Whitestone Hebrew Centre Bulletin

12-45 Clintonville St. Whitestone, NY 11357





שלום

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President's Message



In our Jewish year of 5787, Chanukah comes to an end on the secular month/day of December 12, almost two weeks before one of the most significant days on the Christian calendar. It's at this time of year our non- Jewish friends explore - as evidenced by the plethora of TV melodramas (the Hallmark Channel has a seemingly endless binge-fest on the topic) the search for the true meaning of their holiday season. In these dramatizations the plot generally boils down to the realization that it's the positive relationships and interactions with our fellow human beings that really count and that which is material and temporal can never bring us that same level of fulfillment (spiritual or otherwise). I may be oversimplifying the above - but that's because my topic is parallel, an exploration into the true meaning of Chanukah. Let me briefly digress to say I lost count of how many have asked me if the real spelling is Chanukah, Channukah, Hanukah, Hanukkah and so on (the Oxford English Dictionary states 24 different spellings). My (mostly) patient answer is along the lines of "however you like, as it's a Hebrew word - you can only misspell it in Hebrew". In truth the correct Hebrew spelling is crucial because of its translation as "dedication", referring to the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem by the Maccabees after it was reclaimed from the Seleucid (Syrian-Greek) Empire in the 2nd century BCE. What we were taught in Hebrew school was mostly centered on the miracle based portion of the rededication - a single day's worth of oil in the Temple's menorah burning for eight days. I'll take it for granted that actually happened but there's so much more to the story we don't focus on - the similarities in cruelty of the Greek King Antiochus to Egypt's Pharaoh, his desire to be worshipped as a god with his supporters attempting to force the Hebrews to make sacrilegious offerings to the King and other Greek deities, the defeat of a massive collection of armies by the much smaller Hebrew forces led by Judah Maccabee, finally culminating in conquest of Jerusalem and rededication of the Temple in 164 BCE. Here we learn the twin concepts of religious freedom (the Maccabees' struggle for the right to practice one's faith without oppression), coupled with hope and perseverance (in spite of overwhelming odds, the Jewish people preserved their culture and identity). Really, I can imagine the Chanukah story resonating with other peoples and cultures when considering its theme of rededication, speaking to the universal human need to rebuild after destruction, whether in Israel, or anywhere else affected by conflict.

Chag Urim sameach (Happy Festival of Lights)

Bruce Berenson



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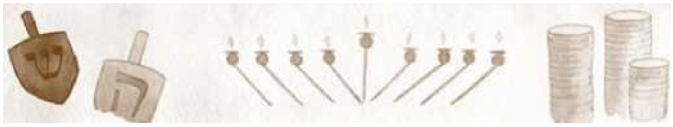
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FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY





THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

Chanukah

Chanuka begins this year with sunset on Friday, December 4th and ends with nightfall on Saturday, December 12th. Chanuka is the only Jewish holiday that continues from one Jewish month to the next, beginning on the 25th day of Kislev and continuing into the month of Tevet. According to the Talmud, Chanukah commemorates the miracle that occurred when, after being victorious in war against the Greeks, the Jews found only enough ritually pure oil in the Temple to light the Menorah for one day, but miraculously the Menorah burned for eight days, until more oil was found or processed.

On the weeknights of Chanuka, it is best to light the candles 20 minutes or so after sunset and they should remain lit for at least 30 minutes. However, on Shabbat it is forbidden to light the candles after sunset. The proper procedure, therefore, is to light the Chanukah candles before lighting Shabbat candles at the proper time. The candles should remain lit for approximately 90 minutes. On Saturday night, the candles should NOT be lit until dark, approximately 40 minutes after sundown.

The prevalent custom is to light the Menorah in a window that faces the street. Each night we add one candle, the first night, 1, the second night, 2, etc. The shamash (the extra candle) is lit because it is forbidden to derive benefit from the candles of Chanuka; we can only derive benefit from the light provided by the shamash.

On the first night we recite three blessings (B'rachot) that are found in the Siddur/ prayer book, including "Shehechiyanu", the blessing we recite the first time we observe any Mitzvah. On subsequent nights we recite only two blessings. It is customary for everyone in the house to light their own Menorah. After lighting the Menorah, "Haneirot Hallalu" and "Maoz Tzur" are sung.

Various possible origins are cited for the custom of playing dreidel on Chanukah, including that the Jews, when prohibited from studying Torah, would pretend to be gambling with a dreidel when caught by the Greeks. The letters on the dreidel: Nun, Gimmel, Heh, and Shin stand for "Nes Gadol Haya Sham" or a great miracle happened there, referring to Israel.

Another widespread custom is to eat latkes, as they are fried in oil, to commemorate the miracle that happened with oil. In Israel today, they eat "sufganiyot", jelly donuts, instead.

Wishing you all a Chanukah Samayach—a happy and healthy Chanukah!

For lyrics (Hebrew, English and Transliterated) and audio of the Brachot and Ma'oz Tzur, please visit our website at www.whitestonehebrewcenter.org/chanuka.

SISTERHOOD

Sisterhood Message

Sisterhood wishes everyone a Happy and Healthy Thanksgiving and a Joyful Chanukah. Please do a mitzvah and call our senior members to ask if they need anything or just to chat for a while. Hearing a friendly voice will lift their spirits.



Prayer for the Sick



If you would like a name mentioned in the weekly Prayer for the Sick, please email the name of the sick person and the name of that person's mother (if available) to the Rabbi, at rabbiaxelman@outlook.com. If you do not have access to email, please leave a message on the WHC office voice mail. There are names on our list for a very long time and we have no way of knowing who are still in need of prayers.

Thank you.

Rabbi Axelman

Prayer Book Fund October 2026

Inscribed Prayer Book in memory of Lillian Bitman, mother of Marlene Fox
Inscribed Prayer Book in memory of Jerome Strassler
Sisterhood WHC

In memory of Lillian Bitman, mother of Marlene Fox
in memory of Jerome Strassler
Patricia Smolker

Oct. — Dec. Happy Birthdays



Bruce Berenson	Sharon Samet
Meryl Hoffmann	Shirley Smith
Egon Mermelstein	Tricia Smith

* 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 us your date of birth. Thank you.



Mazel tov to Bruce and Lee Berenson
on the birth of their granddaughter,
Alexandria Arielle, to Kayla and Mike.
May they continue to have nachas from their family!





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.

Checks for the above funds should be made payable to "Sisterhood of WHC".



Recent positive news generated by Israel, of which we can all be proud. (Articles below are excerpts of originals only)



Doctors at Beilinson Medical Center perform Israel's first robot-assisted lung transplant

Nov 2, 2026 Israel National News



For the first time in Israel, surgeons at Clalit-Beilinson Hospital have successfully performed a robotic-assisted lung transplant using the da Vinci surgical system, without the need for the extensive chest opening required in conventional lung transplantation. Through several small incisions in the chest, the surgical team used robotic technology to connect the transplanted lung to the patient's blood vessels and airways. The innovative approach eliminates the need for the traditional technique, which involves cutting through the chest bone, fully opening the chest cavity and spreading the ribs to access the lungs. Lung transplantation is one of the most complex surgical procedures, typically lasting between eight and ten hours. With conventional surgery, opening the chest can cause severe postoperative pain, shallow breathing and difficulty clearing lung secretions. These complications increase the risk of infections and contribute to a prolonged and challenging recovery that can last several weeks. The new minimally invasive approach is expected to significantly improve surgical outcomes and shorten recovery time. This technique significantly improves postoperative pain management, preserves muscles and nerves, and enables patients to breathe, cough and clear their lungs more effectively following surgery. These are critical factors in dramatically reducing the risk of pneumonia, infections and other recovery-related complications. The success of this preliminary operation helped pave the way for the robotic-assisted lung transplant performed approximately one month later.

Breakthrough at Jerusalem hospital: 4 pacemakers implanted in new technique for 1st time

Nov 1, 2026 Israel National News



Four pacemaker implantation procedures using an advanced technique have been performed for the first time in Israel at Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem. The technique is designed to improve electrical coordination between the heart's two atria and reduce cardiac arrhythmias. The hospital reported that all four procedures were completed successfully. The new technique, introduced at the Integrated Heart Center under the direction of Professor Michael Glikson, involves positioning an electrode in an area known as "Bachmann's bundle," a natural electrical conduction pathway connecting the heart's right and left atria. Unlike conventional pacing methods, in which the electrode is generally positioned in the right atrial appendage, the new placement is intended to allow electrical signals to travel more rapidly and in a more coordinated manner between the two atria, reducing delays in the activation of the left atrium. Hospital officials explained that improved synchronization between the atria may reduce atrial arrhythmias and alleviate symptoms of heart failure. The technique may be particularly suitable for patients suffering from heart rhythm disorders or delays in electrical conduction between the atria, depending on an individualized medical assessment.





Medical miracle: Groundbreaking brain surgery brings mother of four back to consciousness

Oct 1, 2026 Israel National News



A 33-year-old mother of four has regained full consciousness after spending months in a coma following severe, treatment-resistant epileptic seizures, in a rare and complex case treated at Hadassah Ein Kerem Medical Center in Jerusalem. The woman had been healthy and living an active life, working full-time and completing her academic studies with honors. On the way to the hospital, she began suffering violent seizures. Doctors determined that A. was suffering from prolonged, severe epileptic seizures caused by abnormal electrical activity in the brain. Her family was subsequently advised to transfer her to Hadassah Ein Kerem, where a multidisciplinary team of specialists in neurology, neurosurgery, intensive care and anesthesia took on the complex case. After weeks of evaluation, doctors decided to perform an advanced invasive brain mapping procedure. Thin electrodes were implanted deep in her brain to precisely identify the sources of the abnormal electrical activity. The mapping revealed an extensive network spanning both sides of the brain that was driving the seizures. Based on the findings, the team decided to implant a deep brain stimulation (DBS) system. The surgery, led by senior neurosurgeon and epilepsy surgery specialist Dr. Sami Hyman, involved implanting four permanent electrodes deep in the brain. The system delivers precisely controlled electrical stimulation intended to disrupt the abnormal activity and stabilize the neural networks. Within days of activating the system, doctors observed a dramatic reduction in the abnormal electrical activity. Under continuous monitoring, the sedation medications were gradually discontinued. Then came the breakthrough moment: A. opened her eyes.



SCHEDULE OF WHC CLASSES

(led by Rabbi Axelman)
Sundays @ Time TBA -- Talmud Class
Mondays @ 7:00 PM -- Judaism 101

Please check our website
for updated days and times of classes.
Currently classes are being streamed on zoom
and not being held in person.

(See page 7 for what you've been missing!)

Condolences

To Marlene Fox and family
on the loss of her mother, Lillian Bittman

To Norma Strassler and family
on the loss of her husband, Jerome

המקום ינחם אתכם
בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

May their memories be a blessing



Thank you for Donations -- September — November 2026

Yahrzeit

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General Donations

Yom Kippur break fast
Meryl Hoffman

In memory of Jerry Strassler
Ellis Rosenblatt

Happy & healthy New Year to all
Sidney Rothstein

In appreciation of the Whitestone Hebrew Centre
Dennis and Jonathan Grossman

In appreciation of aliyot on Shabbat and the High Holidays
David Yerushalmi

DONATIONS

WHC Classes—what are you missing?



For those who do not attend the Judaism 101 Class at WHC, it presents a rare opportunity to ask any question about any topic related to Judaism or Israel, with no prior knowledge needed or expected. In our recent classes we have discussed the afterlife, priestly lineage for women, anti-Semitism in contemporary American society, biblical kingship and monarchical restrictions, biblical narratives as history or allegory, calendar dualities in the State of Israel, Christian churches and religious art in Halacha, consciousness and divine omniscience, the permissibility of curses in Jewish law, digital currencies (Bitcoin) in Jewish jurisprudence, divine



names and the attributes of justice and mercy, free will versus divine sovereignty, the Haredi military conscription controversy, the Jewish Defense League (JDL) and self-defense philosophy, military camp sanctity and rules of engagement, Noachide commandments and righteous gentiles, rabbinic judicial authority, suffering and theodicy, Talmudic biological claims and modern science, virtual minyans and digital presence... and more. This class continues to be held on Zoom, providing the maximum amount of convenience in attending. We look forward to a growing attendance—everyone is welcome!



The definitive spelling!

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