincha: 5:45 p.m.
Seuda Shelishit
Maariv and Havdalah: 6:51 p.m.