

# THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

September 2018

Elul/Tishrei 5778

### SHABBAT TIMES

🔊 Parasha - 🕯 Candle Lighting

🕯 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)  
For service times see page 3

7 & 8 September – 28 Elul

🔊 Nitzavim

🕯 5:39 – 🕯 6:29

14 & 15 September – 6 Tishrei

🔊 Vayelech (*Shabbat Shuva*)

🕯 5:42 – 🕯 6:32

21 & 22 September – 13 Tishrei

🔊 Haazinu

🕯 5:45 – 🕯 6:35

28 & 29 September – 20 Tishrei

*Chol Hamoed Sukkot*

🕯 5:48 – 🕯 6:38

5 & 6 October – 27 Tishrei

🔊 Bereishit

🕯 5:51 – 🕯 6:41

12 & 13 October – 4 Cheshvan

🔊 Noach

🕯 5:55 – 🕯 6:45

### RABBI'S MESSAGE

It has been regular visitors to the chiropractor for several weeks now. I cannot say I have been enjoying the process. It is outright painful... he digs very deep. It often aches for days after. Tempting as it may be to skip a session to avoid this discomfort, I know that I will not be able to stand straight if I do not go through the treatment. And with the Yomim Tovim coming up, involving lengthy periods of being upstanding during the multiple services, it leaves me with no choice.

Yes, the High Holidays are upon us. This is the time of year when we must stand for scrutiny before our Maker. To quote from the famous Unetane Tokef prayer, "all created beings pass before You, like a flock of sheep. As a shepherd examines his flock, making his sheep pass under his staff, so do You cause to pass before You every living soul... and You inscribe the verdict of their judgment."

The very thought sends shivers down our spines. It is sobering and outright scary. These days are indeed known as the Days of Awe.

So I am going to be honest and admit that the sound of the Shofar during Elul, reminding me of these impending days, does fill me with a sense of dread.

To be able to stand tall before Hashem requires a thorough process of soul-searching. It means digging really deep, reaching into places where we would not go by choice. And that is not necessarily a pleasant or comfortable experience—it can be excruciating.

So it may be tempting to cancel the appointment. To forego the extra prayers, the additional charity, the

Selichot services, the Psalms, the morning and afternoon minyan... the Rosh Hashana services (why do we even need two days of Yom Tov?)... the lengthy readings from the Machzor... the multiple blasts of the piercing and haunting sound of the Shofar...

But as the old saying goes, "no pain, no gain" and if we want to be able to stand up straight and tall, we must allow the prodding and probing to penetrate deep into the soul.

For after we are through with this treatment the relief is intense. The feeling, at the end of Yom Kippur, when that final jubilant Shofar blast is heard, is one of tremendous joy. It is extreme happiness in the knowledge that we have been able to stand tall before Hashem, comfortable with who we are and who we want to be. And it is thankfulness to Him for the brocha of forgiveness and the hope of health, happiness and prosperity in the year ahead.

Shana Tova to you all. May we be blessed with an outstanding and upstanding year!

*Rabbi Yossi Chaikin*

## FROM THE REBBETZIN

You have probably heard the expression “the seder doesn’t start until someone spills the wine.” Well my personal expression is “the cooking hasn’t begun until I have burnt a pot of something”.

So my cooking has begun...

Today, I officially decided that I had to do something to prepare for the upcoming month of gastronomy. I peeled and chopped and spiced and while I waited for it to cook, I sat down to prepare for school and, lo and behold, a pot of food burnt well beyond edibility... grrrrr...

The Yiddish expression for that is ‘a kapporah’, which in other words means ‘may the wasted time, effort and food be the worst thing that ever happens’.

I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a Shana Tova, a happy, healthy year filled with blessings... and may the very worst that ever happens be a burnt pot of food!

Ketiva Vechatima tova to each of you.

Wishing you a good month.

Rivky

## DVAR TORAH

### STRATEGIES FOR MAKING REAL CHANGES IN YOUR LIFE

#### Design your personalized Spiritual Fitbit.

by Rabbi Efreim Goldberg  
(aish.com)

*“Rabbi, what is that on your wrist?”*

*“It’s a Fitbit.”*

*“Why do you wear it?”*

*“It tracks how many steps I take each day, the quantity and quality of my sleep, and other important pieces of information.”*

*“C’mom Rabbi, sounds like shtick to me. Do you really need that? What does it do for you? You already know you should be active each day and that you need to get enough sleep, so just do what you are supposed to, why do you need to wear something?”*

I thought about his question and it struck me as compelling. We know what we need to do in life, so why not just do it? Why involve outside “shtick”? Isn’t it just a distraction?

And then I remembered an excellent quote from the great management expert Peter Drucker: “What gets measured gets managed.”

“The value of wearing a Fitbit,” I told my friend, “is that it holds me accountable to achieve my commitment and forces me to confront the reality of falling short, rather than at the end of each day bluffing or fooling myself

about what had in fact transpired that day.”

### Spiritual Growth

Across the world from Professor Peter Drucker lived another management expert, only he specialized in personal management. Rav Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, Hy”d, also known as the Piaseczno Rebbe, was a Chassidic Rebbe in Poland who served as the Rabbi of the Warsaw Ghetto and, after surviving the uprising, was later shot dead by the Nazis in the Trawniki labor camp. Among his many talents, he had incredible insight into human psychology.

In his spiritual diary called Tzav V’Ziruz he writes the following entry (#15):

*If you have been able to draw up personal rules for your spiritual growth, consider this a success. But if you have not, then either you have not devoted your life to personal growth or you are blind to your own failures and successes.*

*Because the spiritual seeker who channels his efforts to his inner world will inevitably be faced with difficulty and distraction – not only external ones like supporting his family but also in his inner world such as indolence, negative tendencies, destructive character traits, and so forth – and because the spiritual seeker is constantly involved in this inner battle, sometimes winning and sometimes losing, he will inevitably come to conclusions: which strategies work for him and*

which ones bring out his weakness.

*So someone who cannot draw such conclusions is not engaged in the battle – he neither wins nor loses. Or else he is unaware of both his inner weaknesses and strong points. (Translation from Yehoshua Starret)*

Essentially, the Piaseczno Rebbe says that when it comes to our character, our personal growth and becoming the best version of ourselves – what gets measured, gets managed. One cannot claim to care about growing spiritually and fail to devise a plan or a strategy, set goals, and, most importantly, identify how progress will be measured.

It is one thing to say you want to work on having greater patience and being slower to anger and another to articulate a plan for how. Does the plan answer questions such as: What triggers your anger? Why do you lose patience? How will you learn to react differently? How will you measure and track if you are improving in this area?

The difference between a desire to grow being just lip service and empty words versus the beginning of real change is designing our personalized Spiritual Fitbit – a Spiritbit.

Here are a few things to consider when programming your Spiritbit:

#### **Limit:**

Identify one or two areas you want to work on at a time. Taking on too much at

one time makes it overwhelming and intimidating, making it almost impossible to make real progress.

#### **Be Real:**

Be realistic in setting the goals. Don't pledge to make radical changes that are impossible to achieve and unsustainable to maintain.

#### **Plan:**

The Rambam writes that to authentically accomplish teshuva, vidui, articulating what we have done wrong, must be done out loud. Only by saying or writing what went wrong and what we will do to repair and improve in the future can we avoid bluffing ourselves or our way through this process. Putting our plan and goals into words causes us to be thoughtful, strategic, honest, and gives us a reference to measure against.

#### **Accountability:**

Involve a family member, friend, or confidant in holding you accountable for doing what you say you are going to do. Choose someone trustworthy, kind, and who is more interested in helping you grow than in catching you fail.

#### **Schedule:**

Most businesses and companies have employee reviews. A good review seeks to validate and accentuate the positive while identifying and isolating areas that need improvement. Without scheduled reviews, it is unlikely time would be taken to reflect and to plan. Put in your schedule designated

times to review your progress.

#### **Celebrate:**

Make space to celebrate your progress and growth. Be proud and use that pride to be motivated to grow further.

#### **Start Again:**

Don't stop just because you accomplished your particular goal. Set more goals and pursue them with the same resolve that brought you success the first time.

Get more sleep, lose weight, have less anger, stop feeling jealous, be more scrupulous in following Jewish law, set aside time daily for Torah study – whatever the area you want to work on, this can absolutely be your year.

But it won't happen if you don't design a Spiritbit, a mechanism to be honest and to track results. This Rosh Hashanah, wear your Spiritbit and finally become the best version of yourself.

## **SERVICE TIMES**

### **SHACHARIT (A.M.)**

<b>Sunday and Public Holidays</b>	8:00
<i>09/09 (Selichot): 7:45</i>	
<b>Monday to Friday</b>	7:15
<i>03/09 &amp; 06/09 (Selichot): 6:45</i>	
<i>04/09, 05/09 &amp; 18/09 (Selichot): 7:00</i>	
<i>12/09, 13/09, 14/09 &amp; 17/09 (Selichot): 6:45</i>	
<i>26/09, 27/09 &amp; 28/09 (Chol Hamoed): 7:00</i>	
<i>30/09 (Hoshana Rabba): 7:45</i>	
<b>Shabbat &amp; Festivals</b>	9:00

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

<b>Sunday to Thursday</b>	5:45
<i>from 30/09</i>	6:00
<b>Friday</b>	5:45
<b>Shabbat</b>	5:30
<i>from 06/10</i>	5:45

**MAZALTOV**

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

**BIRTHS**

- Maisie Ehrlich on the birth of a great grandson in Cape Town.
- Philip and Rilla Jacobson on the birth of a great grandson in Melbourne, Australia.

**ENGAGEMENT**

- Cecil Kramer on the engagement of his daughter Tashi to Alan Blumenfeld.

**BIRTHDAYS**

- Barney Gordon on his 96<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 7<sup>th</sup> September.
- Roselyn Rubenstein on her 75<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 13<sup>th</sup> September.
- Annette Wolk on her 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday on the 24<sup>th</sup> September.
- Lewis Duchon on his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 30<sup>th</sup> September.
- Rhona Gilbert on her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 30<sup>th</sup> September.

**REFUAH SHLEIMA**

We wish a Speedy recovery to:

- John Brick
- Blima Nudelman

**BEREAVEMENTS**

We wish long life to

- Cecilie Marks on the death of her husband Kenneth.
- Michael Bloom on the death of his brother, Anthony

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

# L' Shana Tova!



ראש השנה

Have a Good Year!