

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

September 2026

Elul 5786 & Tishrei 5787

SHABBAT TIMES

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

4 & 5 September – 23 Elul

🕒 Nitzavim & Vayelech

🕒 5:39 – 🕒 6:28

11 & 12 September – 1 Tishrei

Rosh Hashanah Day 1

🕒 5:41

18 & 19 September – 8 Tishrei

🕒 Haazinu (Shabbat Shuva)

🕒 5:44 – 🕒 6:34

25 & 26 September – 15 Tishrei

Sukkot 1st Day

🕒 5:46

2 & 3 October – 22 Tishrei

Shemini Atzeret

🕒 5:50

9 & 10 October – 29 Tishrei

🕒 Bereishit

🕒 5:53 – 🕒 6:44

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Early this Sunday morning we begin reciting Selichot prayers. Actually, very early. Traditionally this service takes place at midnight in shuls around the world, on the Saturday night before Rosh Hashanah. We continue rising before dawn every day for Selichot for the rest of the week, with many communities continuing until Yom Kippur.

I must qualify the word “we”—I am referring to Ashkenazi Jews. Our Sephardi brothers have been doing this for three weeks already, since the beginning of the month of Elul. Ouch! Then again, they got to eat rice over Pesach half a year

ago. I personally enjoy my morning sleep more than rice, but each to their own traditions and customs.

Selichot (from the word *selicha* meaning forgiveness) is a collection of liturgical compositions particularly suited to this time of year, when we engage in introspection ahead of the Divine Judgement of Rosh Hashanah. Its roots reach back to the Talmud, while organised pre-dawn prayers for forgiveness are documented in the period of the Geonim more than a thousand years ago. Over the centuries, generations of great Jewish poets added the haunting penitential poems that surround its core—the repeated recitation of the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy. “Hashem, Hashem, G-d, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in kindness and truth, preserving kindness for thousands of generations, forgiving wrongdoing, rebellion and sin, and granting forgiveness” (Exodus 34: 6–7).

When Moshe was on Mount Sinai, pleading for forgiveness for his people after the Golden Calf, he was genuinely concerned that they would sin again in future and invoke Divine wrath. This is when Hashem revealed the Thirteen Attributes to him. The Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 17b) describes the circumstances in which this took place. “The Holy One, blessed

be He, wrapped Himself like a chazan and showed Moshe the order of prayer. He said to him: ‘Whenever the Jewish people sin, let them follow this order before Me, and I will forgive them.’”

Let us read the words of the Talmud carefully. It does not quote Hashem as saying, “recite these words before Me.” This is not some form of magical incantation with supernatural powers, achieving Divine pardon through mere repetition. The exact words are “let them follow this order before Me,” suggesting there is something we must do, not just say. Following this order means emulating Hashem in His compassion towards us—Imitatio Dei—by showing kindness, forgiveness and tolerance towards others. Now that is more of a challenge than even getting up at the crack of dawn!

The Talmud concludes, “A covenant has been made regarding the Thirteen Attributes: they never return empty-handed.”

May Hashem hear our prayers. May He look down from above and see His children acting compassionately and graciously, slow to anger, abundant in kindness and truth, and granting forgiveness to others. And may He do the same for us.

Shana Tova

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

We were blessed to have such a special few weeks with Shmuly, Shoshy and family, and to get to know and bond with our grandchildren a little during their summer vacation.

Then they went home, and our house was eerily silent. It took a while to finish washing the sheets and towels and to put everything away. Now that we are no longer finding pieces of Lego on the couch or strawberry yoghurt in the fridge, we are, Baruch Hashem, getting ready for our next visitors.

We are so looking forward to having little Batsheva and her parents, and then Ita, over Yom Tov.

We are so grateful to be spoiled like this!

I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a Ketivah Vachatimah Tovah—a happy, sweet, sweet year ahead, filled with blessings, especially good health and simchah.

Shanah Tovah Umetukah!

Rivky

SERVICE TIMES

For services 11/09-04/10 see page 4

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday & Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
<i>07/09 & 10/09: 7:00 (Selichot)</i>	
Shabbat & Festivals	9:30

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Friday	6:00
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DVAR TORAH**THE CORONATION**

The fundamental theme of Rosh Hashanah is the coronation of G-d as King over us. A coronation is a solemn and awe-inspiring ceremony, and the holy trembling in every Jew's heart at the onset of the "Days of Awe" goes far beyond fear of punishment. The specific term for this feeling is "yirat haromemut" (Awe of G-d's grandeur), fear stemming from each Jew's contemplation of his personal role in the King's coronation.

In addition to the collective aspects of Rosh Hashanah worship, the coronation renews each Jew's personal bond with

G-d, his direct inner connection as an individual. Each man and woman personally asks G-d to accept the coronation, thus creating the bond of "We are your people and You are our King." Therefore we omit tachanun, the daily prayers of supplication, nor do we confess on Rosh Hashanah, although it is the first of the Ten Days of Repentance. For sorrow, however great, over past deeds is forgotten in the different mood the coronation evokes: oneness with G-d and yirat haromemut.

Moreover, repentance then is not ordinary regret for the past and resolve for the future, but rather "teshuvah" according to its inner meaning: the soul's return to its source. This spiritual

service corresponds precisely to the renewed individual bond of the King's coronation.

Only after the holiday does ordinary repentance commence, with confession and slichot, following as a necessary consequence of the coronation. Renewed oneness with G-d evokes desire and resolve to be fit for such an exalted status, requiring vigorous effort to uproot anything which diminishes it, i.e. sin, and even inadvertent sin.

ACCEPTANCE OF HIS KINGSHIP

G-d's coronation requires complete readiness from a person to assume the proper spiritual state, so that all his possessions and his very essence belong solely to the King. This is acceptance of the yoke of Heaven in every detail of daily life.

And how does the acceptance of the yoke on Rosh Hashanah differ from the daily acceptance (particularly during the recitation of the Shema)? The daily acceptance is merely the beginning and foundation of a person's conduct during the day; the acceptance on Rosh Hashanah, however, is the essence of the holiday.

Nevertheless, complete and sincere acceptance of the yoke requires an honest accounting of past conduct, with a profound feeling of regret and repentance.

(chabad.org)

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTH

- Mazaltov to Shmuly & Chanala Hurwitz and to Rabbi Yossi & Rivky Chaikin on the birth of a son and grandson.

BIRTHDAYS

- Riva Stein on her 80th birthday on the 7th September.
- Jules Schneid on his 91st birthday on 14th September.
- Hazel Bernard on her 85th birthday on the 27th September.

ANNIVERSARIES

- Ronald & Estelle Katz on their 59th anniversary on the 3rd September.

BEREAVEMENTS

We wish long life to

- Reva Stan and family on the passing of her husband, Stan.
- The family of the late Ruth Kuper on her passing.
- The family of the late Leah Lange on her passing.

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



TISHREI 5787 CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SHABBAT
4 October 23 Tishrei SIMCHAT TORAH Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. 6:40	LEGEND: Candle lighting Shabbat / Yom Tov ends Service Other	<i>Wishing you Shana Tova</i> <i>May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year</i>			11 September EREV ROSH HASHANAH Shacharit: 6:45 a.m. Annulment of vows Mincha/Maariv: 5:45 p.m. Apple & Honey in evening 5:41 p.m.	12 September 1 Tishrei ROSH HASHANAH Shacharit: 9:00 a.m. Torah Reading: 10:15 a.m. Musaf: 11:00 a.m. Mincha: 5:45 p.m. Maariv: 6:15 p.m. Eat new fruit in evening 6:31 p.m.
13 September 2 Tishrei ROSH HASHANAH 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 6:00 p.m. Maariv: 6:31 p.m. 6:31 p.m.	14 September 3 Tishrei FAST OF GEDALYA Fast begins: 4:58 a.m. Shacharit: 7:00 a.m. Fast ends: 6:18 p.m.	15 September 4 Tishrei	16 September 5 Tishrei	17 September 6 Tishrei Shacharit: 7:00 a.m.	18 September 7 Tishrei Mincha/Maariv: 6:00 p.m. 5:44	19 September 8 Tishrei SHABBAT SHUVA Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. 6:34 p.m.
20 September 9 Tishrei EREV YOM KIPPUR Shacharit: 8:00 a.m. Fast begins: 5:45 p.m. Kol Nidrei: 6:00 p.m. 5:45 p.m.	21 September 10 Tishrei YOM KIPPUR Shacharit: 9:00 a.m. Torah Reading: 10:15 a.m. Yizkor: 11:00 a.m. Musaf: 11:15 a.m. Mincha: 4:30 p.m. Neilah: 5:15 p.m. Fast ends: 6:35 p.m. Maariv: 6:40 p.m. 6:35 p.m.	22 September 11 Tishrei	23 September 12 Tishrei	24 September 13 Tishrei Shacharit: 7:15 a.m.	25 September 14 Tishrei EREV SUKKOT Mincha/Maariv: 6:00 p.m. Eat dinner in Sukkah 5:47	26 September 15 Tishrei SUKKOT Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. Eat all meals in Sukkah 6:37 p.m.
27 September 16 Tishrei SUKKOT Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. Shake Lulav & Etrog Eat all meals in Sukkah 6:37 p.m.	28 September 17 Tishrei CHOL HAMOED Shacharit: 7:00 a.m. Shake Lulav & Etrog Eat all meals in Sukkah	29 September 18 Tishrei CHOL HAMOED Shake Lulav & Etrog Eat all meals in Sukkah	30 September 19 Tishrei CHOL HAMOED Shake Lulav & Etrog Eat all meals in Sukkah	1 October 20 Tishrei CHOL HAMOED Shacharit: 7:00 a.m. Shake Lulav & Etrog Eat all meals in Sukkah	2 October 21 Tishrei HOSHANA RABBA Shacharit: 6:45 a.m. Shake Lulav & Etrog Eat all meals in Sukkah Mincha/Maariv: 6:00 p.m. 5:50	3 October 22 Tishrei SHEMINI ATZERET Shacharit: 9:30 a.m. Yizkor: 10:45 a.m. Mincha/Maariv: 6:00 p.m. <i>continued top left</i> 6:40