

Whitestone Hebrew Centre Bulletin

12-45 Clintonville St. Whitestone, NY 11357



שלום

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Volume XXXV No. 3 March — April 2025 Adar — Nissan 5785

CELEBRATE PURIM AT WHC



Megilla Reading

Thursday, March 13th -- 7:30 PM



See page 2 for more information on Purim

President's Message

It's difficult to conceive a year has passed since sitting at the keyboard composing a bulletin article on this very same subject. Purim 2025 (or 5785 by the Hebrew calendar) is nearly here, and shortly after our celebrations of that most joyous of Yom Tovs (and recovery from the excess wine consumed in observance of imbibing till we no longer distinguish between "blessed is Mordechai" from "cursed is Haman"), we begin the most stringent of all Holiday preparations for Pesach (about a

month later). They do seem to be on opposite ends of the spectrum regarding the physical and mental effort made for halachic satisfaction. Yet, I've often quoted our Rabbi who once said Purim is considered a warm up for Pesach. Considering the 4 special Shabbatot Torah readings - 2 before Purim, and 2 which connect the Yom Tovs, plus the principal subject matter (our overcoming extinction via a single catastrophic event in the

(Continued on page 4)

Schedule of Passover Services



Sunday April 13th — 9:30 AM

Monday April 14th — 9:30 AM

Saturday April 19th — 9:30 AM & 7:00 PM

Sunday April 20th — (Yizkor) 9:30 AM



Board of Trustees Meeting

Tuesday, April 29th -- 7:30 PM





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PURIM LAWS AND CUSTOMS

by Rabbi Axelman

Purim 5785 begins on the evening of Thursday, March 13th and ends at dark the next evening. Though sometimes thought of as a "minor holiday", because one is allowed to do work on that day unlike Shabbat and "major holidays", Purim celebrates the Jewish people being saved from total annihilation throughout the Persian empire. These events, described in the Megillat Esther, which we read publicly on Purim, took place some time between the 6th and 4th centuries B.C.E. (there are sources for several different time periods) before the Jews were allowed to return to Israel from exile and re-build the Temple. Considering how we appropriately mourn the various times in Jewish history when the Jewish people were subjected to slaughter and genocide, I often think that the celebration of avoiding such a catastrophe should be more deeply felt.

When Purim falls on a Friday outside of Israel, in Jerusalem and some other locations in Israel it falls on Shabbat, leading to a complicated halachic situation. Some details may be found here: [When Shushan Purim Is on Shabbat - The Three-Day Purim \(Purim Meshulash\) - Chabad.org](https://www.chabad.org/when-shushan-purim-is-on-shabbat-the-three-day-purim-purim-meshulash-chabad.org). (For further discussion please join our Judaism 101 Class on Monday evenings on zoom.)

Purim is celebrated with four Mitzvot and several customs

- (1) **Reading of the Megilla**, preferably with a minyan in a synagogue, on both the evening and the day of Purim. 
- (2) **Shalach Manot** (or *Mishloach Manot*): sending gifts of food to a friend. This Mitzvah is fulfilled by delivering two food items to at least one person, each requiring a different *Bracha* (blessing) before eating. For example, an orange and an apple are both fruit, the blessing before eating them is the same and therefore this does not fulfill the Mitzvah. Luckily, chocolate has a different blessing. Always a good thing to send along with the fruit! Same with wine or liquor. 
- (3) **Matanot La'evyonim** (gifts to the poor): this Mitzvah is more important than *Shalach Manot* but unfortunately often receives less attention. This mitzvah is fulfilled by giving monetary charity to at least two poor people. This is often accomplished collectively by giving money beforehand or on Purim to the Rabbi (or anyone so designated) who will turn the money over to poor people. 
- (4) **Seudat Purim**: having a festive meal on the day of Purim. This custom has been neglected in many communities, but is alive and well in many places in Israel as well as in the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities in N.Y. and elsewhere. The Mitzvah of getting drunk "until one does not know the difference between Haman and Mordechai" during this meal, cited in the Talmud, has been interpreted literally and has also been interpreted as drinking more than one is accustomed to and going to sleep. 
- (5) Among the other customs of Purim are making noise when Haman's name is mentioned during the reading of the megilla, eating Hamantashen and wearing masks or costumes.  

SISTERHOOD

Sisterhood President's Message

Sisterhood wishes everyone a Happy and Healthy Purim and Zissen Pesach. We all pray that there will be peace in Israel and also around the world. 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.

Naomi Gukowsky
Sisterhood President

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

Happy Birthdays

January and February

Mark Safran Jared Young
Frank Smith

March

Evelyn Apter Gloria Keller
Jill Dee Ronald Kohn
Naomi Gukowsky Ellis Rosenblatt
Danielle Hoffmann Joshua Samet

April

Alu Axelman Danielle Yamen
Hannah Kohn Jori Young
Patricia Smolker

Prayer Book Fund - December 2024

Inscribed Prayer Book in memory of Seena Slutsky

- Frank, Shirley and Tricia Smith

In memory of Seena Slutsky

- Patricia Smolker

Prayer Book Fund - January 2025

Inscribed Prayer Book in memory of Adele Rothman

-Sisterhood WHC

In memory of Adele Rothman

- Patricia Smolker

Prayer Book Fund - February 2025

Inscribed Prayer Book in memory of Herbert Barry Stern,
brother of Evelyn Apter

-Sisterhood WHC

In memory of Herbert Barry Stern, brother of Evelyn Apter

- Patricia Smolker

Thank You For Additional Shalach Manot Donations

Kathryn and Mark Safran



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".

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 Erev Pesach falls on Shabbos, the search for Chametz is performed on Thursday evening, April 10th. 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 with 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, April 12th. 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 April 13th. The Seder is specifically designed to communicate to children the story of our exodus from Egypt. 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 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 we hope to see as many of our members as possible in person. Best wishes to all for a Chag Kasher V'samayach--a Happy, Healthy and Kosher Pesach!

President's Message

(Continued from page 1)

case of Purim, vs slow annihilation by slave labor and humiliation by the Egyptians described in the Haggadah) - it does appear they are very much intertwined. But, there is a fundamental difference between the two narratives. In chapter 9 of Megillat Esther (after we've finally exhausted ourselves stomping and yelling to blot out the spoken name of the evil Haman), we read of the province's Jews organizing and arming themselves to fight for their lives, killing over 75 thousand of their enemies. We've noted in the past the curious lack of G-d's Name appearing anywhere in the story - although His Hand is clearly behind the scenes throughout. The Hebrews fought

and won by their own effort. Compare this with the Pesach saga's slaughter of the Egyptian firstborn, then the climactic destruction of Pharaoh's army, drowned in the Reed Sea. Our ancestors were not called on for much beyond faith and acceptance of HaShem - who had successfully battled on their behalf. What resonates for me in the current crises facing our Brethren in the Holy Land is the lesson linking the two Yom Tovs. When we must face our enemies G-d may not clearly and miraculously fight for us - but He will always fight with us. Chag Purim Sameach



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



Israeli Researchers Discover Neural Link Between Brain and Body's Immune System

February 4, 2025

jewishpress.com



The connection between the body and the brain has preoccupied philosophers and researchers for thousands of years. A new study at the University of Haifa has now identified a neural circuit that enables the brain to regulate the activity of the immune system through learning processes similar to associative learning. The study was conducted at the laboratory for Research of Molecular and Cellular Mechanisms Underlying Learning and Memory, at the University of Haifa. The findings show that the brain and the immune system collaborate to prepare for future challenges and reveal how they “learn” to activate the immune system based solely on sensory information and brain activity. This process involves the “representation” of the immune system in the brain and the integration of this information with sensory inputs, such as taste. “We knew that the immune system can sense cells in

the body that are behaving abnormally or detect bacteria or viruses that have invaded the body. It can also learn and act decisively and rapidly against invaders it has encountered in the past,” says Prof. Rosenblum. “Through the senses, the brain constantly samples the environment. The researchers emphasized that this is the first time science has identified the specific nerve cells and pathways in mammals that enable integrating sensory information with information from the immune system. This basic understanding opens new therapeutic possibilities for a variety of diseases. Many illnesses arise from the impairments in the immune system’s ability to respond to threats, leading to either overactive or insufficient responses. The study suggests new therapeutic directions in which the regulation of behavior, brain activity, and the immune system function are coordinated to optimize disease treatment.

Israeli Scientists Create GPS to Lead Drugs to Cancerous Tumors

Hana Levi Julian - 21 Kislev 5785 – December 22, 2024

jewishpress.com

Israeli researchers have created a new way to deliver drugs directly to cancerous tumors. The researchers at Tel Aviv University developed a new platform using polymeric nanoparticles to deliver drug pairs to specific cancer types, including skin cancer and breast cancer. The researchers explain that having both drugs arrive at the tumor site together significantly amplifies their therapeutic effects and safety profiles. “Currently, cancer treatment often involves a combination of multiple drugs that work synergistically to enhance their anti-cancer effect,” Satchi-Fainaro explains. “However, these drugs differ in their chemical and physical properties – such as their rate of degradation, their circulation

time in the bloodstream, and their ability to penetrate and accumulate in the tumor. Therefore, even if multiple drugs are administered simultaneously, they don’t arrive together at the tumor, and their combined effects are not fully realized. “To ensure maximal efficacy and minimal toxicity, we sought a way to deliver two drugs simultaneously and selectively to the tumor site without harming healthy organs.” Of special significance is the fact that the combination of two drugs delivered simultaneously was far more effective than administering the drugs separately, even at 30 times lower doses than prior preclinical studies.



Wave of Innovation: Eco Wave Power Debuts Israel's First Wave Energy Project at Jaffa Port - Eco Wave Power

David Israel - 25 Kislev 5785 – December 26, 2024

ecowavepower.com



Eco Wave Power Global AB, a leading provider of onshore wave energy technology, is pleased to announce that in collaboration with the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality and the municipal company Atarim, will inaugurate Israel’s first pilot station for generating electricity from sea waves on Thursday, December 5, 2024, in Jaffa Port. This groundbreaking global project combines innovation, sustainability, and the fight against climate change. The launch marks a significant step towards reducing greenhouse gas

emissions and advancing sustainable energy, reinforcing Tel Aviv-Yafo’s status as a global innovation leader. In this unique project, for the very first time, electricity generated from sea waves is supplied to the national grid—a historic milestone in Israel’s renewable energy journey. “The launch of Israel’s first wave energy power plant is more than just a technological achievement—it’s a powerful statement about the future we envision. This project at Jaffa Port represents a historic milestone in the global renewable energy journey, proving that sea waves can be a viable, clean, and consistent source of electricity.

(continued on next page)

TAU Groundbreaking Discovery Illuminates the Brain's 'Memory Wars'

David Israel - 25 Kislev 5785 – December 26, 2024

jewishpress.com



In a groundbreaking study from Tel Aviv University, scientists have uncovered a fundamental conflict in how the brain learns and forms memories, challenging long-held assumptions about classical and operant conditioning. The findings suggest that these two learning systems cannot operate simultaneously, as they compete for dominance in the brain. Classical conditioning, famously demonstrated by Pavlov's dogs, involves forming passive associations between stimuli—like linking the sound of a bell with the anticipation of food. Operant conditioning, by contrast, is an active process where behaviors are reinforced by rewards or consequences. For decades, scientists assumed these systems could work in

tandem, but the new research reveals a far more complex dynamic. "You can think of the brain as engaging in a mental tug-of-war," said Prof. Parnas. "When one learning system is active, it actively suppresses the other. This prioritization prevents conflicting responses but also means the brain cannot learn two contradictory behaviors at the same time." Eyal Rozenfeld highlighted the broader implications of the findings: "This discovery not only reshapes how we understand learning but could also provide valuable insights into conditions like ADHD and Alzheimer's disease. By understanding how the brain manages competing learning systems, we might uncover new pathways for therapeutic interventions."

SCHEDULE OF WHC CLASSES

(led by Rabbi Axelman)

Sundays @ Time TBA -- Talmud Class

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.

Condolences

To Evelyn Apter

on the loss of her brother, Herbert Barry Stern

To Bruce Berenson and family

on the loss of his mother, Seena Slutsky

To the family of Adele Rothman for her loss

**המקום ינחם אתכם
בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים**

May their memory be a blessing



Services — Wednesday April 23rd at 8:00 PM



Thank you for Donations -- January - March 2025

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In Honor of Egon Mermelstein's 90th Birthday

Meryl Hoffmann

In memory of Lotte Bloch and Seena Slutsky

Condolences to the Berenson family

Wishing Rebbitzen Sharon a swift recovery

Wishing Hannah Kohn continuing recovery and best of health

Wishing all members of the congregation well this holiday season and happy new year to all

Kiddush in honor of Egon Mermelstein's birthday

Curtis & Allison Faver

Kiddush in honor of his great-granddaughter

Sheldon Glass

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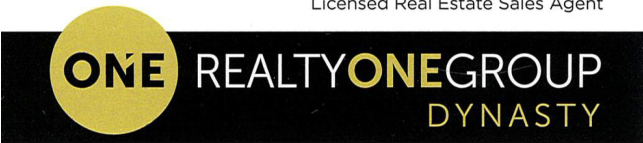


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