

multitudes of loyal Jews. About this the prophet Isaiah declared, "You are my witnesses, says HASHEM!"

One year when looking for a place in which to make a seminar we happened upon a fancy and yet reasonably priced hotel. We were taking a last walk through with the hotel staff before signing the contract. We came to the kitchen and met the chef and his crew. There was sufficient equipment and space to for us to share however there was only one exit. We realized it would be hard to ensure the integrity of the Kashrus with their waiters and ours co-mingling. It was a deal breaker. A palpable tension filled the room. I explained that it was not that we did not trust them. Even accidentally a spoon of theirs could end up in one of our sinks and change the whole equation. They didn't buy it. I tried again, "It's not ours to negotiate. We have been doing it this way for 3300 years!" Just then a Chinese chef wearing one of those tall white hats broke the silence. With his cute accent he exclaimed, "3300 years? 'I wouldn't want to be the one to break that chain!'" *Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.*

AGM - Sunday May 31, 7:30 pm via 'zoom' see email for details

Bespoke shiurim choose your own learning adventure!

Matan Bat Mitzvah 2020 continues via 'zoom'

Community Announcements:

**Limmud Oz online
June 6 - 14**

**JeneScreen information at
www.jenescreen.com.au**

Minyan Schedule

Services remain suspended

Erev Shavuot 28/05/20

Eruv Tavshilin *before* 4:37 pm

Candle lighting 4:37 pm

First Day Shavuot 29/05/20

Erev Shabbat

Shabbat Candle lighting 4:37 pm

Shabbat Second Day Shavuot

30/05/20

Shabbat ends 5:36 pm

Erev Shabbat Naso 05/06/20

Candle lighting 4:35 pm

Announcements

COVID-19 Pandemic - see email for all the latest information.

While the situation seems more positive now, after careful consideration, the Rabbi and the Committee have decided to delay restarting our services until the government regulations allow for more people to gather

together. Mindful of greater safety and ensuring that we remain true to our mission of being an open and embracing community that is inclusive of women rather than an exclusive minyan, we will continue to review the situation as regulations evolve

Please contact Rabbi Alon or OC's President Jonathan Erlich at any time if you are in need of assistance (alon.meltzer@gmail.com or 0416 643 431; j.erlich@unsw.edu.au or 0404 073 193)



Celebrating
25
Years

Weekly Newsletter

Shavuot - Shabbat

6 - 7 Sivan, 5780; 29 - 30 May, 2020

Shavuot First Day: Stone Chumash p 400, Maftir p 892, Haftarah p 1228; **Shabbat Shavuot** p 1012, Maftir p 892, Haftarah p 1229.

President Jonathan Erlich

Rabbi Alon Meltzer

D'var Torah Rabbi Alon see email

D'var Torah Rabbi Alon see email

The Humility of an Open Mind **Rabbi Marc D. Angel**

When I was a senior at Franklin High School in Seattle, my teacher for Language Arts was Mr. James Britain. Even after these many years, I remember him and his class quite vividly.

I invariably got A grades on all my papers. But once, Mr. Britain marked my paper with a D. I think I learned more from that D than from all my A papers. What was the paper about and what did I learn?

Mr. Britain often presented the class with challenging assignments. Once, he asked us to walk around the outside of the school building and to observe all its architectural details. Another assignment was to study a painting and analyze it as carefully as possible—its colors, perspective, lighting etc. His goal was to teach us to "see", to focus in on detail, to

look for the usual and the unusual.

One day, he played a recording of atonal electronic music for the class and asked us to write our impressions. I was outraged by this "music" and wrote a scathing essay condemning it. This was not music at all! It was a cacophony of senseless screeching, painful to the ear. Mr. Britain gave me a D on this paper. He wrote me a one line comment: "In order to learn, you must open your mind to new ideas."

When I spoke to him afterward about my "unfair" grade, he calmly explained that I had entirely missed the point of the assignment. He indicated that I should have listened carefully, with an open mind; I should have tried to understand the intentions of the composer; I should have put aside my preconceived notions so as to experience the music on its terms—not on mine. Only after

I had processed the experience with an open mind was I entitled to offer my judgments about it. Think carefully, don't rant.



That was one of the most valuable lessons I've ever learned—and one of the most difficult to apply.

We all have fixed ideas on a great many topics. It is often painful to hear opinions that conflict with our sure understanding of life. New ideas, unusual approaches, unconventional artistic expressions—these are difficult to absorb. It is tempting—and usual—to shut off ideas that challenge our own views and tastes. It is very common for those who have different views to talk to each other, or to talk against each other; it is far less common for people actually to listen to each other, to try sincerely to understand the ideas and approaches of others. To open our minds to new ideas demands tremendous self-control and humility.

And this brings us to some thoughts about Shavuot.

The festival of Shavuot commemorates the Revelation at Mt. Sinai. The Torah and its commandments were revealed by the Almighty to the people of Israel on this special mountain.

In the early 17th century, Rehuel Jessurun wrote *Dialogo dos Montes*, a drama based on the rabbinic tradition that various mountains competed for the privilege of having the Torah revealed on them. (The drama was presented on Shavuot, 1624, in the Bet Yaacob synagogue of Amsterdam.) Each mountain offered its claim to be the most worthy of this honor. Mount Sinai, though, was humble. It was a low and unimpressive mountain, hardly worthy of being chosen by G-d for the

Divine revelation of the Torah. Because of its very humility, G-d chose Mount Sinai upon which to give the Israelites the Torah.

Much of human life resembles the Dialogue of the Mountains. People seek to assert their pre-eminence, to highlight their virtues, to claim the highest honors. Yet, it is the Mount Sinais of the world who reflect the quiet humility worthy of Divine blessing.

As we celebrate the Shavuot festival commemorating the Revelation at Mount Sinai, it would be appropriate for us to recall the symbolic virtues of Mount Sinai—humility, awareness of limitations, openness to new and unique revelation.

“In order to learn, you must open your mind to new ideas.”

This does not mean that one must accept all new ideas, or that one should adopt every new opinion. Rather, it entails the ability to listen carefully, to analyze and process ideas, to think carefully and not to rant. Even ideas that we ultimately reject may contain kernels of truth that will sharpen and enhance our own understanding.

To open our minds to new and differing ideas is not only the way for all of us to grow intellectually and spiritually; it is the foundation of a responsible civil society.

Moadim leSimha. Although this Shavuot will be different from all other years due to the covid 19 pandemic, we pray that the festival will imbue us with hope for the future, with blessings of good health and happiness. *Rabbi Marc. D. Angel and the Institute of*

Jewish Ideas and Ideals.

I wouldn't Want to Be the One to Break that Chain! Rabbi Label Lam

“And you should know it today and return it to your heart that HASHEM is G-d in the heavens above and on the earth below and the there is no other.” (Devarim 4:39)

The Rambam states that foundation of foundations and the pillar of all wisdom is to know that there is a prime source of reality- namely G-d. It is not a matter of belief or speculation but rather of knowledge. He continues, “The knowledge of this matter is a positive commandment, as it says, “I am HASHEM your G-d Who took you out of the land of Egypt...” The Kuzari asks, “Why such a small claim?” “I am HASHEM Who created heaven and earth” would be more grandiose. The answer is that we were not there when the world was created but we did experience the Exodus from Egypt and the pronouncements on Mt. Sinai. This was a historical revelation and not a hysterical revolution. We, as a nation, were there and we witnessed it. That's how we know.

A general caught wind that that his army was beginning to grumble and complain overmuch. When he learned that the main source of their discontent was the quality of the food he became enraged and decided to address the troops. He barked at them, “Do you think Napoleon's men at Waterloo would have complained about the bread?” A small voice was heard from amongst the troops, “No sir! It was fresh then!” Leaving Egypt and receiving the Torah occurred 3318 years ago and it was fresh then. How do we “know it today”?

What occurred at Mt. Sinai was not an isolated moment of inspiration which

Or Chadash is a friendly community. We hold tuneful participatory services, in the nusach Ashkenaz tradition, on Shabbat and Yom Tov. Focusing on personal growth, we welcome all, from small children to older men and women, of all levels of observance.

We have operated since 1995. During the year we arrange special activities including: learning, shiur/lecture series and social events.

fades like a sun tan. No! The memory of those uniquely powerful events were captured and bottled in many detailed programs of action, sublime souvenirs that are bubbling and alive till this very day. Just a few examples; At least twice daily we mention leaving Egypt fulfilling the verse, “In order that you should remember the day you left Egypt all the days of your life” (Devarim 28:3)

Tefillin, which are worn daily, “... should be a sign on your arm and for Totafos between your eyes, because with a strong hand HASHEM took us out of Egypt.” (Shemos 13:15) Kiddush is recited as a testimony- a “remembrance of leaving Egypt”, “You must remember that you were slaves in Egypt, when HASHEM your G-d brought with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. It is for this reason that HASHEM has commanded you to keep the Shabbos.” (Devarim 5:13-15) Pesach each year a whole week and more is dedicated to memorializing the events of leaving Egypt. Needless to say Shevuos commemorates and invites the re-reception of the Torah. Sukkos for seven days too is, “In order that your generations should know that in Sukkos I housed the Children of Israel when I took them out of Egypt.” (Vayikra 23:43) Not a day or a week in 3318 years has passed that the echo those events are not felt and acted on with earnest by

Are you on the Or Chadash email list? To receive information about Or Chadash times and events, contact us on orchadash613@gmail.com.

Please be in contact if you have recently changed your details.

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