

Whitestone Hebrew Centre Bulletin

12-45 Clintonville St. Whitestone, NY 11357



שלום

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May 2019

Nissan -- Iyar 5779



YOM HASHOAH

Join WHC as we commemorate Yom Hashoah, the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust, and the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

Wednesday May 1st — 8:00 PM

Sisterhood Joint Fashion Show

with the Sisterhoods of Hillcrest Jewish Center and Temple Gates of Prayer

Sunday, May 5th – 3:00 PM
@ Temple Gates of Prayer



Kosher Chinese Dinner • Fashions by CHICO'S • Vendor Shopping and Raffles

Sisterhood General Meeting

Tuesday, May 7th — 1:00 PM
Come Celebrate Israel Independence Day
Refreshments Will Be Served



Family Shabbat

May 18th @ 10:00 AM

We look forward to seeing everyone there!



Sisterhood Spring Luncheon and Bingo

Wednesday, May 15th @ 12:30 PM

@ Ben's Kosher Restaurant
Located in the Bay Terrace Shopping Center
(See enclosed flier for details)



Board of Trustees Meeting

Tuesday, May 21st -- 7:30 PM



Congregation Meeting

Tuesday, May 28th — 7:30 PM



WHC Bulletin Staff

Rabbi Steven Axelman,
Editor
Sharon Samet
Patricia Smolker

WHITESTONE
HEBREW CENTRE
12-45 Clintonville St.
Whitestone, NY 11357
718-767-1500

Email:
Whitestonehebrewcentre
@gmail.com

Website:
whitestonehebrewcenter.org

WHC ADMINISTRATION

2018-19 Officers

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President - Bruce Berenson
Vice-President - Ellis Rosenblatt
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Sisterhood Co-Presidents
Esther Cohen
Rhoda Weinstein

Rabbi Steven Axelman
haxelman@gmail.com
718-208-5059



FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

The following is adapted from A Religion Of Holy Words by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, as printed in the [Jewish Press](#).

President's Message

By: Bruce Berenson

Just recently in the Rearview Mirror - We have just finished celebrating Pesach – my (and many other's) favorite Jewish Holiday. It connects me back to my earliest memories of the warmth in family gathering at my grandparent's house in Williamsburg. There was the enormous responsibility of putting into practice what I learned in Hebrew School - reciting the four questions (in Hebrew of course - my Grandfather considered any English used in ritual as "Treyf") and attempting an explanation to my sister and younger cousins the meaning of what we were doing here. To my eight-year-old brain there was no doubt it boiled down to how God - with the help of Moses and some nasty plagues liberated our ancestors enslaved by those evil Egyptian taskmasters. As we get older (and presumably more knowledgeable) we learn The Sages also tell us the redemption from Egypt was not just to free us from oppression - it was to free us to serve God. Personally, one of the larger downsides of the "Shabbat to Shabbat" Holiday schedule this year was no Shabbat Chol ha-Moed so, no reading the intermediate Sabbath Haftarah about the vision of the Prophet Ezekiel, who finds himself in a valley of scattered dry bones. The Voice of God tells him to speak to the bones in His name and tell them to rise up and live so that all will know The Lord is God. Much is written about what this represents but one common analogy is the promise of our rebirth as a Nation, gathered from all over the world and returned to Israel, once again in the Service of God as His Chosen People.

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In the Torah Portion that we read at Services on April 6th, Parshat Tazria, we read about a condition called *tzara'at*. Our Sages identify *tzara'at* – a condition that affects human skin, the fabric of garments, and the walls of a house – not as an illness in the medical sense, but as a punishment, and not for any sin but for one specific sin, that of *lashon hara*, evil speech. What is it about sins committed through speech that warrants such a punishment. Are such sins worse than physical violence? Did not most of us grow up with the phrase, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me"?

There is not even a direct prohibition against evil speech in the Torah. There is a prohibition against gossip: "Do not go around as a gossip among your people" (Lev. 19:16). *Lashon hara* is a subset of this larger command. Here is how Maimonides (Hilchot De'ot 7:2) defines it: "There is a far greater sin that falls under this prohibition [of gossip]. It is 'the evil tongue,' which refers to whoever speaks disparagingly of his fellow, even though he speaks the truth."

The Sages go to remarkable lengths to emphasize the seriousness of *lashon hara*, speaking disparagingly about others. It is, they say, as bad as all three cardinal sins together – idol worship, bloodshed, and illicit sexual relations. Whoever speaks with an evil tongue, they say, is as if he denied G-d. They also say: it is forbidden to dwell in the vicinity of any of those with an evil tongue, and all the more to sit with them and to listen to their words.

Why are mere words treated with such seriousness in Judaism? Though like most

(Continued on page 5)

SISTERHOOD

Sisterhood Message

Last month our Passover Program, "What Lessons from the Exodus are Relevant to the World Today", was led by Sisterhood's Program Chairperson, Iris Kirschner. Thank you, Iris, for a meaningful program. Join us on Tuesday, May 7th for our General Meeting at 1:00 PM. We will be celebrating Israel Independence Day, with a program, once again led by Iris Kirschner.

Thank you to our Sisterhood members who attended and participated in last month's Sisterhood and Family Shabbat Service.

We are looking forward to Sisterhood's Fifth Joint Fashion Show on Sunday, May 5th at 3:00 PM. This function is always a big hit and lots of fun.

Another function we are looking forward to is our ever popular Spring Luncheon at Ben's on Wednesday, May 15th at 12:30 PM. Don't forget we will be playing bingo. (See enclosed flier for details.)

Please join us for the Fashion Show and Spring Luncheon. Hope to see you at these functions.

SISTERHOOD DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun.	May 5 th	Joint Sisterhood Fashion Show	3:00 PM
Tue.	May 7 th	Sisterhood Board Meeting	10:00 AM
Tue.	May 7 th	Sisterhood General Meeting	1:00 PM
Wed.	May 15 th	Sisterhood Spring Luncheon	12:30 PM



Helen Cytryn Study Day

Temple Beth Sholom in Roslyn hosted our Brooklyn, Queens, Long Island (BQLI) Region of Women's League Helen Cytryn Study Day on Wednesday, April 3rd.

There were 70 members who attended this event. In addition to myself, Lilian Gradofsky and Iris Kirschner attended from our Sisterhood. The program was "Envisioning Future Jewish Engagement". The guest speakers and their topics were: Rabbi Alan Lucas, Temple Beth Sholom, Roslyn — L'Dor Vador: What Does It Mean?, Rabbi Eric Cytryn, son of Helen Cytryn, Beth-El Temple, Harrisburg, Pa. — Judaism and Our Neighbors, Merav Cohen, Manager, Hazon Seal of Sustainability—Engaging Millennials and Rabbi Ari Saks, Huntington Jewish Center — Embracing Diversity.

After the program we ate lunch and had the chance to talk to our sister BQLI members.

Our Sisterhood members who attended this event, along with our sister BQLI members, had a wonderful day, which was enhanced by all the speakers who participated in the Women's League Helen Cytryn Study Day.

Patricia Smolker

Thank You

A very huge thank you

to all my friends at WHC during Purim

Evelyn Apter

Making Contributions

For many years Sisterhood has offered the service of sending cards from all those who wish to acknowledge both Simchas and Condolences. The response from the recipients is most heart warming. The following funds are available:

Simcha Fund	\$10
Chai Fund	\$18
Prayer Book Fund	\$10
Inscribed Prayer Books.....	\$25

The recipient receives an acknowledgement of the contribution and it is printed in the monthly Bulletin so all can share the feelings expressed. To place orders, call Patricia Smolker at (718) 746-7068.

Prayer Book Fund - April 2019

Inscribed prayer books in memory of Abraham Weinstein



- Sisterhood WHC
- Patricia Smolker

In memory of Abraham Weinstein

- Bonnie Buxbaum
- Adele Rothman

Chai Fund—April 2019

Wishing Leon Gukowsky a return to good health

- Esther Cohen



This picture recently appeared in the International Edition of the [NY Times](#) and caused a large outcry due to its anti-Semitic nature. In light of that incident, I am sharing the following article that appeared in the [Jewish Press](#) on April 24, 2019, entitled: [120 Years Of Bias At The New York Times: An Interview with Professor Jerold Auerbach](#), written by Elliot Resnick.

Many Jews complain about The New York Times' anti-Israel bias. What they may not realize is that this bias dates back 120 years – all the way to 1896 when Adolph Ochs, son-in-law of the founder of American Reform Judaism – bought the newspaper. A new book by Professor Jerold Auerbach – [Print to Fit: The New York](#)

[Times, Zionism and Israel, 1896-2016](#) – documents this bias in some detail over the course of 300 pages. Auerbach is the author of 10 previous books and a former professor of history at Wellesley College.

The Jewish Press: The New York Times opposed Zionism from its very inception, as you note in your book. Why?

Auerbach: Because its publisher, Adolph Ochs, was a devoted Reform Jew who believed that Judaism was a religion only, not a national identity. He believed if it were a national identity, it would call into question the loyalty of Jews in the United States. So anti-Zionism was embedded in the newspaper from the very beginning. Ochs died in 1935, but his son-in-law, Arthur Hays Sulzberger, shared the same belief and therefore opposed the creation of a Jewish state.

JP: You write that Sulzberger held this belief so firmly that actually instructed New York Times editors to refer to Jews as “people of Jewish faith” as opposed to “the Jewish people.”

JA: That's correct. And also, Jewish correspondents in the Times were often required to appear in print with their initials only, particularly if their first name was Abraham.

JP: In 1942, a new anti-Zionist group, the American Council for Judaism, emerged on the American scene and received extensive coverage in the pages of The New York Times for years afterward. Why?

JA: Because it was staunchly anti-Zionist. Sulzberger was very supportive of it, and this organization – along with Judah Magnes, the president of Hebrew University – were really the two sources of information and ideology for the New York Times publisher.

JP: Almost all of American Jewry – including many former anti-Zionists – supported the creation of a Jewish state after the devastation of the Holocaust. The American Council for Judaism amazingly, however, continued to oppose it even in 1948.

JA: Correct. It did not change its position, although it eventually faded away in the 1960s. After the birth of Israel, it became largely irrelevant other than in the pages of The New York Times.

JP: You write that Sulzberger's anti-Zionism ran so deep that he actually resigned as a member of his synagogue, Shearith Israel – the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue – because Hatikvah was sung at one of its functions.

JA: Yes. Sulzberger was even more vehemently [anti-Zionist] than his father-in-law and spoke very openly about his position. He really was intensely uncomfortable with Jewish statehood.

JP: He once said that he had “no affinity” with Israel.

JA: That's certainly true. And his newspaper had very little affinity for it, too. It supported the birth of Israel, and for the next four or five years was generally favorable toward it – by which I mean that every May the Times would run an editorial proclaiming Israel's virtue as a struggling young country achieving remarkable success – but that ceased after that.

JP: You note that The New York Times opposed Adolf Eichmann standing trial in Israel. What was its objection?

JA: Eichmann had committed no crime in Israel, and if Israel could extend its jurisdiction to non-Jews who harmed Jews in other countries, that again raised the loyalty issue [implying that Jews all over the world belonged to one nation, represented by Israel, as opposed to members of the nations in which they live]. So the Times was absolutely resolute that Israel had no jurisdiction over Eichmann.

JP: How did the Times cover the Six-Day War?

JA: It was over so quickly that the Times really didn't have the opportunity to formulate much of a position, but certainly after the war it began to argue that Israel should return the territories it seized.

JP: What can you say about the Times' coverage of Israel in more recent decades?

JA: It partially depends on who the prime minister was. The Times was staunchly opposed to Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon and incredibly uncomfortable with Netanyahu. Over the last 20 years, the Times has been relentless in its criticism of what it sees as Israel's uncompromising stand on what it calls the West Bank....

JP: We haven't touched yet on the Times' Jerusalem bureau chiefs. The first one was David Shipler, who was appointed in the 1980s. He was very fair, thoughtful, and eager to learn. But he was followed by Thomas Friedman, and that began a very different story. How so?

JA: Well, Friedman had an interesting background. As a student at Brandeis University, he was head of the university chapter of an organization called *Breira*, which was supportive of Palestinian statehood. He also spent a semester in Egypt and was smitten with Arab culture. So Friedman was not exactly a neutral journalist. He was stationed in Beirut and, in the mid '80s, covered the Israeli assault on the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. He wrote that Israel behaved with indiscriminate aggression and was very sharply rebuked by his Times superior who ordered him back to New York and basically told him if he editorialized like that in a news

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FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

(Continued from page 2)

religions, Judaism has holy places, holy people, sacred times, and consecrated rituals, unlike other cultures and religions that worshipped gods to whom they attributed various powers, Judaism is primarily a religion of holy words. With words G-d created the universe: "And G-d said, Let there be... and there was." Through words He communicated with humankind. In Judaism, language itself is holy. That is why *lashon hara*, the use of language to harm, is not merely a minor offence. It involves taking something that is holy and using it for purposes that are unholy. It is a kind of desecration. After creating the universe, G-d's first gift to the first man was the power to use words to name the animals, and thus to use language to classify. This was the start of the intellectual process that is the distinguishing mark of Homo Sapiens. The Targum translates the phrase, "And man became a living creature" (Gen. 2:7) as "a speaking spirit." When G-d sought to halt the plan of the people of Babel to build a tower that would reach heaven, He merely "confused their language" so they were unable to communicate. Language remains basic to the existence of human groups. G-d created the natural universe with words. We create – and sometimes destroy – the social universe with words.

So the first principle of language in Judaism is that it is creative. We create worlds with words. The second principle is no less fundamental. Abrahamic monotheism introduced into the world the idea of a G-d who transcends the universe, and who therefore cannot be identified with any phenomenon within the universe. G-d is invisible. Hence in Judaism all religious images and icons are a sign of idolatry.

How then does an invisible G-d reveal Himself? Where can such a G-d be found? The answer again is: in words. G-d spoke. He spoke to Adam, Noach, Avraham, Moshe. At the revelation at Mount Sinai, as Moshe reminded Bnei Yisrael, "The L-rd spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice" (Deut. 4:12). In Judaism, words are the vehicle of revelation. The prophet is the man or woman who hears and speaks the word of G-d. Judaism calls this aspect of G-d "Elokim." But we believe in another aspect of G-d also, which we call "Hashem," the G-d of relationship – and relationship exists by virtue of speech. For it is speech that allows us to communicate with others and share with them our fears, hopes, loves, plans, feelings, and intentions. Speech allows us to convey our inwardness to others. It is at the very heart of the human bond. A G-d who could create universes but not speak or listen would be an impersonal god – a god incapable of understanding what makes us human. Worshipping such a god would be like bowing down to the sun or to a giant computer. We might care about it but it could not care about us. That is not the G-d of Avraham.

Words are remarkable in another way as well. We can use language not just to describe or assert. We can use it to create new moral facts. The Oxford philosopher J. L. Austin called this special use of language "performative utterance." The classic example is making a promise. When I make a promise, I create an obligation that did not exist before. Nietzsche believed that

the ability to make a promise was the birth of morality and human responsibility.

Hence the idea at the heart of Judaism: brit, covenant, which is nothing other than a mutually binding promise between G-d and human beings. What defines the special relationship between the Jewish people and G-d is not that He brought them from slavery to freedom. He did that, says the prophet Amos, to other people as well: "Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Arameans from Kir?" (Amos 9:7). It is the fact that at Sinai, G-d and Israel entered into a mutual pledge that linked them in an everlasting bond. Covenant is the word that joins heaven and earth, the word spoken, the word heard, the word affirmed and honored in trust. For that reason, Jews were able to survive exile. They may have lost their home, their land, their power, their freedom, but they still had G-d's word, the word He said He would never break or rescind. The Torah, in the most profound sense, is the word of G-d, and Judaism is the religion of holy words. It follows that to misuse or abuse language to sow suspicion and dissension is not just destructive. It is sacrilege. It takes something holy, the human ability to communicate and thus join soul to soul, and use it for the lowest of purposes, to divide soul from soul and destroy the trust on which non-coercive relationships depend. That, according to the Sages, is why the speaker of *lashon hara* was smitten by *tzara'at* and forced to live as a pariah outside the camp. The punishment was measure for measure: What is special about the person afflicted with *tzara'at* that the Torah says, "He shall live alone; he must live outside the camp" (Lev. 13:46)? The Holy One, Blessed Be He, said, "Since this person sought to create division between man and wife, or a person and his neighbor, [he is punished by being divided from the community], which is why it says, 'Let him live alone, outside the camp.'"

Language, in Judaism, is the basis of creation, revelation, and the moral life. It is the air we breathe as social beings. Hence the statement in Proverbs (18:21), "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." Likewise, the verse in Psalms, "Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies" (Ps. 34:13–14). Judaism, thus, answers a series of questions: How can finite human beings be connected to an infinite G-d? How can they be connected to one another? How can there be cooperation, collaboration, collective action, families, communities, and a nation, without the coercive use of power? How can we form relationships of trust? How can we redeem the human person from his or her solitude? How can we create collective liberty such that my freedom is not bought at the cost of yours? The answer is: through words, words that communicate, words

(Continued on page 6)

Before you speak ask yourself if what you are going to say is...

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TRUE?
HELPFUL?
INSPIRING?
NECESSARY?
KIND?

If the answer is NO, Maybe what you are about to say should be left unsaid.

FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY*(Continued from page 5)*

that bind, words that honor the Divine Other and the human other. *Lashon hara*, "evil speech," by poisoning language, destroys the very basis of the Judaic vision. When we speak disparagingly of others, we diminish them, we diminish ourselves, and we damage the very ecology of freedom. That is one reason that the Sages take *lashon hara* so seriously, why they regard it as the gravest of sins, and why they believe that the entire phenomenon of *tzara'at* in people, mildew in

clothes and houses, was G-d's way of making it public and stigmatized. Language is not to be taken lightly. For it was through language that G-d created the natural world, and through language that we create and sustain our social world. The holiness of our language (or lack thereof) determines to a great extent what our social world will be like.

120 Years Of Bias At The New York Times: An Interview with Professor Jerold Auerbach*(Continued from page 4)*

column again he would be fired. So Friedman's bias was on the table even before he became the Times' Jerusalem bureau chief. And afterwards, he relied on a very, very narrow source base, including a liberal rabbi named David Hartman and Yaron Ezrahi, who was a political scientist and very active in peace organizations.

JP: Writing a fair article is not terribly hard if you try. In recent years, though, The New York Times' articles on Israel are so biased that it seems like their writers don't even bother trying. How do you explain that? Are they knowingly lying or just shockingly ignorant?

JA: I think the Times, ideologically, has moved to the left, and it shows in who its correspondents are. They don't see themselves as getting the story wrong.

President's Message*(Continued from page 2)*

We hope Ezekiel's vision will occur within our lifetime, but we don't need to wait for this Miracle (or even next Pesach for that matter) before returning to God. The Synagogue is here for this purpose every Shabbat and Yom Tov.

I am sorry to say that although this year, the first two days of the Passover Holiday Morning Services were on Sat-Sun, we had great difficulty in getting a minyan on either of the days. Without putting on the hat of "Shul Cop" I would like to dust off my old line that without some commitment on our part to Prayer in the form of Synagogue Worship we could just as well hold all our meetings in the local bowling alley.

There are also our popular Talmud and Judaism 101 classes to

help us figure out why attendance at Services is so important. I urge you to experience the joy found in simple Prayer at what is universally acknowledged as the "friendliest Congregation in the area" – the Whitestone Hebrew Centre. It's a way to acknowledge who we are, no matter how far we may have strayed from God's original command that we be to Him a "Nation of Priests. I invite you all to visit Him in His house as free men and women to return the favor.

B' Shalom
Bruce Berenson

Transportation to and from WHC now available!

Now you no longer have to worry about a ride to and from shul. The Whitestone Hebrew Centre has set up an account with Four Two's. This was set up for our members that are no longer able to drive or find it difficult to drive to shul. The way it works is simple: Four Two's has a list of members' names that will be using this service. You need to call Four Two's, preferably 2 days in advance, 1 day in advance the latest, and tell them your name, address, what time you need to be picked up, and if you will need them to come back to shul to take you home, at what time. You can use this service anytime you need to come to shul, whether it be for services, an event, or a meeting. The tip is already included, so there is no cost to you! Four Two's phone # is 718 746-2222.



If you think you are not on the list, please call the shul office to ensure that you are.

Sharon Samet

April Sisterhood & Family Shabbat Sponsors



Rabbi and Rebbetzin Axelman in honor of Alu's birthday
and in memory of the birthday of
the Rabbi's father, Joseph B. Axelman

The Berenson and Slutsky Families in memory of
the yahrzeit of Alvin Slutsky

Ron Kohn in honor of Hannah's birthday

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Sisterhood in memory of Gertrude Schneider

Patricia Smolker in honor of her birthday and in memory of
the yahrzeit of her mother Goldie Smolker

Michele Splain in memory of the yahrzeit of her mother,
Eva Splain and in memory of her brother, Dr. Shepard Splain

The Young family in honor of Jori's birthday

May Happy Birthdays



Binny Axelman

Melvin Mesnick

Paula Hanover

Kathryn Safran

Martina Osdoby

Zachary Skow

*Editor's note: If your birthday should be listed on this page and is not, please call the office at (718) 767-1500 and give them your date of birth.

Thank you.

SCHEDULE OF WHC CLASSES

(led by Rabbi Axelman)

Sundays @12:45 PM -- Talmud Class

The goal of this class is to reintroduce people to the wisdom of the Talmud. As Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz writes in Essential Talmud:

"The Talmud is a very hard book to define ... from content to style, every definition is incomplete or contradictory. ... The Talmud is completely unique--a book that has no parallel anywhere.... If the bible is the cornerstone of Judaism, then the Talmud is the central pillar, soaring up from the foundations and supporting the entire spiritual and intellectual edifice.... In many ways the Talmud is the most important book in Jewish culture, the backbone of creativity and of national life. No other work has had a comparable influence on the theory and practice of Jewish life, shaping spiritual content and serving as a guide to conduct.... [t]he Jewish people have always been keenly aware that their continued survival and development depend on study of the Talmud.

Mondays @7:30 PM -- Judaism 101

Explores Your Questions: Why?... Because...

A class at which you can ask any question, dispel misconceptions, and discuss any current issues and concerns relating to Jews, Judaism or Israel, in a non-judgmental, open and candid forum. This is an ideal venue for individuals who wish to discuss basic principles of Judaism and express their views, questions, etc.

Refreshments are served at every class.

Your donations are greatly appreciated.

New WHC Phone System



Due to the increase of business being conducted more on the internet than in the past, coupled with our new virtual phone system, we no longer need someone staffing the office during the day. Anyone phoning the shul will be presented with options to hear hours of services, directions, or to be connected to me or the Rabbi. If you are not connected directly to me or the Rabbi, please leave a message and your call will be returned in a timely manner. When the calendar states that the office is closed, that means that messages may not be returned on the same day. When you need to conduct business in shul in person, please leave that in your message and we will arrange to meet you.

Sharon Samet



Thank you for Donations -- April 2019

Yahrzeit

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In Memory of Abraham Weinstein

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In memory of Trudy Messinger

Stan Simon

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Help us to Direct your Checks and Mail to the Correct Person



When mailing checks and other notes or correspondence to WHC, if for Sisterhood, please write in the lower left hand corner of the envelope: ATTN: SISTERHOOD (and if you know the name of the Sisterhood member, please include it as well).

If you are enclosing multiple checks and/or correspondence in the same envelope, and they are for different people, please include a note as to the distribution of the checks and/or correspondence. This will ensure that the office will direct your checks, notes and/or correspondence to the proper person in a timely fashion.

Donations are accepted by Credit Card in one of the following ways:

Option 1: Phone our office and your card information can be given by phone



Option 2: Come into our office and your credit card can be read by a chip-enabled card reader



Option 3: Request an emailed invoice from our office, which will include a "pay now" button



Option 4: Go to our website at www.whitestonehebrewcenter.org, and click on the "Donate" button



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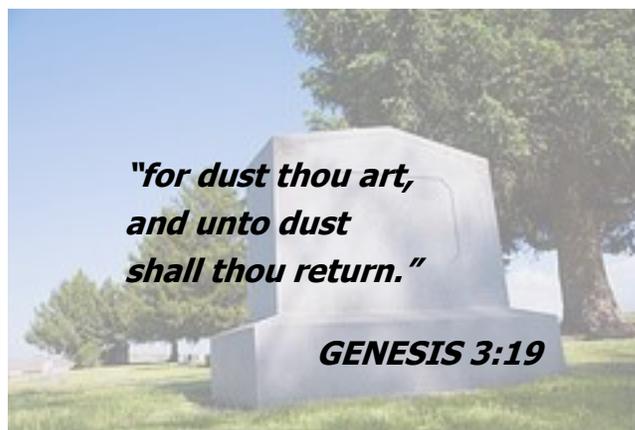
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**Cemetery Committee Chair
at WHC (718) 767-1500**



***"for dust thou art,
and unto dust
shall thou return."***

GENESIS 3:19

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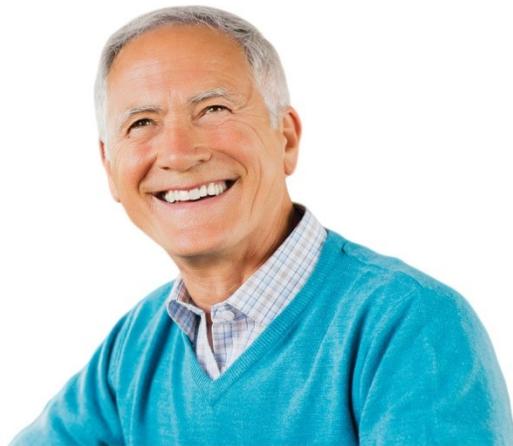
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