

Whitestone Hebrew Centre Bulletin

12-45 Clintonville St. Whitestone, NY 11357



שלום

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Volume XXXVI No. 3 March — April 2026

Adar — Iyar 5786

CELEBRATE PURIM AT WHC



Megilla Reading

Monday, March 2nd -- 7:00 PM



See page 2 for more information on Purim

President's Message

I will confess that the article I prepared for this month's bulletin was similar to those written in the past regarding Purim and the various ways we celebrate/observe this relatively light-hearted Yom Tov. I put that piece to the side. Seemingly one hundred and eighty degrees from our other solemn, restriction-heavy days, Purim mandates physical joy in the form of eating, drinking, and costumes. A more fun based celebration of survival, making it unique when compared to the three pilgrimage

festivals (and frankly, most of our other Holidays as well). The month of Adar (on the solar calendar we entered on February 17), arrives with the Jewish directive: "Mi'shenichnas Adar, marbin b'simcha"— "When Adar enters, we increase in joy." The mechanism for how this is followed is much written about in general terms. Although we sit here in Adar 5786 and recent events have not been favorable to us, it is a fact throughout

(Continued on page 6)

Schedule of Passover Services

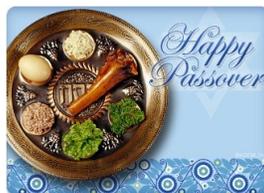
Thursday April 2nd — 9:30 AM

Friday April 3rd — 9:30 AM

Tuesday April 7th — 7:00 PM

Wednesday April 8th — 9:30 AM & 7:00 PM

Thursday April 9th — (Yizkor) 9:30 AM



Board of Trustees Meeting

Tuesday, April 28th -- 7:30 PM





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PURIM LAWS AND CUSTOMS

by Rabbi Axelman

Purim 5786 begins on the evening of Monday, March 2nd 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. (It is hard to ignore the reality that all these centuries later the world's attention is once again turned to Persia and the Jews.)

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 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.

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

Prayer Book Fund - December 2025

Inscribed Prayer Book in memory of Daniel Weiss

-Sisterhood WHC

Prayer Book Fund - February 2026

Inscribed Prayer Book in memory of Jeffrey Wolkin

-Sisterhood WHC

In memory of Jeffrey Wolkin

- Evelyn Apter
- Linda Pereira
- Patricia Smolker

Thank You For Additional Shalach Manot Donations

Bonnie Buxbaum
Naomi and Leon Gukowsky
Ellen Mishkin



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

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, the search for Chametz is performed on Tuesday evening, March 31st. 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 Wednesday night, April 1st. 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 2nd. 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*”, customarily recited by the youngest attendee.

(As I have noted many times in my classes, there is no better way to learn something than to have one’s curiosity aroused, thereby leading one to search for answers.) 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!

Condolences

To Joseph Wolkin on the loss of his father, Jeffrey Wolkin

To Eva Weiss and family on the loss of Daniel Weiss

המקום ינחם אתכם
בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

May their memories be a blessing



Services — Monday April 13th at 8:00 PM



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



Israeli-led research unveils 'living' implant that could end insulin shots

February 4, 2026

[Ynetnews.com](https://www.ynetnews.com)



A multinational research team led by an Israeli engineer and involving top U.S. universities has unveiled a pioneering implantable device that could someday eliminate the need for daily insulin injections for people with diabetes. The study, published Jan. 28 in [Science Translational Medicine](https://doi.org/10.1126/scitranslmed.2025.2828), describes a living, cell-based implant that functions as an autonomous "artificial pancreas." Once placed in the body, the device continuously monitors blood glucose levels, produces insulin internally and releases exactly what the body needs — without external pumps, injections or patient intervention. The breakthrough centers on a novel protective technology researchers call a "crystalline shield", engineered to prevent the body's immune system from rejecting the implant — a major hurdle that has stymied cell-based therapies for decades. The shield allows the implant to operate reliably for years. Tests in mice showed effective long-term glucose regulation, and studies in non-human primates confirmed that the cells inside the implant remain viable and functional, the researchers said. Those

results, they added, provide strong support for future clinical testing in humans. The work was led by Assistant Professor Shady Farah of the Technion — Israel Institute of Technology's Faculty of Chemical Engineering, in collaboration with scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University, Johns Hopkins University and the University of Massachusetts. The collaboration traces back to Farah's postdoctoral work beginning in 2018 at MIT and Boston Children's Hospital/Harvard Medical School, under tissue-engineering pioneers including Robert Langer, a co-founder of Moderna. While the initial focus is on diabetes, the team emphasized that the platform could one day be adapted to deliver other biologic therapies continuously, offering a new approach to chronic conditions such as hemophilia and other metabolic or genetic diseases. If successfully translated into human treatment, experts say the technology could reshape the management of chronic illness by replacing lifelong drug regimens with self-regulated, living therapeutics working continuously inside the body.

Israel unveils new Iron Beam laser system amid record breaking defense sales

By William La Jeunesse , Yael Rotem-Kuriel December 11, 2025

[foxnews.com](https://www.foxnews.com)

Israel isn't the world's most popular country, except when it comes to military hardware. A country the size of New Jersey is now the world's eighth-largest arms exporter with a record-breaking \$15 billion in sales in 2024. Behind Britain, but ahead of Turkey and South Korea in foreign arms sales, governments are flocking to Israel to buy battle-tested weapons, especially rockets from its vaunted Iron Dome missile defense system.

Europe accounts for most of the sales — Germany and Finland being the largest, but India, Thailand and Greece are buyers as well. Even Muslim majority countries — Morocco, the UAE and Bahrain — buy missiles, drones and cybersecurity systems from the Jewish state. The record sales come as Israel unveils its latest weapon. The Iron Beam is a laser capable of knocking out incoming missiles, mortar rounds and drones up to 6 miles away for as little as \$2 per interception. By contrast, interceptor missiles typically cost anywhere from \$100,000 to \$1 million apiece. "With the laser, the only cost is electricity," says Yuval Steinitz, chairman of Rafael Defense Industries, manufacturer of the Iron Beam. "It is like between \$1 and \$2, less than the price of a hot dog in New York." Unlike conventional missile interceptors, fast as they are, take time. A laser travels at the speed of light. "We have already used it against UAVs launched by Hezbollah in the north and missiles

from Iran. It works," says University of Tel Aviv professor Isaac Ben-David. "The most important advantage is, once you see the target, it is intercepted at the speed of light. It takes a fraction of a second, and the laser is already destroying it." After decades of failed tests by multiple nations, Israel is the first country to successfully use the weapon in war. One of those who oversaw development was professor Isaac Ben-David, former head of research and development at Israel's Ministry of Defense. Israel will deploy the first Iron Beam systems in the north, where Hezbollah rockets fired in southern Lebanon take under a minute to cross the Israeli border. Applications will expand to include ships and specific air bases. "This is just the beginning of a new era," Steinitz said. "In time, maybe five years, it will enable us to shoot down every hostile object in the air around Israel. It's really a game changer." Rafael developed the technology with U.S.-based Lockheed Martin and \$1.2 billion from the Pentagon. Steinitz says the technology is already being shared with the U.S. Army's directed energy program. "We cannot do without the United States," he said. "But sometimes, in a partnership, even the dwarf can contribute to the giant."



(continued on next page)

The 'American Options' Doctrine—a new framework for the US-Israel Alliance

By Federal Newswire Editorial Board

thefederalnewswire.com



The United States relationship with Israel is frequently viewed as a one-way commitment.

Since 1948, the United States has provided Israel with over \$158 billion in direct aid—more than \$300 billion when adjusted for inflation—making it the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign assistance. The support has overwhelmingly taken the form of military financing, with more than \$113 billion dedicated to defense and weapons systems, alongside \$45 billion in economic aid. According to an analysis for Federal Newswire by Israel defense experts, the partnership delivers an estimated \$48 billion in annual benefits to the United States—nearly 15 times the value of the roughly \$3.3 billion in U.S. security assistance has appropriated for Israel each year. The analysis was based on recent reports by US and Israel defense agencies. In broad terms, the U.S. relies on Israel's military as a high-stakes testing ground for American weapons systems, including aircraft, armor, and munitions. U.S. assets are deployed in live combat more frequently in Israel than in any other allied nation, allowing the Pentagon to receive after-action performance data without putting American troops in harm's way. The U.S. also relies on Israeli intelligence for early warnings on threats to U.S. interests and assets in the region. These include Israeli insights and intelligence assets in Iran, Syria, and within terrorist networks. According to the Department of Defense, the actionable intelligence provided by Israel saves the U.S. approximately \$2.6 billion annually from economic losses. The

U.S. also saves by not having to maintain a military presence in Israel, where it has important regional interests, compared to the cost of deployments in Japan, Korea, or Europe—totaling tens of thousands of troops and billions of dollars in upkeep. Israel provides troops in the region, as well as strategic coverage in the Eastern Mediterranean without a standing U.S. base. This saves approximately \$2 billion per year in operational costs according to a 2024 GAO report. In more specific terms, the U.S. has developed missile systems with Israel's help, including Iron Dome, David's Sling, and Arrow-3. The systems were first field-tested in Israel and then licensed back to the United States. According to a 2023 Reuters report and information provided by Boeing, the Arrow-3 sale to Germany generated \$3.5 billion in revenues, with up to 50% of the work performed by U.S. contractors. In fact, the Iron Dome missile defense system was initially developed solely by Israel, allowing the country to retain proprietary technology rights. The United States has since become a production partner, which may provide additional economic benefits to the U.S. if President Trump's comments about creating an Iron Dome for the U.S. leads to actual deployment. In other areas, Israeli trauma medicine has profoundly shaped American emergency response systems. Techniques adapted from Israeli battlefield care—such as the "Stop the Bleed" initiative—are estimated to save roughly 300 U.S. lives annually, with a \$4.1 billion societal welfare impact, according to a March briefing by the American College of Surgeons. In cybersecurity, U.S.-Israel joint simulations protect critical infrastructure like water and power systems—training that is difficult to run domestically under U.S. regulations.

President's Message

(Continued from page 1)

recorded history that at all-too-regular intervals the Hebrew People have been excoriated, shunned and attacked by the majority of the world. These recent times has (again) seen a marked increase in overt anti Jewish sentiment extending out to perpetration of violence. On a personal note, in my own circle, there has been illness and loss. How can we embrace happiness when we feel overwhelmed by physical attacks, disconnection, and fear? None of this is new - I suppose it just resonates more strongly with me this particular year. In spending a little more time diving under the surface, Jewish tradition explains the month of Adar is not a call to ignore suffering, but an invitation to intentionally cultivate joy as a spiritual practice. The Talmudic instruction to "increase in joy" suggests a gradual, effortful process rather than an immediate emotional shift. My friend the Rebbetzin had suggested the practice of compartmentalizing as a way to prevent being overwhelmed by an avalanche of negative emotions and thoughts. Not always an easy thing, but there are tools we can use to this end. To me, this resembles the concept of allowing/

accepting dual emotions. In fact, Judaism recognizes the "laughing side" and "crying side" of the heart. You do not have to suppress fear, frustration or sadness to increase joy; they can exist simultaneously. The practice of "Micro-Joys": small, ordinary moments as simple as enjoying a cup of coffee (substitute beverage of your choice if you like), an especially beautiful sunset, a brief laugh with a friend, any of the ordinary little positives sprinkled throughout the day. We know that the Purim story, while not mentioning HaShem directly, has His Fingerprints throughout. Just as the narrative centers on hidden miracles, try to find small, positive "reversals" to the negatives presented in daily life. On the spiritual side, choosing joy during hard times can be seen as an act of resistance to despair, allowing you to reconnect with your vitality and hope. Because increasing joy is not just a response to sadness—it is a strategy for resilience. And in a world that too often tries to beat us down, choosing joy is one of the most powerful things we can do. Wishing you a joy-filled Adar, and a Chag Purim Sameach.



Thank you for Donations December 2025 — February 2026

Yahrzeit

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Kiddush in honor of Egon Mermelstein's birthday

Curtis & Allison Faver

Kiddush in memory of Gerald Wolberg

Mark & Cheryl Rubin

Donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary fund

Joshua Friedman

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.



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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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