

Whitestone Hebrew Centre Bulletin

12-45 Clintonville St. Whitestone, NY 11357



שלום

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Volume XXX No. 7

March 2021

Adar — Nissan 5781



Schedule of Passover Services

Sunday, March 28th — 9:30 AM

Monday, March 29th — 9:30 AM

Saturday, April 3rd — 9:30 AM & 7:45 PM

Sunday, April 4th — (Yizkor) 9:30 AM

President's Message

In a matter of a few weeks, we will be celebrating Pesach – for many of us our favorite Jewish Holiday. Personally, it connects me back to my earliest memories of the warmth in family gathering at my Grandparents house in Williamsburg (Brooklyn not VA). 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 insisted) 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.

Although this year resembles Pesach 5780 in that we are still in Covid lock down, I would once again like to dust off my old line that without some commitment on our part to Prayer in the form of Worship (in-person or online) we could just as well hold our gatherings in the local bowling alley (although if you are attending services online you could very well be sitting in Whitestone Lanes or one of few other remaining shrines to that venerable sport). And this year again - to my great disappointment, there is no Shabbat Chol ha-Moed, so we will not be reading the intermediate Shabbat Haftarah describing 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

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Overview of Pesach

by Rabbi Axelman



Following is a brief overview of the observance of Pesach: Per several verses in the biblical Book of

Exodus, one is not allowed to eat, possess or derive any benefit from *chametz* during Pesach. *Chametz* is any food containing flour that has come into contact with water, and not baked quickly (e.g., bread, cake, cookies, pasta, pretzels, etc.). In most years, a ritual "search" for *chametz* is conducted in the home on the evening before Pesach, and any *chametz* that is found is burned the next morning, along with any other *chametz* in one's possession. This year, since Pesach begins with the end of Shabbat on Saturday night, March 27th, this search for Chametz is done on Thursday evening, March 25th. Some of my fondest childhood memories are being awakened very early by my father, who before leaving for work, would let us all go into the backyard in our pajamas to burn the chametz in our garbage can. As fire departments have become less enamored of this custom, to my knowledge, in most communities special arrangements are made with the fire department to burn all of the community's *chametz* at one time and in one place. After burning the *chametz*, a short declaration is made, through which one gives up ownership of and nullifies any *chametz* that s/he may not be aware is in his or her possession. The first Seder this year is celebrated Saturday night, March 27th. Since we are already in Daylight Savings Time by then, nightfall is quite late and it is preferable not to start the Seder

until nightfall; if that is not possible, one should try to eat matzah after nightfall.



The second Seder is celebrated Sunday night March 28th. The Seder is specifically designed to communicate to children the story of our exodus from Egypt. (Sadly, if the current situation with Covid-19 does not change, many grandparents and great-grandparents will again be denied the opportunity to share this holiday and the Seder with their families.) The Seder table is set up to include things not normally on a table so as to stir the curiosity of children. Since its inception, the Seder focused on answering the four questions, known as "*mah nishtana*", traditionally recited by the youngest attendee. In the place of bread, matzah is eaten as part of the Seder. One reason for the commandment to eat matzah at the Seder is to remember that the Jews were rushed on their way out of Egypt and therefore their bread did not have time to rise. Matzah is also referred to as the bread of the poor man, commemorating the years of slavery that preceded the exodus. Bitter herbs, known as *maror*, are eaten to remember the sad and difficult times of slavery. Four cups of wine are drunk, symbolizing the wording of God's promise to the Jews while they were in Egypt. It is customary to recline while eating and drinking at the Seder, to re-enact the freedom that was gained with the Exodus. A well-known custom is the "stealing" of the

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SISTERHOOD

Sisterhood Message

Sisterhood wishes everyone a Zissen Pesach. 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.

Shalach Manot

Thank you to all who participated in our annual Purim mitzvah known as Shalach Manot. Although this year our Shalach Manot fundraiser was different, everyone who sent and received Shalach Manot shares in this mitzvah. This Purim mitzvah is only surpassed by the giving of charity on this holiday. Yasher Koach to everyone.



Lilian Gradofsky
Patricia Smolker
Shalach Manot Co-Chairs

Thank You For Additional Shalach Manot Donations

Bonnie Buxbaum
Naomi and Leon Gukowsky
Meryl Hoffmann
Ellen Mishkin
Shirley and Aaron Safran
Zula Schibuk
Norma and Jerry Strassler

Chai Fund - March 2021

Mazel Tov to Ellis Rosenblatt for his "Special" birthday

- Patricia Smolker

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".

March Happy Birthdays



Evelyn Apter	Saul Osdoby
Jill Dee	Ellis Rosenblatt
Naomi Gukowsky	Joshua Samet
Danielle Hoffmann	Madison Skow
Gloria Keller	Seena Slutsky
Ronald Kohn	

*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.

Best Wishes for a speedy and complete recovery

Barbara Friedman



Evelyn Apter



Megilla reading at WHC in the age of Corona and Zoom—March 25th
(Photos courtesy of Jeffrey Young)

What is “Matzah”?

By Rabbi Axelman



As I have said many times, I never claim to know what many words mean, whether Hebrew or English, simple or sophisticated. Today’s word is Matzah. I am pretty convinced that most people define Matzah as a “thin, crisp unleavened bread”, as I found on google or “flat, cracker-like bread” as I found on Wikipedia.

But is this true? On many occasions (including the torah Portion we read on Saturday, February 24th, the Torah refers to “unleavened loaves mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers mixed with oil”, using the Hebrew word *matzot*. It is clear that the word matzah is in no way referring to a wafer or cracker-like bread. Matzah simply means bread that was not allowed to become leavened or chametz. It is also very clear that in the time of the Torah and throughout the time of the Holy Temples, matzah was baked as thick as any loaf of bread we have today.

By the time of the writing of the Code of Jewish Law in the 16th century it was accepted that in order to make sure matzah did not become leavened we should be careful not to bake matzah

thicker than three inches or so. Even much closer to our times, Halachic authorities held that soft matzah of at least several millimeters thickness was Kosher for Passover use, at the very least post-facto. Some are convinced that the “sandwich” of matzah and maror that we eat at the Seder was a wrap and therefore had to be made using soft matzah.



Personally, I was exposed to and partook of soft matzahs many years ago when observing a Seder at the home of my teacher, a kabbalist in Jerusalem.

The custom of matzahs in the current form dates back only several hundred years at most, according to the sources I have found. Seemingly, we arrived at this point because people stopped baking matzah on Pesach itself (for practical or Halachic reasons) and the only matzah that would stay “fresh” was the cracker-like matzah that we use most commonly today.

For more info on this topic see Chabad.org

President’s Message

(Continued from page 1)

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.

We hope Ezekiel’s vision will occur within our lifetime, but we don’t need to wait for this Miracle (or even next Pesach) before returning to God. Our Synagogue is here for this purpose every Shabbat and Yom Tov (come in person or come online). There is also the bonus of our Judaism 101 classes (Monday nights, 7:00P - online) with our Rabbi Axelman to help guide us

in figuring out why this is so necessary. 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 Gods original command that we be to Him a "Nation of Priests. We should pledge to visit Him (by whatever means you feel comfortable) at His house as free men and women to return the many favors He grants to us each day.



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



Israel Ranked 7th Most Innovative Country In The World For 2021

February 11, 2021

Israel has been ranked seventh among the most innovative countries in the world for 2021, according to the Bloomberg Innovation Index published last week. The Bloomberg Index ranks the 60 most innovative economies in the world each year on the basis of seven criteria, including spending on

research and development according to GDP, registered patents, and the number of companies specializing in the high-tech sector.



[i24NEWS](#)

Innovative Israeli Corona Drug Cured 96% of Patients in Phase One Test

By David Israel - 23 Shevat 5781 – February 4, 2021

[JewishPress.com](#)



On Thursday night, Kan 11 News announced the development of an innovative drug manufactured at Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv that cured over 96% of the patients who received it. This was the new technology's first clinical phase testing on humans. EXO-CD24 is an innovative, targeted drug that was in development for many years as a cure for cancer in the lab of Prof. Nadir Arber at the Soroka Medical Center. It

may now turn out to be a life-saving drug for moderate to severe Corona patients to prevent their deterioration to a severe condition. So far, the innovative drug has been tried with great success on 30 critical patients, in 29 of whom their medical condition improved within two to three days, and most of them were discharged home within a few days. The 30th patient took longer to recover. The drug is taken once a day for five days.

Israeli tank protection system has transformed land warfare

February 18, 2021

[ins.org](#)

When Michael Lurie, vice president at Rafael Advanced Defense Systems and head of its Maneuver Systems Directorate, recalls the first time that the company's Trophy system went into action, he gets goosebumps. The year was 2011, and an Israel Defense Forces tank was on the border with Gaza. In a recorded encounter, tank crew members were conducting a lookout and reported over the army's communications system that they had spotted a figure wandering around a structure in the Strip. "And then suddenly, an alert went off, and a missile appears. The soldiers didn't understand what had happened. They tell one another, 'We've been fired on; we're supposed to be dead.' The Trophy active protection system, which defends armored vehicles against incoming anti-tank missiles and rocket-propelled grenades, had just made history, successfully intercepting a threat in mid-air. Since 2011, Trophy has amassed more than one million operational hours and has saved many lives in combat. It is today installed on an ever-growing number of IDF Merkava tanks and Namer-type armored personnel carriers. The system started out as a revolutionary defensive layer for armored vehicles, but Lurie made clear that as time went by, it

has become an essential aspect of offense as well. Using advanced radars, Trophy is able to identify the source of fire and intercept the threat. Since tank shells travel faster than missiles, there is also sufficient time for the tank to return fire, explaining how Trophy significantly boosts offense, not just defense, on the battlefield. Trophy's advanced sensors, which also now include electro-optic sensors (sensors that convert light into electrical signals), mean that tanks and tank formations now have a heightened understanding of events on the battlefield in real-time, or as the military calls this, situational awareness. When multiple numbers of Trophy systems link up with the military's command network, a new level of situational awareness is formed. "The tank force can create a significant leap ahead in some of its capabilities; this is what we are currently working on," said Lurie.



(continued on next page)

Israelis Create First-of-its-Kind Personalized Schizophrenia Treatment

By Yakir Benzion Jan 17, 2021

unitedwithisrael.org



Researchers at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) have developed a novel method for instantly and accurately monitoring blood levels of the anti-psychotic drug, clozapine, using a blood drop from a finger prick.

The method, developed by Dr. Hadar Ben-Yoav, Department of Biomedical Engineering and Ilse Katz Institute for Nanoscale Science and Technology, BGU, is based on an electrochemical microsensor which enables, for the first time, clozapine detection in one drop of finger-pricked whole blood samples of schizophrenia patients without using any pretreatment steps. Clozapine is considered the most effective anti-psychotic medication for schizophrenia and the only anti-psychotic currently approved for treatment-resistant

schizophrenia but is also associated with harsh side effects. Both its efficacy and its side effects are strongly correlated with blood concentration levels, which can differ up to 20-fold between individuals prescribed identical doses, and can be greatly affected by age, gender, drug interactions and other parameters. Despite the importance of monitoring clozapine blood levels, the existing monitoring scheme is burdensome and involves frequent invasive blood draws, leading to sub-optimal treatment efficacy due to the poor ability to titrate its dose for maximal therapeutic benefit while minimizing side effects. As a result, clozapine is still one of the most underutilized evidence-based treatments in the field of mental health. Dr. Ben-Yoav's team has invented a miniaturized microelectrode sensor that is able to accurately and immediately detect clozapine levels in a microliter-sample of whole blood such as obtained by a simple finger prick.

Israeli stroke therapy granted FDA breakthrough device status

February 15, 2021

jpost.com

Israeli BrainQ's artificial intelligence stroke therapy, which reduces disability following strokes, was given Breakthrough Device designation by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the start-up announced last week. The designation will allow BrainQ to work with the FDA to expedite the development and clearance process of BrainQ's device. Some 50 to 70% of those who suffer a stroke experience chronic disability in the aftermath of these events, according to BrainQ. BrainQ's AI-powered, electromagnetic field therapy aims to reduce disability caused by stroke through a non-invasive therapy. BrainQ's therapy is designed to treat patients in the weeks and months following a stroke. Currently approved interventions for reducing disability

following a stroke are only relevant in the first few hours following the stroke and only 5% of stroke victims reach the hospital in time to benefit from these, according to BrainQ, whose therapy aims to fill this gap. BrainQ's therapy is based on biological insights from brainwaves and uses machine learning algorithms that translate into frequency-tuned, low intensity electromagnetic fields. The therapy is delivered through a wearable device that is connected to the cloud. It is designed so that it is a portable treatment that can be used in the patient's home.



Israeli 'Zero Touch' Tech Keeps Hands Sterile in Any Environment

Feb 17, 2021

unitedwithisrael.org



An Israeli startup has developed a smart device that allows automatic fitting and removal of latex gloves for medical workers, reducing infections and saving millions of wasted products. Latex gloves are used by

health workers around the world for all sorts of medical procedures, including those involving Covid-19. But did you

know that millions of latex gloves are thrown out before they are even used due to contamination? Thanks to an innovative Israeli startup, a new device will automatically fit and remove gloves to ensure sterile medical procedures, prevent transmission of bacteria and prevent waste. Incredible!

Israeli Researchers Replace Painful Biopsies With Simple Blood Draws

December 24, 2020

unitedwithisrael.org

Biopsies for cancer are extremely painful and invasive, posing a danger to the patient and limiting medical professionals in their diagnostic resources since the biopsies can only really be performed once. Thanks to Hebrew University scientists, a blood test may replace the invasive procedures. Dr. Ronen

Sadeh, Hebrew University's senior research associate and CEO of Senseera Health, breaks down this incredible technology. (Click on link above for video)





Thank you for Donations -- December 2020 & January 2021

Yahrzeit

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 Jeffrey Young



FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

(Continued from page 2)

Afikoman, a broken piece of matzah which is hidden during the Seder, challenging the children to find it and return it in exchange for a present. The Haggada, the written guide to the Seder, consists in large part of answers to the child's questions, relating the Exodus story through quotes and commentaries on the Biblical story. The seventh day of Pesach commemorates the splitting of the sea, which allowed the Jews to escape the pursuit of the Egyptians. The Torah Portion read on that day relates this story. In many synagogues, especially in Israel, this day is celebrated by large crowds gathering

and singing the whole night through, commemorating the song that was recited after the splitting of the sea. The schedule of Holiday services is printed on the front page of this bulletin and as we have done for many months now, those comfortable attending Services in person are encouraged to do so. Those not comfortable may at least observe the Services on Zoom. Best wishes to all for a Chag Kasher V'samayach--a Happy, Healthy and Kosher Pesach!

- Rabbi Axelman



WHC BULLETIN BY EMAIL!



If you would like to receive a copy of the bulletin by email, in addition to the printed version, please send your email address to haxelman@gmail.com and let us know. The email version appears in color and will reach you several days before the hard copy. Thank you!

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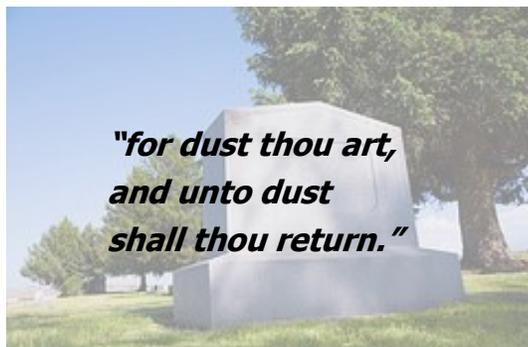
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Whitestone Hebrew Centre Congregational Cemetery

Burial Plots Available
New Montefiore Cemetery
Pinelawn, Long Island
Contact: Ronald Kohn
Cemetery Committee Chair
at WHC (718) 767-1500



SCHEDULE OF WHC CLASSES

(led by Rabbi Axelman)

Mondays @7:00 PM -- Judaism 101 Explore Your Questions



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