

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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September 2013

Tishrei 5774

SHABBAT TIMES

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

6 & 7 September – 3 Tishrei

🕒 Vayelech

🕒 5:39 – 🕒 6:29

13 & 14 September – 10 Tishrei
Yom Kippur

🕒 5:42 – 🕒 6:31

20 & 21 September – 17 Tishrei
Chol Hamoed Sukkot

🕒 5:45 – 🕒 6:34

27 & 28 September – 24 Tishrei
🕒 Bereishit

🕒 5:48 – 🕒 6:37

3 & 4 October – 1 Cheshvan

🕒 Noach (Rosh Chodesh)

🕒 5:51 – 🕒 6:40

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Rosh Hashana

Well it's only a few days to go before our High Holidays. Where the year went I have no idea!

It hasn't been an easy year for the Shul with numerous issues having to be dealt with. These will be elaborated on at the AGM, which will still happen this year (I do apologise for the delay). However, suffice to say that these issues are on the way to being resolved. With deep gratitude to Hashem, your committee, our resilient office staff and not least our Rabbi, I say thank you because without their efforts and support this year would have been a whole lot harder and the Shul's options and opportunities fewer.

Around this time of Rosh Hashana we Jews look back on the year and see what we did well and what we perhaps didn't do so well, and then look forward to seeing how we could be better (Teshuva –

repentance and a concerted effort to try harder and strive further). Remember you also need Tefilah (so come to shul to daven and to listen to the chazzan and choir who are sounding awesome) and Tzedaka (charity)!!

So too have we tried to look back, absorb and then look forward to the future of Oxford. To this end we have decided to sub-divide both our property in Saxonwold as well as the Shul's property in Riviera. The subdivision is a **precautionary measure** looking forward to the ongoing sustainability of the Shul. The application is to subdivide the Simon Kuper and nursery school from the Shul. We have also applied for rezoning of this part of the property from education to residential. The reason for doing this is because it increases the value of the property significantly.

Now, there are rumours galore circulating and percolating in our fair City (and beyond I'm sure!) and I need your assistance to spread the word. **No part of Oxford nor its property has been sold neither is it in the process of being sold.** No development, nor plans for development of the property, are in place. It may be an option in the future but having options differentiates corporate survivors from non-survivors.

Subdivision takes anywhere from 18 months to two years and it is for this reason that we decided to subdivide now rather than wait till it is too late.

Please spread the word... Oxford has not sold any assets nor is it in the process of selling nor developing.

I wish you all a Shanah Tovah U' metuka. May we all have a wonderful year ahead.

See you in Shul

Regards

Brian Levy

RABBI'S MESSAGE

In the last few remaining days of the year leading up to Rosh Hashana, and then during the ten days of Teshuva that follow, we make every effort to catch G-d's attention through our prayers, our acts of repentance and of charity. We hope that He will notice our renewed resolve to become better people.

We cannot help but ask ourselves the crucial question: Does He pay any attention?

A group of children were once playing at the seaside. They all seemed to be having a great time together, except for one little boy who stood slightly away from his group, his gaze fixed at a small dot on the horizon. A passing adult engaged the child in conversation. "Why are you not enjoying yourself with the other children?" he asked. "I am waiting for the ship to come a little closer. Then I will lift this flag and wave it to and fro so that the captain of the ship can notice me," said the youngster.

The adult replied, a little condescendingly. "Do you really think that the captain of a big cruise ship has nothing better to do than to look at boys waving flags on the seaside? He is a busy man and he will pay you no attention whatsoever. Go and play now!"

The child was undeterred. "The captain will notice me," he said, "in fact he will be looking out for me and, when he sees me waving, he will be extremely happy. You see, the captain of the ship is my father!"

"Seek G-d when he is to be found," says Jeremiah. Our Sages tell us that this is a reference to the High Holy Days, when Hashem is looking out for us. Now, more than ever, He cannot remain indifferent. He is our Father, looking down from Heaven, waiting for us to wave the flag: to do more charity, more Mitzvot, to speak to Him in prayer so that He can answer. Let us not disappoint Him.

I wish you all a Ketiva vaChatima Tova. May you be inscribed in the Book of Life for a year of good health, prosperity and safety, among the entire Jewish nation here, in Israel and the world over.

Shana Tova

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE CHOIRMASTER

This will be my 3rd Rosh Hashana as choirmaster of Oxford Shul and I am pleased to say that I feel it will be one of our best.

The choir and Chazzan have been working tirelessly for the last few months in order to deliver a musically beautiful and spiritually uplifting service over the days and nights of Yomtov.

We have had some people leave the choir as well as some people join and I feel the choir is at a very strong point.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Rabbi Chaikin, the Committee and the community for all the support they give the choir.

I also want to thank Tzvi and each chorister Mickey, Harold, Selwyn, Allan, Michael, David, Martin, Gary and Adam for all the hard work they have put in over the last few months.

On behalf of the choir I want to wish everyone a happy and healthy Chag Sameach

Bryan Isakow

FROM THE CHAZAN

Dear Oxfordians

This coming Rosh Hashanah will be my 3rd High Holidays at Oxford Shul and it is as exciting as the first time.

For a Chazzan the upcoming Tefillos are filled with amazing compositions and such rich Nusach which makes it a new and exciting experience each and every year.

As I prepare for the Davening together with the choir this excitement builds as I relearn and revise the music which is so deeply connected to "Pirush Hamilos" the translation and feeling of the words in the machzorim.

Now reaching a peak in the preparation I can feel and anticipate the holiness that is clear to see when the shul is full and the congregation joins in prayers such as Unesane Tokef, Ki Keshimcha and Avinu Malkenu.

For me personally this peak reaches its height at Neila at the end of Yom kippur when we recite the 13 attributes of Hashem's Kindness, in the prayer Hashem Hashem, in a soft and solemn tone which breaks through to the highest levels in heaven. It is the same tune I sang standing next to my father as a small child and has the same power every year. It is a prayer that reminds us who we are as Jews and that no matter where we are holding Hashem is kind and has mercy.

Looking forward to davening, together with you all, over the coming month.

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 REBBETZIN

Well, it is that time of year again when we are all surprised that another year has gone by.

While we all shop and cook and get ready for the Yom Tov season of shul and socializing, it is also time for taking stock of the year that was, and to pray seriously for the year to come

Thanking Hashem for the simchas, and the nachas and praying for more.

Thinking of friends and family who need various blessings.

Thinking of Eretz Yisrael and praying for the safety of its people.

I want to wish all of you a Shana Tova, a year filled with all and only good.

Rivky



SHACHARIT (A.M.)	
Sunday and Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00
06/08 & 07/08 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00	
MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)	
Sunday to Friday	5:45
Shabbat	5:30
PLEASE CONSULT HIGH HOLIDAY GUIDE OR WEBSITE FOR SERVICE TIMES OVER THE CHAGIM	

DVAR TORAH

JEWS DON'T SAY HAPPY NEW YEAR

By Rabbi Benjamin Blech
(aish.com)

Ever notice that Jews don't traditionally wish each other "happy new year"?

Instead we say the Hebrew phrase "shanah tovah" which — in spite of the mistaken translation that appears on almost all greeting cards — has no connection at all to the expression "have a happy new year."

Shanah tovah conveys the hope for a good year rather than a happy one. And the reason for that distinction contains great significance.

This past January, the Atlantic Monthly had a fascinating article titled *There's More to Life than Being Happy*. The author, Emily Esfahani Smith, points out how researchers are beginning to caution against the pursuit of mere happiness. They found that a meaningful life and a happy life overlap in certain ways, but are ultimately very different. Leading a happy life, the psychologists found, is associated with being a "taker" while leading a meaningful life corresponds with being a "giver."

"Happiness without meaning characterizes a relatively shallow, self-absorbed or even selfish life, in which things go well, needs and desire are easily satisfied and difficult or taxing entanglements are avoided," the author writes.

She quotes Kathleen Vohs, one of the authors of a new study to be published this year in *The Journal of Positive Psychology*: "Happy people get joy from receiving benefits from others while people leading meaningful lives get a lot of joy from giving to others." In other words, meaning transcends the self while happiness is all about giving the self what it wants.

According to Roy Baumeister, the lead researcher of the study, "What sets human beings apart from animals is not the pursuit of happiness, which occurs all across the natural world, but the pursuit of meaning, which is unique to humans."

Long before all of these studies, Jews somehow understood this intuitively. Happy is good, but good is better.

To hope for a happy new year is to give primacy to the ideal of a hedonistic

culture whose greatest goal is "to have a good time." To seek a good year however is to recognize the superiority of meaning over the joy of the moment.

The word "good" has special meaning in the Torah. The first time we find it used is in the series of sentences where God, after each day of creation, views his handiwork and proclaims it "good". More, when God completed his work he saw all that he had done "and behold it was very good."

What does that mean? In what way was the world good? Surely it was not in any moral sense that it was being praised. The commentators offer a profound insight. The word good indicates that every part of creation fulfilled God's purpose: it was good because it was what it was meant to be.

That is the deepest meaning of the word good when it is applied to us and to our lives. We are good when we achieve our purpose; our lives are good when they fulfill what they are meant to be.

We know many people of whom it can be said that they had good lives in spite of their having had to endure great unhappiness. Indeed, the truly great chose lives of sacrifice over pleasure and left a legacy of inspiration and achievement that they never could have accomplished had they been solely concerned with personal gratification.

A shanah tovah, a good year, from a spiritual perspective, is far more blessed than a simply happy one.

Meaning Leads to Happiness

A shanah tovah may not emphasize happiness, yet it is the most certain way to ultimately achieve happiness.

Because another powerful idea discovered by contemporary psychologists is that happiness most often is the byproduct of a meaningful life. It's precisely when we don't go looking for it and are willing to set it aside in the interest of a loftier goal that we find it unexpectedly landing on us with a force that we never considered possible.

You would think that acquiring ever more money would make people happier. There are millions of people ready to testify from their own experience that it just isn't so. But if getting more won't do it, what will? Social scientists have come to a significant conclusion: while having

money doesn't automatically lead to happiness, giving it away almost always achieves that goal!

The prestigious *Science* magazine (March, 2008) tells us that new research reveals when individuals dole out money for gifts for friends or charitable donations they get a boost in happiness while those who spend on themselves get no such cheery lift. "We wanted to test our theory that how people spend their money is at least as important as how much money they earn," said Elizabeth Dunn, a psychologist at the University of British Columbia. What they discovered was that personal spending had no link with a person's happiness, while spending on others and charity was significantly related to a boost in happiness.

"Regardless of how much income each person made," Dunn said, "those who spent money on others reported greater happiness, while those who spent more on themselves did not."

In a fascinating experiment, researchers gave college students a \$5 or \$20 bill, asking them to spend the money by that evening. Half the participants were instructed to spend the money on themselves, and the remaining students were told to spend it on others. Participants who spent the windfall on others — which included toys for siblings and meals eaten with friends — reported feeling happier at the end of the day than those who spent the money on themselves. Spending as little as \$5 on other people produced a measurable surge in happiness on a given day, while purchasing supposedly pleasure-gratifying personal items produced almost no change in mood.

"It doesn't surprise me at all that people find giving money away very rewarding," Aaron Ahuvia, associate professor of marketing at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, explained. "People spend a lot of money to make their lives feel meaningful, significant and important. When you give away money you are making that same kind of purchase, only you are doing it in a more effective way." He added, "What you're really trying to buy is meaning to life."

Meaning is our ultimate goal; in our pursuit of the "good" life we will discover the reward of true happiness.

So shana tova, may you have a year filled with meaning and purpose. And happiness that will surely follow.

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Sharon Margo on the birth of a grandson
- Auriel Wittert on the birth of a great grandson

ENGAGEMENTS

- Clive and Carole Strimling and Romy Strimling on Romy's engagement to David Levy
- Philip and Rilla Jacobson on the engagement of their grandson
- Sam and Jill Nudelman and Craig Nudelman on Craig's engagement to Gabi Sulcas

BIRTHDAYS

- Jonathan Bolon on his 30th birthday on 2nd September
- Barney Gordon on his 91st birthday on 7th September
- Ruth Stein on her 96th birthday on 8th September
- Roselyn Rubenstein on her 70th birthday on 13th September
- Selwyn Zwick on his 65th birthday on 17th September
- Menachem Gudelsky on his 18th birthday on 19th September
- Lewis Duchon on his 60th birthday on 30th September
- Rhona Gilbert on her 65th birthday on 30th September

ANNIVERSARIES

- Sheldon and Karen Sundy on their 20th anniversary on 14th September

REFUAH SHLEMAH

We wish a Speedy Recovery to:



- Blima Nudelman
- Connie Meyerowitz

BEREAVEMENTS

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



- Collie Sarachik on the death of his sister, Sarah Trapido
- The family of Bella Trapido on her death

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



SHANA TOVA