

# THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

20 North Avenue, Riviera

✉ P.O. Box 87406, Houghton, 2041

☎ 011-646-6020 📠 011-486-2214

🌐 [www.oxfordshul.com](http://www.oxfordshul.com) 📧 [info@oxfordshul.com](mailto:info@oxfordshul.com)

📘 [facebook.com/oxfordshul](https://facebook.com/oxfordshul)

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

October & November 2017

Cheshvan & Kislev 5778

### SHABBAT TIMES

🔊 Parasha - 🕯 Candle Lighting

🕯 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)

For service times see page 2

20 & 21 October – 1 Cheshvan

🔊 Noach

🕯 5:59 – 🕯 6:50

27 & 28 October – 8 Cheshvan

🔊 Lech Lecha

🕯 6:03 – 🕯 6:54

3 & 4 November – 15 Cheshvan

🔊 Vayeira

🕯 6:08 – 🕯 6:59

10 & 11 November – 22 Cheshvan

🔊 Chayei Sarah

🕯 6:12 – 🕯 7:05

17 & 18 November – 29 Cheshvan

🔊 Toldot

🕯 6:18 – 🕯 7:10

24 & 25 November – 7 Kislev

🔊 Vayeitzei

🕯 6:23 – 🕯 7:16

1 & 2 December – 14 Kislev

🔊 Vayishlach

🕯 6:28 – 🕯 7:22

### RABBI'S MESSAGE

This is my favourite Cheshvan story, so you are likely to have heard it from me previously. Yes, Tishrei is such an inspirational month, but then...?

*Rabbi Shalom Ber of Lubavitch was 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 obvious.*

We have just experienced Tishrei—lots of noise, bells and whistles, frenetic activity. Feasting and fasting, praying and swaying, standing still and dancing in circles. Sounding a Shofar, building a Sukkah, shaking a Lulav & Etrog.

One cannot help but be inspired by the awesomeness of it all, especially when a lot of this took place in a sanctuary as majestic as Oxford.

And our grand finale was truly unforgettable. Thanks to the kindness of my Torah Academy Grade 11 pupils, who along with two Shluchim (student interns) made the long trek from the Northeastern Suburbs, the joy of Simchat Torah reached its true peak. They danced and sang, carried Torah Scrolls aloft and swept the very

young as well as the very old into the spirit of the day. So many of you have commented to me how the High Holidays literally ended on a high and that they could not remember such a lebedik Simchat Torah at our Shul.

So there is the locomotive, ready to pull out of the station, fully stoked with energy and power.

Behind it are waiting eleven wagons, all connected to each other: Cheshvan, Kislev, Tevet... down to Elul. It is the function of the locomotive to drive the entire train out of the station.

But have we remembered to hitch the lead wagon, Cheshvan, to the engine that is meant to propel the whole year to follow?

So inspired we have been. But do we now watch as Tishrei leaves the station, with eleven abandoned months left stranded, unaffected by all the whistling bells, the puffing smoke and the hive of activity?

So this is the challenge of Cheshvan. There are no chagim, special Jewish observances... it is just day after day of the 'normal' life of a Yid.

It is a month to reflect, to harvest and to take inspiration and turn it into action.

Have a safe ride.

*Rabbi Yossi Chaikin*

**FROM THE REBBETZIN**

Every erev Pesach my family smiles as I rotate the platters in my Pesach cupboards, trying to make sure that they all get used – and not just the ones on top. I have beautiful Pesach dishes and would feel sad if those that have waited a whole year never got used.

When I walked into our big shul on Rosh Hashonah night, I had the same feeling. This grand, beautiful shul was waiting for us to come in and daven. The very building inspires one to daven with more feeling.

What a hectic month it has been, with all the Yomtovs leading straight into Shabbos. We have really been involved non-stop. Davening, eating, cooking and starting again.

Today we woke up and realised that a whole Yomtov season is over.

One of the main themes of this Yomtov season was to take the inspiration with us into the new year and not just leave it behind, waiting for next year to come around.

In the row behind me there was a machzor, also waiting. Each of the yomtov days I waited for someone to come and claim the machzor, or use it. Finally, late in the afternoon, I opened the machzor and whispered some of the prayers.

May all of our tefillot be answered. May this year be a year of good health, good parnossah and abundant simchas for everyone.

Have a good month

*Rivky*

**DVAR TORAH*****Jewish Mother's Day*****Rachel & the 11th of Cheshvan**

*by By Yitzchak Ginsburgh  
(chabad.org)*

One of the most important days in the month of Cheshvan is the 11th, which commemorates the day of passing of our matriarch Rachel. Rachel was Jacob's most beloved wife and was the principal of his household and thus the principal of the entire house of Israel. From the first day of the year, the 1st day of Tishrei, the 11th day of Cheshvan is the 41st day. 41 is the numerical value of the Hebrew word "eim," which means "mother," thus the 11th of Cheshvan is truly the Jewish Mother's Day.

The figure of our matriarch Rachel is the one most associated in Kabbalah with the building of Jewish nature, the inbred character of an individual who walks willingly and naturally in the path of G-d. Jewish nature and character, best exemplified by the patriarchs and matriarchs, calls upon an individual to perform G-d's will out of his or her own accord, a state described by the sages as "acting without dictation [from Above]." Just as our matriarch Eve, "the mother of all life," is the mother of human nature, so our matriarch Rachel is the mother of our unique Jewish nature. The month of Cheshvan is thus the time to recommit to our mother's guidance and reconstitute Jewish nature and character.

"Rachel cries for her children, she will not be comforted..." Rachel constantly mourns over the exile of her children, the

Jewish people, and the Almighty comforts her with the words: "Withhold your voice from crying and your eyes from tearing, for there is a reward for your actions... and the children will return to their border." Literally, "return to their border" refers to the return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel. But, more deeply, it refers to the return of our people to our natural spiritual environs: Judaism and our ancestral Jewish nature. These are the borders that truly circumscribe the uniqueness of our people. Amazingly, numerically, the value of the Hebrew word for "border" (g'vul / גבול) is exactly the same as the value of the word for "mother" (eim / אם); both equal 41. How much more beautiful are the words of the prophet who promises our return to our border, our mother Rachel.

The mother defines and guards the uniqueness of the Jewish people, both physically and spiritually: physically, because one's nationality as a Jew passes through one's mother; and, spiritually, because the culture, atmosphere, and nature of being Jewish are nurtured by the Jewish mother. Our ability to return to, defend, and hold on to our physical borders, i.e., to the Land of Israel, depends on our success in returning to and guarding the spiritual borders of our people. Thus, Jewish mother's day is also the day for reclaiming Judaism. The month of Cheshvan is therefore the month to return to our religious, cultural, and spiritual territory and to the actual physical borders of our physical territory, the Land of Israel.

Let us gain some insight into the month of Cheshvan and Jewish mother's day by making some numerical observations. In Hebrew, Cheshvan is written with the four letters: חשוון. The borders (the first and last letters) of Cheshvan are chet / ח and nun / נ, which together spell the word chein / חן, meaning "beauty." The word chein / חן, "beauty" equals 58. The 58th day of the year is the 28th day of Cheshvan.

The numerical value of the two middle letters, shin and vov, is equal to isha / אישה, meaning "woman." Thus, the name of the month itself hints at the special and unique grace endowed to women. King Solomon says that external beauty by itself is deceitful. If external beauty is all that a woman seeks then the name of the month becomes Marcheshvan, which means Bitter-Cheshvan. It is of such a woman King Solomon says: "And I find the woman to be more bitter than death." But, of true beauty, the beauty of a Jewish woman that emanates from within, he says: "The woman of beauty shall support honor." This true beauty is given to us, the Jewish people, by G-d through the Torah, for "there is no truth but Torah" and "there is no honor but Torah." It was Rachel, who was first endowed with this real beauty. Rachel is described as the most beautiful woman in the Torah, "She had a beautiful face and a beautiful figure." Thus, Rachel was the embodiment of the verse: "A woman who fears G-d, she shall be praised," praised both for her grace and true beauty.

The beauty of the Jewish woman is not just a passive agent of spirituality. The sages teach that the offspring of Esau and his grandson Amalek can be defeated only by the children of Rachel.

Who embodies the spirit of Amalek in our day and age? In Hebrew, the words "Amalek" (עמלק) and "doubt" (ספק / safek) have the same numerical value. Thus, the spirit of Amalek that continues to plague each and every Jew is doubt; doubt in our faith, doubt in our Torah, and doubt in ourselves and the moral justification of our path.

But, sometimes the spirit of Amalek becomes bolder and captures a Jew (whether he be a private individual or a political figure) to the point of driving him or her to unconscious or even conscious self-hatred. This can result in a Jew's cooperation with the enemies of our people.

Finally there are the direct spiritual offspring of Amalek: those enemies who threaten the lives of Jews and our return to the Land of Israel.

The sages say that beauty is a woman's weapon. With everything that we have said about Rachel, her role as our matriarch, as the progenitor of Jewish nature, and of her beauty, it should now be clear that our weapon for defeating Amalek is the special beauty and grace of the Jewish mother. Joseph the tzaddik (righteous one) inherited his mother Rachel's beauty and he too is described as having a beautiful face and a beautiful figure. That is why the prophet says about him that "the house of Jacob will be fire and the house of Joseph its flame and the house of Esau straw, and

together they will ignite him and consume him; and there will be no remnant for the house of Esau."

But, beauty is no regular weapon. True grace and beauty work by attracting the sparks of holiness that are bound within the enemy. These sparks are G-d's will that the enemy still exist. Yet, when they are redeemed by their attraction to true beauty, they escape the enemy's grasp, leaving him void of any Divine source and causing his demise. True Jewish beauty and grace destroy the enemy indirectly by leaving him void of any beauty or grace himself, making him irrelevant and powerless.

The battle against Amalek in our generation must be conducted primarily with our ability to communicate to all around us the true nature of Jewish beauty and grace. It is to this beauty of Jewish nature and character that we return during the month of Cheshvan by reconnecting with our matriarch Rachel, with our own Jewish nature, and with ourselves.

*Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh is founder and director of the Gal Einai Institute and has written more than forty books exploring topics like psychology, education, medicine, politics, mathematics and relationships, through the prism of Kabbalah and numerology.*

## SERVICE TIMES

### 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 from 04/11	6:00 6:15
Friday	5:45
Shabbat from 11/10	6:00 6:15

**MAZALTOV**

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

**BIRTHS**

- Blima Nudelman on the birth of a great-grandson in Israel.
- Eddie & Carole Pokroy on the birth of a grandson.
- Philip & Rilla Jacobson and Marke & Jeanette Markovitz on the birth of a great granddaughter in Israel.

**ENGAGEMENT**

- Stanley and Norma Wolpe on the engagement of their grand-daughter Morgan Fine to Dan Kusikantow in New York.

**BIRTHDAYS**

- Flory Mencer on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 1<sup>st</sup> November.
- Harry Sweidan on his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 5<sup>th</sup> November.
- Willie Wittert on his 91<sup>st</sup> birthday on the 9<sup>th</sup> November.
- Alan Norman on his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 13<sup>th</sup> November.
- Carole Stock on her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November.

**ANNIVERSARIES**

- Leonard & Leora Berger on their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the 1<sup>st</sup> October.

**REFUAH SHLEIMA**

We wish a Speedy recovery to:

- Percy Bloom
- Nita Kotzen

**BEREAVEMENTS**

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



- Leah Lange on the death of her brother, George Traub.



**KEEPING IT  
TOGETHER  
27 - 28 OCTOBER**

JOIN US FOR SHABBAT  
LUNCH TOGETHER AT  
OXFORD, FOLLOWING THE  
BROCHA ON 28/10

**JOIN IN**  
[theshabbosproject.org](http://theshabbosproject.org)

