

Whitestone Hebrew Centre Bulletin

12-45 Clintonville St. Whitestone, NY 11357



שלום

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April 2020

Nissan — Iyar 5780

PLEASE NOTE:

All dates and times of services and events are contingent and depend on the current coronavirus situation.

Until further notice (by phone tree and email), please assume that NO events or services will take place.

Schedule of Passover Services



Thursday, April 9th — 9:30 AM

Friday April 10th — 9:30 AM & 7:45 PM

Saturday, April 11th — 9:30 AM

Tuesday, April 14th — 7:45 PM

Wednesday, April 15th — 9:30 AM & 7:45 PM

Thursday, April 16th — (Yizkor) 9:30 AM



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.

Tuesday April 21st — 7:00 PM



Family Shabbat

April 25th @ 10:00 AM

We look forward to seeing everyone there!



WHC Bulletin Staff

Rabbi Steven Axelman,
Editor
Sharon Samet
Patricia Smolker

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FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY



As I begin to pen this column, we are in the middle of the greatest disruption to daily life in America that anyone can remember. The upending of our schedules, the difficulties in obtaining some of the regular commodities we are used to, the layoffs of millions of employees, the closing of thousands of businesses and the collapse of the financial markets are unprecedented in our history. As I am sure we all do, I have many thoughts on this situation. Some of us agree that all these steps on the part of government are necessary to head off a major, world-wide pandemic that has already killed thousands. Some of us argue that compared to other illnesses and causes of death, the fatalities have not been that numerous and in no way have warranted this level of disruption. I will leave the political debates to others, at least for the purposes of this column. Wearing my Rabbi hat, the thought most prominent in my mind is (again) how little we control in this world. A microscopic virus has brought much of the world to a standstill. Something we cannot even see with the naked eye, something not even conceived of in the not-so-distant past. America--the greatest military power in world history, China--the [world's most populous country](#), with the world's [largest](#) and one of the most powerful militaries, Israel--with its great military and ingenuity--all brought to their heels by this invisible bug. Nuclear weapons today are thousands of times more powerful than those used in 1945 yet we are powerless against an invisible invader. Is

there no message in that? Is someone trying to tell us something?! Are we really all that?! We believe that we control our world and our destinies and even when droughts strike, we are convinced that the least important way to cope is by praying for rain. Who really believes that God is the one who makes it rain--something we mention in every single Amidah we recite in the months between Sukkot and Pesach?! What a ridiculous and primitive belief that is/was! When hurricanes and tornados hit, killing many, injuring more and destroying much more, we are convinced that the least important way to head off these disasters is through prayer, though, again, we mention that God controls the wind in every single Amidah we recite in the months between Sukkot and Pesach. We are so scientific, so sophisticated, we have computer models and highly educated scientists who can understand, predict and even believe they can control the climate. Only an unsophisticated barbarian would believe that God has anything to do with these clearly natural forces. In our financial lives, some of us literally begin to save and plan our financial welfare and futures from the moment we first are aware of a pregnancy. We save and invest, we study the markets, we train and hire thousands of financial experts to insure the greatest returns on our savings. We are convinced that the least important way to achieve financial security is through prayer, though we ask God to help us in that area in many of our daily prayers. This coronavirus is truly a shock to the system. We are barricading ourselves in our own homes out of abject fear. We are

(Continued on page 9)

SISTERHOOD

SISTERHOOD DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat. Apr. 25th Sisterhood & Family Shabbat 10:00 AM

Prayer Book Fund—February 2020

Inscribed Prayer Book
in memory of Paula Hanover

- Evelyn Apter

Chai Fund—February 2020

Good health for Esther Cohen, Ron Kohn and Zula Schibuk

- Evelyn Apter

A speedy and complete recovery for Bruce Berenson
after hip surgery

- Evelyn Apter

Chai Fund—March 2020

To the “hippest” fellow we know, Bruce Berenson,
get well soon.

- Frank, Shirley and Tricia Smith

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”.

Sisterhood Message

Sisterhood thanks everyone who participated in Shalach Manot. Your participation helped to make this fundraiser a financial success. (See Rhoda Weinstein article.)

We don't know if any or all of our April or May planned events will take place. You will be kept informed by the Bulletin, getting phone calls, texts or emails. Do a mitzvah, please 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 Zissen Pesach.

Shalach Manot

Thank you to all who participated in our annual Purim mitzvah known as Shalach Manot. 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. The Shalach Manot fundraiser is a huge project. The preparation begins months in advance. Organizing, shopping, schlepping, assembling and delivering Purim bags takes a lot of coordination and cooperation. Thank you to everyone who assembled and delivered Purim bags. Thank you also to Sharon Samet who helped to coordinate some of our pick-ups. An extra special thank you to my Co-Chairs Lilian Gradofsky and Patricia Smolker, for organizing and executing all the tasks associated with the Shalach Manot fundraiser. Yasher Koach to everyone.



Rhoda Weinstein

Shalach Manot Chairperson

Thank You For Additional Shalach Manot Donations



Bonnie Buxbaum

Naomi and Leon Gukowsky

Meryl Hoffmann

Ellen Mishkin

Adele Rothman



Purim celebration at WHC March 9th (Pictures courtesy of Jeffrey Young)

For more pictures and videos go to: <https://www.whitestonehebrewcenter.org/pictures-and-videos>



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

Printing 3D Dreams – The Future of Operating Room Technology Has Arrived

<https://tinyurl.com/t352hv7>

By David Brummer February 25, 2020



3D printing, one of the most exciting, cutting-edge technologies, is currently revolutionizing surgical procedures at the Sheba Medical Center in Tel Hashomer. Used in conjunction with MRI and virtual (VR) and augmented reality (AR), 3D printing is currently being used as a precision tool to save lives, avert complications, and greatly improve surgical outcomes while serving as a unique pre-op learning tool for rookie surgeons. ...[T]he printing of precise, patient-specific replicas of organs and bones...provides inexperienced surgeons with the opportunity to perform a sort of “dry run”

on an altered reality composite of the patient. Imagine a surgeon being able to examine a plastic printed replica of the patient's damaged kneecap before the actual surgery. Now, imagine the surgeon having a full 3D view of that replica on a computer screen, and more, being able to manipulate it in different ways. A 16-year-old girl who needed corrective facial reconstruction following a trauma was able to achieve outstanding results with the help of 3D printed facsimiles of her jawbone. The improvement was so dramatic that one of her friends did not recognize her after the procedure had taken place. “My future husband will never know that I was ever disfigured,” she said happily.

Israeli Device Lets Disabled Control Smartphones, Wheelchairs with Their Tongues

<https://tinyurl.com/ujnr5d9>

By United with Israel Staff Mar 17, 2020

For people with limited or no hand mobility, this Israeli innovation puts the power of the tongue to good use.

By United with Israel Staff

The Israeli company Tongo has created the first tongue-based operating system, called *Smart Brace*, for people with limited use of their hands. The device, placed in the user's mouth, can help tens of millions of people worldwide achieve greater functionality and independence. *Smart Brace* is set to change the lives of people suffering from a wide range of maladies that cause limited finger or hand movement. These include spinal cord injury, stroke, neurological disorders and more. Not only does it help the mobility of the disabled, but it can also unlock the digital world that is near impossible to navigate without the use of hands. Founded by Matan Berkowitz, an

award-winning inventor, and Tal Parnass, a bio-medical engineer, the patent-pending device wirelessly controls smartphones, computers, wheelchairs and smart homes.



Until now, there was some success in helping the disabled to function better through the use of voice-activated devices and eye-tracking technology. However, these devices can become tiring or challenging to manipulate.

The tongue, on the other hand, rarely exhausts and usually maintains full function even in those suffering spinal cord injuries and neurological disorders.

Cutting-Edge Israeli Contact Lenses Cure Color Blindness

<https://tinyurl.com/sfzxt3y>

By United with Israel Staff Mar 17, 2020



A team from Tel Aviv University's Nanoscale Electro Optics lab successfully altered the design of conventional contact lenses to offset color blindness. The

researchers, under the supervision of Tal Ellenbogen, who co-authored the report, incorporated “metasurface elements into the surface of conventional contact lenses” to combat deuteranomaly, a hereditary form of color blindness that causes defective perception of red and green.

“Problems with distinguishing red from green interrupt simple daily routines such as deciding whether a banana is ripe,” team

member Sharon Karepov said. “Our contact lenses use metasurfaces based on nano-metric size gold ellipses to create a customized, compact and durable way to address these deficiencies.” Though there are commercially produced eyeglasses to combat this form of color blindness, they are cumbersome. The Israeli innovation is “ultra-thin and can be embedded into any rigid contact lens,” explained Karepov. Testing of the product proved it shifts “incorrectly perceived pigments closer to their authentic hues,” according to the article in *Optics Letters*. The results “showed that visual contrast lost due to deuteranomaly was essentially fully restored.”



April Happy Birthdays

Alu Axelman	Patricia Smolker
Ivy Chait	Rhoda Weinstein
Hannah Kohn	Danielle Yamen
Barbara Parker	Jori Young

**Best Wishes for a
speedy and complete recovery**
Bruce Berenson



Overview of Pesach



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.). On the evening before Pesach, Tuesday night April 7th, a ritual “search” for *chametz* is conducted in the home and any *chametz* that is found is burned the next morning, along with any other *chametz* in one’s possession. Traditionally-observant Jews customarily make a small fire in a garbage can to fulfill this ritual. In some communities, special arrangements are made with the fire department to burn all of the community’s *chametz* at one time. 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 Wednesday, April 8th. 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 Thursday night April 9th. The Seder is specifically designed to communicate to children the story of our exodus from Egypt. (Sadly, if the current situation does not change, many grandparents and great-grandparents will not have 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 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 tentative schedule of Holiday services is printed on the front page of this bulletin and assuming that the current coronavirus restrictions on movement and assembly are no longer in place, I encourage everyone to please attend these services as much as possible, in addition to the regular Friday night and Shabbat morning services. Best wishes to all for a Chag Kasher V’samayach--a Happy and Kosher Pesach!

- Rabbi Axelman

March Family Shabbat Sponsors



Due to the coronavirus restrictions, Family Shabbat was not celebrated in March. We hope that by the end of April these restrictions will be removed and we will again be able to celebrate Shabbat together!

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

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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.

Sponsor a Family Shabbat , Kiddush or a Friday Night Oneg



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

Just want to honor someone?

Sponsoring a Family Shabbat, a Shabbat Kiddush or a Friday night Oneg in honor of a loved one is a great way to share a special occasion.

Minimum donation - \$36.

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



Thank you for Donations -- February 2020

Yahrzeit

David Abramoff
Eli Albagli
Lilian Gradofsky
Randy Greenberg
Arthur Isman
Iris Kirschner

Cary Markowitz
Melvin Mesnick
Roselyn Plotkin
Mark Safran
Doris Shankman
Jeffrey Young and Judi Glass

General Donations

In memory of Paula Hanover
Eva Brill

In honor of Sharon's recovery
Arthur Isman

In memory of Paula Hanover
Ellis Rosenblatt

Kiddush in memory of Rachel Kamhi and Yeshaya Lerea

Esther Cohen and Elaine Greenwald



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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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FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

(Continued from page 2)

socially distanced from our friends and family members. There is no one to even comfort or help us in person. Doctors' offices and hospitals are overwhelmed and in many cases closed to anything but the most serious illnesses. Elective medical procedures are no longer available. Nothing in our scientific knowledge can protect us against this bug. We can't even buy toilet paper or hand-sanitizers. One can't help but relate to a strange story in the Talmud, one traditionally studied on the saddest day of the Jewish year, Tisha B'av. The Talmud relates that Titus taunted God, claiming that God could only overcome his enemies through water, as in the Biblical flood, the drowning of the Egyptians at the Red (Reed?) Sea, etc. God said to Titus, "I have a tiny creature in my world, known as a gnat". God sent the gnat into Titus' nose, leading to a painful and terminal illness. For many years I have thought of this gnat as a virus. Someone interpreting this story with an invisible bug many years ago may have been burned at the stake, so the Talmud had to use something visible, if tiny, to make its point. (I was happy to hear Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks make the same interpretation on a video the other day.) All of the power of the Roman empire was powerless in the face of this invisible bug. All of a far more powerful and knowledgeable civilization is now powerless against his invisible bug.

I don't know much but I know that on the High Holidays, when we read "who by water and who by fire?", we also say "who by

plague?". Earlier in the service, in the prayer known as "Avinu Malkeinu—our Father, our King", we say "withhold the plague from your heritage". Though in my mind I have thought about germs or viruses when

saying this, to date I have never encountered a bug that could paralyze the entire world. Later in the prayers of the High Holidays a paragraph is inserted by the Cantor in his repetition of the Mussaf Amidah. "Our father, our king, remember your compassion and suppress your anger, and bring an end to pestilence, ... plague and... every illness." In many congregations the prayer leader is almost in tears when saying these words. In many congregations the prayer is just run through without much attention. I hope that I and all of us will give these prayers their due from these forthcoming High Holidays and until 120. May you all be well and safe—we hope to see you in person when this current disaster ends!

Avinu Malkeinu

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵינוּ

Our Father Our King

כִּלְה דְּכָר וְחָרֵב וְרָעָב מֵעַלְינוּ

Kaleh dever v'cherev v'raav mealeynu
bring an end to pestilence, war and famine around us



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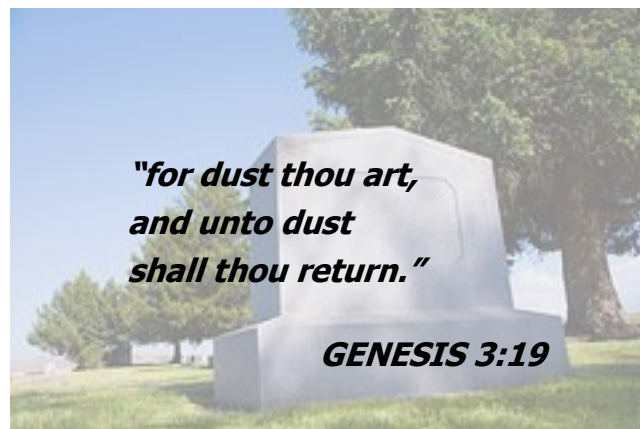
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