

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

September/October 2025

Elul 5785 & Tishrei 5786

SHABBAT TIMES

🔊 Parasha - 🕯 Candle Lighting
🕯 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)
For service times see page 2 & 4

12 & 13 September – 20 Elul

🔊 Ki Tavo

🕯 5:42 – 🕯 6:32

19 & 20 September – 27 Elul

🔊 Nitzavim

🕯 5:45 – 🕯 6:34

26 & 27 September – 5 Tishrei

🔊 Vayelech

🕯 5:47 – 🕯 6:37

3 & 4 October – 12 Tishrei

🔊 Ha'azinu

🕯 5:51 – 🕯 6:41

10 & 11 October – 19 Tishrei

🔊 Shabbat Chol Hamoed

🕯 5:54 – 🕯 6:44

17 & 18 October – 26 Tishrei

🔊 Bereishit

🕯 5:57 – 🕯 6:48

24 & 25 October – 3 Cheshvan

🔊 Noach

🕯 6:01 – 🕯 6:53

31 October & 1 November – 10 Cheshvan

🔊 Lech Lecha

🕯 6:06 – 🕯 6:57

RABBI'S MESSAGE

10 REASONS YOU SHOULD COME TO OXFORD THESE HIGH HOLIDAYS

1. **The Space** – The architecture of the Main Sanctuary does its magic on its own, creating an aura of spirituality and warmth. The vastness of the shul, the golds, reds, and blues, the views unencumbered by support pillars (the cantilevered balcony is a

marvel of design) — all combine to create an atmosphere most conducive to Divine connection.

2. **The Seats** – The pews are more comfortable than you'll find in most synagogues, with soft padded upholstery and ample, business-class-grade legroom. Even after a long High Holiday service, one does not walk out stiff and sore. The bimah and pulpit are visible from every single seat.

3. **The Sound** – The acoustics are on another level. (I've had private, whispered conversations with congregants at my place heard word for word by my wife upstairs.) Chazan and Rabbi do not have to strain to be audible, and congregants are able to hear the entire sermon.

4. **The History** – The prayers uttered at Oxford combine in beautiful resonance with those intoned by three generations of past worshippers. It's not just communal prayer; it's the combined efforts of thousands who have spoken the hallowed words in that space.

5. **The Community** – We manage a perfect equilibrium between the aura of an established synagogue with time-honoured customs and the informality and warmth of a shtiebel. You're among friends to share the experience.

6. **The Service** – Neither too long, with drawn-out pieces and tedious repetition, nor too short, with the attitude of "the quicker we get this over with and get out, the better." Getting this just right is a difficult balance to achieve.

7. **The Decorum** – I hear that in some places of worship, people sit in the pews discussing sports, the stock market, and fashion. I have difficulty believing it. In our shul, people are respectful and get on with the job at hand: speaking to Hashem, not to one another. This is something I truly appreciate about Oxford.

8. **The Shofar** – The best *Tekiah*, *Shevarim*, and *Teruah* this side of the equator. (Okay, maybe I'm blowing my own horn — but ask around!)

9. **The Chazan** – My son Betzalel is coming back to lead the services this year. He was around one year old when he arrived at this shul and literally grew up on Mrs. Lain's kichel and herring — a true Oxford boy. He is thoroughly familiar with our *minhag* and *nusach*; you will thus hear the familiar, traditional tunes.

10. **The Rabbi and Rebbetzin** – (See comment on number 8.)

Shana Tova!

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

This is a time of year for making lists. Before Pesach, the lists read: meat order; clean spare room closet; peel apples etc. This time of year, my list also includes meat, apples and carrots but higher up on the priority list is: say extra Tehillim; inspire myself to daven a little harder; find something motivating to say to my grade 11 class; give extra tzedakah etc.

It is this checklist that helps me feel that Rosh Hashanah is coming and also helps me to be more ready to face it. I keep reminding myself that I would never host a party and not plan, shop or cook for it. And so I must "plan, shop and cook" for the upcoming Yomtov too.

The Grade 11 girls have organised a school-wide programme for this month. Although it is targeted at the student body, I decided to join in. Who knows? I may end up being the winner. But even if I do not get their prize I will in fact be a winner. Their motto, which I aim to adopt, is "don't just go through Elul, grow through Elul."

I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a Ketiva Vachatima Tova, a Shana Tova Umetuka. May the coming year be better, easier, happier, safer, healthier for all of us and all of Klal Yisrael everywhere.

Rivky

SERVICE TIMES

*For services over High Holidays
see page 4.*

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Monday and Thursday 7:15
Shabbat & Festivals 9:30

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Friday 6:00

DVAR TORAH***The Sound of Imperfection***

By Mendel Kalmenson (chabad.org)

Rosh Hashanah is referred to in the Torah as "the day of [shofar] blowing." The sounding of the shofar, the ram's horn, plays center stage.

What can we learn from the shofar?

On Rosh Hashanah we use the shofar to produce a sequence of three sounds. This sequence is repeated many times during the course of the days' prayers:

One, long and uninterrupted, is the tekiah. The next one – the teruah – is made up of short spurts of interrupted sounds, while the third, like the first, is continuous—a tekiah again.

The first and third sounds represent perfection, as they continue unhindered, and even grow in power with time. It is the second one that sings a different song.

The song of imperfection, of obstacles, challenges, and inconsistencies.

Of short spurts of energy because that's all that can be mustered.

It tells the painful story of struggle, of many attempts, of an equal amount of failures, of shortness of breath.

It speaks of limited resources, frustration, losses, setbacks, separations, as well as sudden ends; all of which wrench at the heart like the desperate cry of a child.

But it also tells the story of unbeatable determination, of triumphs (small but many), of the strength to move forward, and of beginnings, all of which inspire hope and faith in the hearts of those who listen carefully, unable to help being moved.

According to the mystics, the first sound, pure and unadulterated, reflects the perfect beginning of time in Eden, before there was sin.

The second sound, the teruah, is the mournful tune of exile, sung by us—the Jews of Diaspora. It cries of interrupted and inconsistent service of G-d. Of love, awe, and faith that stop short as often as they suddenly ring forth.

It is the mouthpiece for those who know too much pain, leaving them with no energy – or worse, no willpower – to blow on. They are hindered by the trials of life, from without and within.

They have lost their breath.

The perfect world reflected in the sound of the tekiah isn't lost forever – Moshiach is on his way. The third sound, which gains in momentum and concludes with a powerful finale, is even more perfect than the first. It prophesies of Messianic times and the return to Paradise.

"And on that day [of Redemption] a tekiah will be sounded from a great shofar"—Isaiah 27:13.

The teruah will expire, never to return.

Yet the psalmist says, "Ashrei ha'am yod'ei teruah," which translates as "Fortunate is the nation who knows how to blow a teruah."

Perhaps a deeper reading is: "Fortunate is the nation that knows – i.e., fully appreciates – the unique sound of teruah!"

Amid the darkness and hardship, let the teruah be heard!

Let us maximize this once-in-a-world-time opportunity.

Wishing us all a year of tekiah, with the arrival of Moshiach

MAZAL TOV

We wish a hearty
Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHDAYS

- Russel Wolpe on his 88th birthday on the 5th of September.
- Julius Schneid on his 90th birthday on the 14th of September.

- David Jankelow on his 65th birthday on the 20th of September.
- Hazel Bernard on her 84th birthday on the 27th of September.

ENGAGEMENTS

- Phillip and Rilla Jacobson on the engagement of their granddaughter Elki Sarchi to Yoel Goldmeier in

London; their granddaughter Shevi Sarchi to Ben Breuer in New York; their granddaughter Basheva Fox to Ephy Wolff in New York.

- Marion Rapp on the engagement of her grandson, David Rapp to Rivka Alpert.



TISHREI 5786 CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SHABBAT
LEGEND: Candle lighting Shabbat / Yom Tov ends Service Other * Light from pre-existing flame.	22 September EREV ROSH HASHANA Shacharit: 6:45 a.m. Annulment of vows Mincha/Maariv: 5:45 p.m. Apple & Honey in evening 5:46 p.m.	23 September 1 Tishrei ROSH HASHANA Shacharit: 9:00 a.m. Torah Reading: 10:15 a.m. Shofar: 11:00 a.m. Musaf: 11:30 a.m. Mincha: 5:30 p.m. Tashlich 5:50 p.m. Maariv: 6:00 p.m. Eat new Fruit in evening 6:36 p.m.*	24 September 2 Tishrei ROSH HASHANA Shacharit: 9:00 a.m. Torah Reading: 10:15 a.m. Shofar: 11:00 a.m. Musaf: 11:30 a.m. Mincha/ Maariv: 5:45 p.m. 6:36 p.m.	25 September 3 Tishrei FAST OF GEDALYA Fast begins: 4:45 a.m. Shacharit: 7:00 a.m. Fast ends: 6:23 p.m. 21 September	26 September 4 Tishrei Kabbalat Shabbat: 6:00 p.m. 5:47 p.m.	27 September 5 Tishrei SHABBAT SHUVA Shacharit: 9:00 a.m. 6:37 p.m.
28 September 6 Tishrei	29 September 7 Tishrei Shacharit: 7:15 a.m.	30 September 8 Tishrei	1 October 9 Tishrei EREV YOM KIPPUR Shacharit: 7:00 a.m. Fast begins: 5:50 p.m. Kol Nidrei: 6:00 p.m. 5:50 p.m.	2 October 10 Tishrei YOM KIPPUR Shacharit: 9:00 a.m. Torah Reading: 10:15 a.m. Yizkor: 11:00 a.m. Musaf: 12:15 p.m. Mincha: 4:30 p.m. Neilah: 5:15 p.m. Fast ends: 6:40 p.m. Maariv: 6:45 p.m. 6:40 p.m.	3 October 11 Tishrei Kabbalat Shabbat: 6:00 p.m. 5:51 p.m.	4 October 12 Tishrei SHABBAT HA'AZINU Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. 6:41 p.m.
5 October 13 Tishrei	6 October 14 Tishrei EREV SUKKOT Shacharit: 7:15 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 6:00 p.m. Brocha in Sukkah after Shul Eat Dinner in Sukkah 5:52	7 October 15 Tishrei SUKKOT Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. Shake Lulav & Etrog Eat all meals in Sukkah Mincha/Maariv: 6:00 p.m. Brocha in Sukkah after Shul 6:42 p.m.*	8 October 16 Tishrei SUKKOT Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. Shake Lulav & Etrog Eat all meals in Sukkah 6:43 p.m.	9 October 17 Tishrei CHOL HAMOED Shacharit: 7:00 a.m. Shake Lulav & Etrog Eat all meals in Sukkah	10 October 18 Tishrei CHOL HAMOED Shake Lulav & Etrog Eat all meals in Sukkah Kabbalat Shabbat: 6:00 p.m. 5:54 p.m.	11 October 19 Tishrei CHOL HAMOED Shacharit: 9:00 a.m. Eat all meals in Sukkah 6:44 p.m.
12 October 20 Tishrei CHOL HAMOED Shake Lulav & Etrog Eat all meals in Sukkah	13 October 21 Tishrei HOSHANA RABBA Shacharit: 6:45 a.m. Shake Lulav & Etrog Eat all meals in Sukkah Mincha/Maariv: 6:00 p.m. 5:55 p.m.	14 October 22 Tishrei SHEMINI ATZERET Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. Yizkor 11:00 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 6:00 p.m. Hakafot after Maariv 6:46 p.m.*	15 October 23 Tishrei SIMCHAT TORAH Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. Kiddush: 10:00 a.m. Hakafot: 10:30 a.m. Simchat Torah Lunch: 1:00 p.m.	<div> All of us at Oxford wish you Shana Tova and well over the fast לשנה טובה תכתבו ותכתמו </div>		