

# THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

September 2012

Elul 5772 / Tishrei 5773

### SHABBAT TIMES

🕒 Parasha - 🕒 Candle Lighting  
🕒 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)  
For service times see page 3  
See "High Holiday Guide" for Yom Tov times

7 & 8 September – 21 Elul

🕒 Ki Tavo

🕒 5:41 – 🕒 6:30

14 & 15 September – 28 Elul

🕒 Nitzavim

🕒 5:43 – 🕒 6:33

21 & 22 September – 6 Tishrei

🕒 Vayelech

🕒 5:46 – 🕒 6:35

28 & 29 September – 13 Tishrei

🕒 Ha'azinu

🕒 5:49 – 🕒 6:38

5 & 6 October – 20 Tishrei

*Chol Hamoed Sukkot*

🕒 5:52 – 🕒 6:42

12 & 13 October – 27 Tishrei

🕒 Bereishit

🕒 5:56 – 🕒 6:46

### CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Rosh Hashana has once again sneaked up on us. For an analogy, in much the same way as Tax deadlines sneak up on us. In both instances we hope we have done enough to get through and hope with even more fervour that the 'Tax Man' doesn't decide he wants a full audit and enquiry! Don't miss the deadline... make sure you have your return (to shul) planned.

The staff are working really hard to ensure that everything is in order for the High Holy days and I would

like to thank them, and the Rabbi, for their effort. Also the Chazan and choir who have been practising really hard.

This Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur we will be introducing a new idea along the lines of the explanatory service we held a few weeks back. Don't panic... we aren't planning on delaying the services but rather will have material for you to read if you wish. The material will pertain to some of the prayers as well as some of the music the choir will be singing. I'm sure you'll find it interesting and meaningful.

Avi and Menachem Gudelsky, have been doing an amazing job with children's' services. We will be running these through Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur so please keep an eye on the Oxfordian for details of times etc. etc.

A quick remedial school update. The organisers are still moving forward (if I may use the phrase) and planning on opening in 2013.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Shana Tovah u'metuka on behalf of myself and the committee, and to thank everyone for their support.

Warm regards

Brian Levy

### RABBI'S MESSAGE

I have not watched much of the London Games over the past few weeks. Let's just say that this is, kind of, the busy season for me. In fact, I think I have watched only about two minutes of it in all. This past Saturday night we were visiting relatives and I walked into the room as the 50m freestyle swimming race was about to begin. A few seconds later I witnessed Charles Bouwer rise out of the pool to collect his Gold Medal for South Africa.

We often refer to the High Holiday season, set to start in a couple of weeks, as the Spiritual Olympics. I myself recall, in 2008, using the metaphor (I readily admit) ad nauseum.

In the last few days, however, I have been thinking. Is the comparison accurate? Is the holiday season ahead really like the Olympic Games that closed on 12 August, or perhaps more like the current Paralympic events which continue until next week?

Let me explain: The Talmud lists 613 components of the human body, comprising 248 limbs and 365 internal parts. Kabbalah teaches us that there are similarly 613 elements to our human souls.

Does the number 613 sound familiar? Of course! That is the number of precepts, or Mitzvot, that we are given in the Torah. To be exact: 248 commandments and 365 prohibitions.

Coincidence? Not really. Each particular instruction in the Torah corresponds to a specific component of the soul. Performance of a precept (or in the case of a prohibition, abstinence thereof) gives life to that part of our neshoma. Just as a particular exercise keeps a certain limb or muscle healthy, fit and strong--so does a mitzvah help the corresponding soul particle.

But, oy, if we fail in a particular area, there are consequences to our spirit. That part of the soul weakens and with time, may wither and atrophy.

So here is my very sobering question: As we approach the Opening Ceremony on Sunday evening, 16 September, will we qualify to do so in the category of the fully-endowed souls?

Now, here is the good news: While no amount of training or exercise will restore 20/20 vision to Charles Bouwer, a soul, however, can be worked back to full-function. We have an amazing restorative process called Teshuva which allows us, with enough practice, to return even a fully atrophied soul component to complete vitality.

The current month of Elul is rehabilitation time. It ends on 16th September. Let us make sure that we use every moment that remains to go through a full restorative process.

We look forward to seeing you all at Shul during the next month of Tishrei. The spiritual Olympics at Oxford are always awesome and live up to the centuries-old motto, "Citius, Altius, Fortius." We are going to take you Higher, we are going to help make you Stronger, we are going to do this Swifter!

May you all be inscribed and sealed for a Shana Tova in every respect--good health, prosperity and happiness with only naches.

*Rabbi Yossi Chaikin*

## FROM THE REBBETZIN

Some novels you read and return. Some are written so well that they remain in our memory and some have characters that you live with as you read and who remain your acquaintances for ever.

In the last few weeks I have read and lived with two books that have strangely made it into lots of bookclubs, bookshows and onto the New York Times bestseller list. Neither are written particularly well but both have left me uncomfortably disturbed.

The first one, 'Hush', a story of abuse in the frum community and the absurd way the community dealt with the aftermath was disturbing. While we like to think that the Jewish and frum communities are free of such worldly horrors, few people are that naïve.

The other book--'Unorthodox', the memoir of a girl who grew up in a very orthodox community and chose to give it all up--left me far more disturbed. I read and re-read various chapters over and over and 'studied' some of the conversations and nuances. I also did a lot of thinking and my own soul searching.

At this time of year when we are meant to be introspecting and re-evaluating our own relationship with Hashem, this kind of story must really make one think. It is sad that the author blames her miserable and dysfunctional childhood on yiddishkeit. But it seems even sadder to me that she considers herself free and in charge of herself and her destiny now; and that makes her feel happy and powerful! Can anyone truly believe that they are totally in charge of their own destiny? Can anyone truly be happy without any relationship with G-d at all?

This is the time of year we nurture our relationship with Hashem and pray to Him to grant us all a good happy and sweet year.

I wish you all a Shana Tova uMetuka

*Rivky*

## FROM THE CHAZAN

Dear Oxfordians

It has been just over a year since I joined Oxford as the Chazzan and wow, how time flies.

It has been an amazing year of growth for me, as the level expected of me at Oxford far exceeds that of my previous position. This has stimulated me to try and attain a higher standard of vocal production and musicality.

That said, as a Baal Tefillah who is the Shliach Tzibur, another important aspect is the meaning and understanding of the written text. This needs to be read correctly and sung in such a way that even someone who does not understand the words has a feeling for what they are hearing.

Elul is a time of reflection on the previous year. As is well known, the 12 days from 18th day of Elul until Rosh Hashana represent the previous 12 months of the year.

One must however also reflect on the year ahead.

With that in mind I am super excited about the year ahead at Oxford and really anticipate future growth from myself and the choir.

I feel it is fitting to mention our Choir Master, Bryan Isakow, who has done an amazing job this past year. His dedication and commitment to Oxford are unparalleled. He has made it very easy for me to blend in and I thank him for that.

May we all grow together with the power of Tefillah which can reach the highest of the highs in bringing us closer to Hashem.

Ksivah Vchasimah Tovah --  
A Gut Yor

*Tzvi Hirsh Gudelsky*

**FROM THE CHOIRMASTER**

The other week I received one of the greatest compliments I have received as the choir master since taking over. One of the community members came up to me and said 'I love coming to shul, its like going to a free concert'. That is exactly why I do this. I have said to the choristers that we are performers in shul, here to make the shul-going experience something special for each person there and receiving a compliment like that means that its working.

The choir has put in a lot of work over the last couple of weeks and I know that they are going to be great. Myself, Tzvi and the guys in the choir always get a buzz just before Yom Tov as it's the big *Performance* in the choir calendar.

After the success of the choir festival I can only see Oxford shul choir going from strength to strength. With the rabbi, committee and community backing us every Friday night, Saturday morning and Yom Tov it is a pleasure performing for you.

The last year and a bit for me being in charge of the choir has been made so much easier because of the trust and faith I have in the choristers. The Choristers have made my job that much easier and I take this opportunity to thank each and everyone of them, Micky Freedman, Harold Mograbi, Mike Sipser, Paul Rodgers, Alan Norman, David Isakow, Zach Nudelman, Gary Haase, Gideon Rodgers, Adam Steyl and Tzvi Gudelsky. Thank you for all the support and hard work you have put in over the last year.

I wish everyone a good and meaningful Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

Please enjoy the show.

*Bryan Isakow*

**FROM THE YOUTH DIRECTOR**

Dear Oxfordians

I have been in charge of the youth programme at Oxford Shul for a month so far.

The kids are loving it and we still have a lot in store for them. The positive feedback from the parents and their words of encouragement are much appreciated.

Over the yomim tovim at Oxford there will be children services during all shul services. The programmes planned are exciting and we will be doing our best to teach the youth more about the yomim tovim in a fun and productive way.

We are currently running services for pre-Bar/Bat-Mitzvah children. We do, however, have plans for the future for a post bar and bat mitzvah program.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage the community to bring along to shul your kids, grandchildren, nieces, nephews or just friends. They won't be disappointed!

May the upcoming year be a year of growth for Oxford Shul youth.

Wishing all a ketiva vechatima tova

*Avi Gudelsky*

**SHACHARIT (A.M.)**

<b>Sunday and Public Holidays</b>	8:00
<b>Monday to Friday</b>	7:15
<b>Shabbat &amp; Festivals</b>	9:00
<i>10/09, 13/09, 19/09, 20/09, 21/09 (Selichot): 6:45</i>	
<i>11/09, 12/09, 25/09 (Selichot): 7:00</i>	
<i>17/09, 18/09, 26/09 (Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur): 8:00</i>	
<i>1/10, 2/10, 8/10, 9/10 (Yom Tov): 9:00</i>	
<i>3/10, 4/10, 5/10 (Chol Hamoed): 7:00</i>	

**MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)**

<b>Sunday to Thursday</b>	5:45
<b>from 07/10</b>	6:00
<i>19/09 (Fast of Gedalya): 5:30</i>	
<b>Friday</b>	5:45
<b>Shabbat</b>	5:30
<b>from 06/10</b>	5:45

**DVAR TORAH**

Think of your year as a kind of space odyssey: You take off, fly around—and occasionally get lost. There could be lots of excitement, but then there's the collateral damage—at times, even grand mess-ups.

So now it's time to come back home. There you'll get your gear back in tune, reset your sightings, refuel and then take off again—with renewed strength to do things even better this time.

Where is home? Home is your inner self, that invincible, pristine core, never scathed, ever intact. Torah is your way to get back in touch with that place—and to keep the connection solid.

The High Holidays are a period of special days at the onset of the new Jewish year, at the cusp between summer and autumn.

What's so high about the High Holidays?

You are.

Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah—these are days for you to get more spiritual, more connected, more fulfilled and in tune with your divine inner self.

Some days are set aside for reflection and soul-searching, others for joy and celebration. They are filled with meaningful customs and beautiful rituals—especially meaningful and beautiful when you understand what's going on.

*(www.chabad.org)*

**MAZALTOV**

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

**BIRTHS**

- Alan and Fern Zev and Morris Zev on the birth of a grandson and great grandson
- Doris Samson on the birth of twin great granddaughters
- Sidney and Maja Abramowitch on the birth of a great granddaughter

**BAR/BATMITZVAHS**

- Justin and Maxine Abratt on the batmitzvahs of their granddaughters, Ora and Elisheva
- Stanley and Reva Stein and Ruth Stein on the barmitzvah of their grandson and great grandson, Troy Etberg
- Yossi and Yvette Russo and Stanley and Lucille Kaplan on the barmitzvah

of their son and grandson, David Russo

**MARRIAGES**

- Eddie and Carol Pokroy on the marriage of their daughter, Keren, to Gary Braude
- Blima Nudelman on the marriage of her granddaughter, Ilana Nudelman, to David Obrand
- Blima Nudelman on the marriage of her grandson, Jonathan Pelzner, to Ayelet Ross

**BIRTHDAYS**

- Barney Gordon on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on 7<sup>th</sup> September
- Ruth Stein on her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on 8<sup>th</sup> September
- Jennifer Levy on her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday on 10<sup>th</sup> September
- Danielle Fobel on her 40<sup>th</sup> birthday on 21<sup>st</sup> September
- Percy Bloom on his 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday on 22<sup>nd</sup> September

- Joel Levy on his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday on 30<sup>th</sup> September

**ANNIVERSARIES**

- John and Brenda Brick on their 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 1<sup>st</sup> September
- Ronald and Estelle Katz on their 45<sup>th</sup> birthday on 3<sup>rd</sup> September

**BEREAVEMENTS**

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



- Leon Reich on the death of his sister, Jeanette Fait
- Joyce Goldberg & Charlotte Gamsu on the death of their mother, Naomi Gamsu

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



# SHANA TOVA

# שנה טובה