

Whitestone Hebrew Centre Bulletin

12-45 Clintonville St. Whitestone, NY 11357



שלום

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Volume XXIX No. 10

June 2020

Sivan — Tammuz 5780



WHC
wishes you and yours
a Happy and Healthy
Summer!



We hope to see you back at services
as soon as the Covid-19 crisis safely allows.
See Page 5 for the Harvard School of Health study
on prayers' benefits to your health—and not just spiritually!



Family Shabbat
June 20th @ 10:00 AM
We look forward to seeing everyone there!
(If allowed by Covid 19)



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Sunday June 21st

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FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

As I write these words (May 25th) we are about two and a half months into the lockdown phase of the Covid-19 pandemic. Everyone is aware of the confusion surrounding its nature and effects. Did it come from animals or from a lab? How exactly is it spread between humans? Can the virus survive on surfaces and if so, for how long? Can those who have had the virus continue to pass it on? Can asymptomatic people pass on the virus? Is there a reliable test for the virus? If so, how often would one have to be tested for fear of being re-exposed? Will there be another wave of this pandemic, possibly in the fall? Not to mention the controversies over nursing homes being forced to admit or readmit those with the virus, what services are "essential", the inconsistencies in the rules between the various States, etc. As of this moment, Israel survived quite well, though it took many drastic steps in locking down its population.

Everyone is aware of the costs of the lockdown with the almost 40 million unemployed with its ensuing rise in mental health problems substance abuse problems, suicide, and more. People have lost tens of thousands of dollars or more in the stock market. Some people's plans for their futures are now shattered because of these losses.

Many people have been affected by deaths directly caused by the virus. I am aware personally of several people who have died because no one was able to visit them in hospitals or homes and their level of care went down precipitously. Funerals have been off limits to many family members and friends. Shiva takes place on zoom, by phone or not at all.

Synagogues and other houses of worship have now been closed for more than two

months. Some synagogue organizations seem ready to open immediately, albeit with caution and social distancing. Some such organizations are much more cautious, waiting at least 14 days after being allowed by the government, to actually open their doors.

The ultra-orthodox and by association, all Jews in this area have been stung by attacks on them by the Mayor, deservedly or not. Areas of Jewish Law (Halacha) are being challenged. For what do we need a minyan? Can a minyan be held on zoom? Can a minyan be held from balconies next to each other or maybe only in backyards with people standing 6 feet apart? Even if so, can someone have an aliya and stand next to the one reading from the Torah? Even if we open our shuls, if we must maintain distance between congregants, who can attend and who cannot? How to decide?

Unfortunately, plagues and pandemics have a long history and concomitantly, in Jewish Law. The Talmud (redacted about 1500 years ago) relates "If there is plague in the city, gather your feet," i.e., limit the time you spend out of the house. Were they aware of contagion in those times, and if so, by what mechanism? Germ theory has only been accepted in the scientific community for about 150 years. In the Code of Jewish Law (16th century), we are advised to flee a city in which there is an epidemic, at least if possible before it gets bad.

Rabbi Akiva Eiger of Posen, among the leading Rabbis of his time, wrote in 1831 concerning an outbreak of cholera that everyone must follow the advice of the physicians. He further ordered that only small numbers pray in a synagogue at once, going so far as to recommend having government authorities police the entrance

(Continued on page 3)

SISTERHOOD

Sisterhood Message

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. Sisterhood wishes everyone a healthy and happy summer.

Sponsor a Family Shabbat , Kiddush or a Friday Night Oneg



Celebrating a birthday, anniversary,
recent achievement or observing a loved-one's Yahrzeit?

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Sponsoring a Family Shabbat, a Shabbat Kiddush
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Minimum donation - \$36.

Please contact the Centre office
at (718) 767-1500 to arrange your sponsorship.

FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

(Continued from page 2)

to enforce this. Even for the High Holidays he ordered that only 50% of the seats be in use, with some people able to attend on Rosh Hashana and the other half on Yom Kippur, to be decided by lottery.

As with everything else, nothing is new under the sun and Halacha has precedents with which it works to accommodate modern issues.

It is my sincere hope that we do not even have to consider such advice as Rabbi Eiger's for the upcoming High Holidays and that this pandemic will only exist in our rear-view mirrors.

Best wishes for everyone's good health!

Happy Summer Birthdays



June

Kayla Berenson	Alex Ratner
Max Berenson	Ashley Samet
Juliana Hakim	Yechezkel Yamen

July

Leon Gukowsky	Joseph Wolkin
---------------	---------------

August

Rabbi Steven Axelman	Morgan Rubin
Lee Berenson	Jeffrey Young
Joshua Friedman	Cheryl Wolkin
Iris Kirschner	

*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.

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)

Israel's Immunai first to map whole immune system, scores \$20m. investment

From the [Jerusalem Post](#)

By Maayan Jaffe-Hoffman May 14, 2020



A company founded by two Israeli masterminds announced on Thursday that it has built the largest proprietary data set in the world for clinical immunological data. Leveraging single-cell technologies and machine learning algorithms, Immunai says it has mapped out millions of immune

cells and their functions, which could help detect, diagnose and treat cancer and many other diseases. Cell therapies and cancer immunotherapies have revolutionized medicine in the last few years and are expected to continue to do so in the near future. However, due to the incredible complexity of the immune system, the team explained that it is prohibitively hard to predict how drugs will affect immune cells. A slight variation in cell therapy products can have a significant

influence on a patient's response to the therapy. Immunai services over a terabyte of data from a single blood sample, which is then mapped to hundreds of cell types and states to create immune profiles based on highlighting differentiated elements. The information can help answer important questions about the immune system by identifying subtle changes in cell type and state-specific expression, and can assist in distinguishing this from normal expression. "We developed the tools and know-how to help every immunology and cell therapy researcher excel at their job," Voloch said in a release. "This helps increase the speed in which drugs are developed and brought to market by elucidating their mechanisms of action and resistance." Solomon said that while the company is first focused on immunological disorders, the next step will be to leverage the database to help treat everything from Alzheimer's and heart disease to COVID-19 and any future viruses.

Israeli Hospital Kills Corona Germs with Ultraviolet Light

From [United with Israel](#)

May 18, 2020

A newly-developed Israeli system sanitizes rooms with ultraviolet light, which is deadly to COVID-19 germs but safe for patients or medical staff. As part of Israel's battle against the coronavirus, Mayanei Hayeshua Medical Center installed a system that destroys the virus in areas in which infected patients received treatment. The strategy uses ultraviolet C (UVC) light, which kills the coronavirus, but does not harm people exposed to it. While UV lights had been used previously to disinfect operating rooms, their production of dangerous

ozone molecules prevented their use in the coronavirus fight. Israel's new UVC system uses a wavelength that does



not produce ozone, making it a safe and effective sterilizing agent for patients with breathing problems.

Self-disinfecting tech could make N95 facemasks reusable

From [Israel21c.org](#)

By Brian Blum May 26,



Israeli professor's invention can essentially 'recharge' a disposable mask so it can be used again and again.

Most facemasks worn to protect against Covid-19

infection are disposable, including simple blue surgical masks and more expensive N95 filtered masks. Prof. Yair Ein-Eli, dean of the Faculty of Materials Science and Engineering at the Technion – Israel Institute of Technion, has now developed a technology that can essentially "recharge" a

disposable mask so it can be used again and again. Ein-Eli estimates that his cleaning mechanism will bump up the price of a mask just 90 cents. Disinfecting should take less than 30 minutes. While cotton masks, now becoming fashionable for the general public, could conceivably be cleaned using Ein-Eli's technology, they don't effectively filter out coronavirus particles and are not used in hospital settings. On the other hand, if N95 masks become reusable, it could blunt the shortage and make more such masks available for the public to buy.

The Real Story Behind the Covid-19 Vaccine Story -- Appreciating the Awesomeness of Our Immune System

[From aish.com](http://aish.com)

by Rabbi Avi Shafran May 23, 2020

One of the Covid-19 vaccines being studied has yielded encouraging results. That good news should yield us something too: a sense of awe at the accomplishment. Earlier this week, the biotech company Moderna, which partnered with the National Institutes of Health to develop the vaccine, announced that results of a Phase 1 clinical trial showed that eight study participants developed antibodies for the virus like those who have experienced and survived the disease. Phase 2 trials, which will involve several hundred subjects, are yet to come. But even the achievement to date is impressive. If our wonderment, however, is only at the amazing progress toward, hopefully, a successful vaccine, we will have missed the truly awe-inspiring story behind the story.

A vaccine, you likely know, works by stimulating immune cells called lymphocytes to produce antibodies, specialized protein molecules that counter the targeted antigen, or toxic invader, and thus prevent the disease it could cause from taking hold. Vaccines are made of dead or weakened antigens that can't cause an infection but nevertheless stimulate the immune system to produce the necessary antibodies. Although with time, the produced antibodies will break down, special "memory cells" remain in the body and, when the antigen is encountered again, even years later, the memory cells can produce new antibodies to fight it. This happens within our bodies constantly. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a healthy individual can produce millions of antibodies a day, fighting infections so efficiently that people never even know they were exposed to an antigen. Last year, a team of scientists at Scripps Research Institute in San Diego published results of their antibody research in the respected journal *Nature*. Based on their findings, they estimated that the human body has the potential to make a quintillion – that's one million trillion –

unique antibodies. Imagine for a moment if the workings of our immune systems were suddenly made visible to us. We would be struck dumb.

"If the stars should appear," wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson, only "one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of G-d which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile."

Our immune systems, like the stars, are usually and easily taken for granted; their very ubiquity makes it hard to fully appreciate them. But appreciating them is the privilege, indeed the duty, of every thinking, sensitive person.

Returning to this week's happy news. Is what really amazes us the technological breakthrough that could lead to an effective vaccine? Or is the true object of our astonishment and wonder the suddenly focused-upon workings of our biological processes?

[W]ith all due recognition of the great and praiseworthy efforts to create an effective vaccine for Covid-19, may they be successful, what happened this week was, in the end, a cajoling of immune systems to do... what immune systems do billions of times daily.

So our proper appreciation of the scientific knowledge we have today, and our gratitude to the scientists that used that knowledge to advance the drive for an effective vaccine should be joined by – indeed, overwhelmed by – our ultimate awe for the immune systems with which our Creator endowed us ... the true marvel lies not in the manipulation but in the manipulated, in the myriad miracles God implanted in the world He created.

(I highly recommend reading the whole article from which this is excerpted. Click on the link above to do so.)

Regularly attending religious services associated with lower risk of deaths of despair

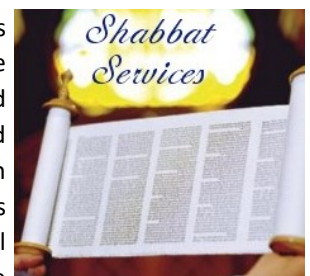
For immediate release: May 6, 2020

[Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health](https://www.hs-niederrhein.de/de/eng/News/News-Details/2020/05/06/Regularly-attending-religious-services-associated-with-lower-risk-of-deaths-of-despair)

Boston, MA – People who attended religious services at least once a week were significantly less likely to die from "deaths of despair," ... according to new research led by Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. "Despair is something that can confront anyone dealing with severe difficulties or loss. The study authors noted that religious participation may serve as an important antidote to despair and an asset for sustaining a sense of hope and meaning. They also wrote that religion may be associated with strengthened psychosocial resilience by fostering a sense of peace and positive outlook, and promoting social connectedness.

"These results are perhaps especially striking amidst the present COVID-19 pandemic," said Ying Chen, research associate and data scientist at the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard's Institute for Quantitative Social Science, and first author of the paper.

(Above is an excerpt of the full article.)





Thank you for Donations -- May 2020

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General Donations

The Smith Family to the Rabbi's Discretionary fund as a thank you for the Ben's Shabbat Dinner

Condolences

To Cheryl Rubin and family on the loss of her father, Rodger Nelson
To Sharon Samet and family on the loss of her stepfather, Stanley Simon

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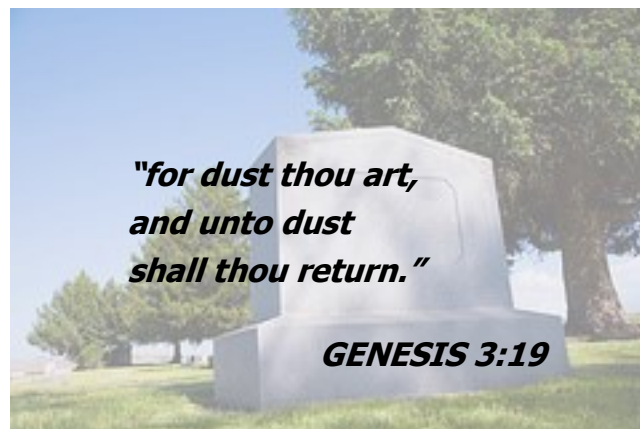
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