

Whitestone Hebrew Centre Bulletin

12-45 Clintonville St. Whitestone, NY 11357



שלום

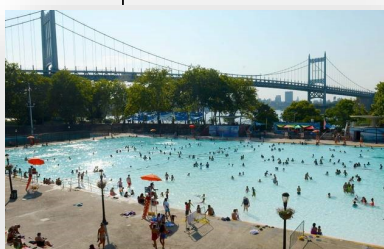
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Volume XXX No. 10

Summer 2021

Sivan — Av 5781



WHC
wishes you and yours
a Happy and Healthy
Summer!



President's Message

The President's article generally has no title other than stating it is in fact the President's article. But if this screed had one it would be "Why I gave up being a Shul Cop". In all the years since my deeper involvement with the shul – and I had an actual platform to speak from – my main preoccupation was pestering/nudging our members to attend our Religious Services. I've long retired the overused "that's what our purpose is – otherwise we could have our secular meetings in a Bowling Alley" (I do like that imagery though).

It's only a little surprising (because they eventually get to everything) the Pew research Center did a study in 2017 called Why

Americans Go (and Don't Go) to Religious Services.

As you'd expect, there were no real surprises. They found the main reasons people regularly go to any house of worship are the obvious ones: to feel closer to God, giving their children a moral foundation and for becoming a better person. Other reasons included music; being part of the flock; seeing the house of worship as a "hospital for human brokenness;" finding the path to heaven; removing doubts; recharging; and finding comfort, divine energy, education, hope and peace. The things that kept people away from religious services were

(Continued on page 6)



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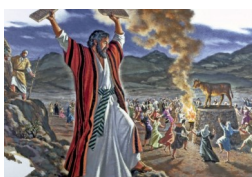
Summer Fast Days

by Rabbi Axelman

During the summer, two fast-days are observed by traditional Jews, Shiva Asar B'Tammuz (17th day of the month of Tammuz) and Tisha B'av (9th day of the month of Av). The following is based on articles on Chabad.org and Aish.com.

Shiva Asar B'Tammuz

The 17th of Tammuz, which this year falls on Sunday the 27th of June, is the first of four fast-days mentioned in the Prophets. This day marks the start of a three-week mourning period for the destruction of Jerusalem and the two Holy Temples. The fast also commemorates five tragic events that occurred on this date, according to our tradition: (1) Moses



broke the tablets when he saw the Jewish people worshipping the Golden Calf. (2)

During the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem, the Jews were forced to cease offering the daily sacrifices due to the lack of sheep. (3) Apostomos burned the holy Torah. (4) An idol was placed in the Holy Temple. (5) The walls of Jerusalem were breached by the Romans, in 69 CE, after a lengthy siege. The Jerusalem

Talmud maintains that this is also the date when Babylonians breached the walls of Jerusalem on their way to destroying the first Temple.

On this fast day, healthy adults—bar- or bat-mitzvah age and older—abstain from eating or drinking between dawn and nightfall. There are also some modifications to the daily prayers services.



Tisha B'Av

Tisha B'Av, which this year begins on Saturday night July 17th and ends at nightfall on Sunday July 18th, is the saddest day on the Jewish calendar. It is the culmination of the Three Weeks, which began on the 17th of Tammuz, a period of time during which gradually intensifying mourning customs and rituals are observed by traditional Jews. During these three weeks, weddings are not celebrated and live music is forbidden. During the first nine days of the month of Av, people refrain from eating meat and drinking wine (other than on Shabbat), as well as bathing for pleasure (e.g., swimming) and certain other pleasurable activities.

Like Shiva Asar B'Tammuz, Tisha B'av also commemorates five tragic events that occurred on this date according to our tradition. (1) During the time of Moses, (1312 BCE) the Jews in the desert accepted the slanderous report of the 10 Spies, and the decree was issued forbidding them from entering the Land of Israel.



(2) The First Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians (586 or 423 BCE), led by Nebuchadnezzar. 100,000 Jews were slaughtered and millions more exiled. (3) The Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans (70 CE), led by Titus. Some two million Jews died, and another one million were exiled. (4) The Bar Kochba revolt was

(Continued on page 6)

SISTERHOOD

Sisterhood Message

Sisterhood wishes everyone a happy, healthy, safe summer. 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.

Simcha Fund - May 2021

Mazel tov to Lee and Bruce Berenson and family on the birth of their grandson, William Alan

-- Patricia Smolker

Mazel tov and many blessed years ahead to the Berenson family and their newest addition, William Alan

-- the Smith Family

Prayer Book Fund - May 2021

Inscribed Prayer Book in honor of Seena Slutsky, one of the earth's nicest residents

-- Shirley, Frank, and Tricia Smith

Prayer Book Fund - Summer 2021

Inscribed Prayer Books in memory of Audrey Citak

-- Sisterhood WHC

-- Patricia Smolker

Inscribed Prayer Book in memory of Esther Cohen

-- Sisterhood WHC

Inscribed Prayer Book in memory of Esther Cohen

-- Adele Rothman

-- 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".

Condolences

To the family of Esther Cohen on her loss

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

May her memory be a blessing

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	

Condolences

To Burton Citak and family
on the loss of Audrey Citak

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

May her memory be a blessing

Condolences may be sent to Burton Citak and family,
40 Sutton Place, Apt 10-L, NY, NY 10022



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



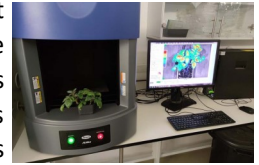
Hebrew U. Develops Bio-Sensor to Prevent Crop Failures

14 Sivan 5781 – May 25, 2021

Jewishpress.com

In an effort to increase agricultural productivity and limit waste, a team of researchers from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Robert H. Smith Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environment developed a method to detect signs of stress before a plant is damaged. Plants are exposed to all types of weather and other external factors that cause harm and impact plants' ability to undergo photosynthesis and produce fruit. If farmers could get an early warning sign that their plants weren't doing well, this would help them take measures to protect their produce, prevent significant losses, and safeguard national food sources.

In new research published in Plant Physiology by Matanel Hipsch under the direction of Dr. Shilo Rosenwasser at HU's Department of Plant Sciences, scientists have introduced molecular bio-sensors within potatoes that allow for real-time monitoring of stress signals within the plants. Researchers believe the application of biosensors can be expanded to other key crops—an effort that will help stem the tide of food insecurity and crop failures due to climate changes worldwide.



Israeli Manicure Robot Startup Nails It

By Noga Martin May 10, 2021

Israelhayom.com



After waiting an unreasonably long time for a date to arrive, Nimble Beauty CEO Omri Moran realized that there was a need for home manicure technology and decided to do something about it.

Israeli startup Nimble Beauty, which has developed a robot that delivers home manicures based on 3D imaging, has raised \$10 million, the company announced Monday. Nimble's technology scans the user's hand in a small machine, identifying the unique structure of their fingernails. Once the scan is complete, the company's algorithms set a small robot arm in motion, which

paints the user's nails in four manicure steps: a base, two layers of polish, and a top coat. The machine also diffuses warm air, drying each layer completely. The idea for the robot manicurist was born in 2016. CEO Omri Moran says, "The idea for Nimble arose after a very long wait for a date with someone who wound up becoming my wife." "When I asked what was holding her up, she explained it was because of her manicure. Even the delay wasn't long enough for her to do her nails, and she gave up on it. The conversation on the date was all about all the problems and difficulties of manicures and I realized there was an urgent need for a technological solution," Moran says.

How to Understand Naftali Bennett's New Government

I recognize that not everyone follows Israeli politics as I do and I recognize that not everyone concurs with the opinions of Caroline Glick, the author who wrote the [article](#) excerpted here. However, I do think this article describes the reality pretty well. Those wishing to discuss this article and the new Israeli government are welcome to our Monday night Judaism 101 class to discuss it. Rabbi A.

Many of Israel's supporters are confused by its new government. Prime Minister Naftali Bennett is a man of the political Right. His party is called Yamina, which means, "to the right"—as in, to the right of Israel's main governing party, former Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu's](#) Likud party. Yet, immediately after Bennett's government was sworn in Sunday night, leftists held a raucous celebration in the center of Tel Aviv. And right-wingers went into mourning. Why would the Left celebrate a prime minister to the right of Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party, and why would the Right mourn Bennett's rise? The answer begins with simple math. Israel's 120-seat Knesset is roughly divided between two blocs. The right-wing bloc includes the center-right Likud party, parties to its ideological right and religious parties. In March, parties in

this bloc won a 65-seat majority. With its 30 seats, Likud was Gulliver in a sea of Lilliputian parties. The opposing bloc is led by newly minted Foreign Minister and Alternate Prime Minister Yair Lapid, who heads the 17-seat center-left Yesh Atid party. Lapid's bloc is comprised of parties on the center-left and radical left, as well as two Arab-Israeli parties. The first Arab party is a Palestinian nationalist party, and the second is an Islamist party. Neither accepts Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. In the March elections, Lapid's bloc won 55 total seats. By rights, Netanyahu could have been expected to use his bloc's 65-seat majority to form a stable governing coalition. But despite his best efforts, he failed to form such a coalition because the heads of two parties who ran to Likud's right—

(Continued on page 5)

Bennett's Yamina and former Likud minister Gideon Sa'ar's New Hope party—refused to join a Netanyahu-led government. Motivated by blinding envy and [hatred for Netanyahu](#), whom they believe stymied their political advancement, Bennett and Sa'ar presented themselves to voters as prime ministerial candidates only to be humiliated at the polls. Bennett won seven seats, and Sa'ar won six.

After prolonged negotiations with Netanyahu following the elections, which at least in Bennett's case were conducted in bad faith, Bennett and Sa'ar defected from their ideological bloc. They took their small factions to Lapid and his Left-Arab bloc to form the government over which Bennett now ostensibly presides as prime minister.

Bennett is the ostensible, as opposed to actual, prime minister because he commands the loyalty of a mere 10 percent of his government—or 20 percent, with Sa'ar's faction. The rest of the coalition members are loyal to Lapid, who is scheduled to replace Bennett as prime minister in two years.

Given the power imbalance, Bennett the “right-winger” lacks the power to advance significant policies aligned with Israel's political Right. Lapid, by contrast, will have more or less free rein to advance the agenda of his leftist majority. And the numerical imbalance won't be the only thing constraining Bennett's maneuvering room. By bolting the right-wing bloc to form a government with the Left-Islamist bloc, Bennett and Sa'ar betrayed their own voters. Accordingly, if they quit this government, they have nowhere to go. With no home base to which to return, Bennett and Sa'ar are now effective hostages of the Left. All of this is sufficient reason for the Right's depression and the Left's exhilaration at the sight of the Lapid-Bennett government. But the Left's clear majority in the new government isn't even its most notable feature. A more significant—and problematic—aspect of Israel's new government is that it threatens the Jewish character of the State of Israel. The Lapid-Bennett government has a bare majority of 61 members. If two members defect to the opposition, it will fall. Not all the members of the 61-seat coalition voted in favor of its formation in Sunday's confidence vote. Saeed Alharoumi from the Islamist Ra'am party abstained to protest the pending destruction of illegal structures in the illegal Bedouin settlement Bir El Daj in Israel's Negev desert. Consequently, the government won the confidence vote with a 60-59 vote tally. With four members, Ra'am is the smallest faction in the Lapid-Bennett government. But size is not everything: The entire government will fall if Ra'am bolts the coalition. By abstaining from the confidence vote, in coordination with Ra'am party leader Mansour Abbas, Alharoumi signaled to Lapid and Bennett that they hold office at Ra'am's pleasure. Whereas Bennett with his six seats is powerless to advance a right-wing agenda, Abbas with his four seats and willingness to walk away from the table is the most powerful member of the coalition. As a general principle, it is a source of grave concern any time a parliamentary governing coalition is beholden to minor parties. But in the case of Ra'am, the problem is quite literally one of existential proportions. Ra'am rejects Israel's right to exist. And from the outset of his coalition negotiations with Lapid and Bennett, Abbas used his

king-making power to compel Bennett and Lapid to agree to policies that undermine Israel's sovereignty and Jewish national character. To bring Ra'am into their coalition, Lapid and Bennett agreed to grant effective autonomy to the Bedouin in the Negev and the Arab-Israeli communities in the Galilee. Autonomy was granted in two ways. First, Lapid and Bennett agreed to effectively end the enforcement of Israel's planning and zoning laws in these communities, thus rendering them self-governing Arab enclaves inside of Israel. Second, the coalition deal involves the practical ceding of state lands the size of Israel's 10 largest cities to illegal Bedouin settlements in the Negev. Just before the Lapid-Bennett coalition was approved by the Knesset, Abbas gave a speech in Arabic at the Knesset podium wherein he pledged: “We will restore the lands that were stolen from our people.” Which lands? In a 2018 speech, Abbas made clear that in keeping with Muslim Brotherhood ideology, he means *all* of Israel: “Since [Israel's founding in] 1948, the Palestinian people have lived in a continuous disaster that was created by Zionist terror gangs.”

Abbas has also repeatedly [denied Jewish history](#) in Jerusalem, the holiest city in Judaism. He has denied that a Jewish Temple ever stood on the Temple Mount. Since his government depends on keeping Abbas happy, Bennett has no power to condemn him for such hateful, incendiary remarks.

Ra'am is the first Arab-Israeli party to join an Israeli governing coalition. Many friends of Israel have pointed to Ra'am and Abbas's move as further proof of the rank bigotry and dishonesty of the slurs of Israel as an “apartheid” state that were recently echoed by the likes of Congresswomen [Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez](#) (D-NY), Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) and [Ilhan Omar](#) (D-MN). But this claim misses two key points. First, Ocasio-Cortez, Tlaib, Omar and their colleagues aren't slandering Israel because they are merely misinformed. They slander the Jewish state because they want to delegitimize its very existence. Second, and arguably worse, Abbas is on board with them. Despite being living proof that Israel is *not* a racist state, in November 2019 Abbas called Israel “the apartheid regime.” It is hard to know how long the Lapid-Bennett government will last. Although Bennett and Sa'ar are clearly on a political suicide mission, members of their factions may decide that jumping ship is their best option. Ra'am may also leave at any time. And Lapid himself may decide that having used Bennett to force Netanyahu out of office, he doesn't need his partner any longer and thus bring the government down himself. Even as head of the opposition, Netanyahu remains by far the most popular politician in Israel. And his partners in the opposition are unified in their desire to break apart the fragile Lapid-Bennett coalition as quickly as possible. For however long it lasts, the Lapid-Bennett government will veer from leftist and Islamist policies to gridlock. Hence the joy of the Left, which could never win a governing majority without Bennett and Sa'ar. And hence the tears of the Right, which is now governed by a leftist- and Islamist-dominated government despite the fact that its members comprise the majority in both the public and the Knesset itself.

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

By Ronald Kohn

This has been SOME year! We haven't been able to socialize with friends, spend time with our extended families, travel, eat in restaurants, attend Sporting and Cultural Events, dance at weddings, and so much more. Many have lost jobs and many have been sick. And worse yet, some have died. Yet in the midst of all this disruption to our normal lives, there was one beacon of light and surety in our lives.

Thanks to the incredible efforts of our Rabbi and Rebbetzin, the Whitestone Hebrew Centre has managed to continue with both live and Zoom services for Shabbat. We were one of the only congregations that provided the opportunity for members to attend services, so that we could cling to Hashem during this difficult time. To participate in the Eternal Jewish worship service provided a level of comfort that was no longer available from many traditional sources.

Yes, things were not the same. In order to insure the safety of all congregants and obey the science guidelines, we instituted protocols for behavior that protected us from the virus. Masks were required, appropriate social distancing was observed. The elbow bump replaced the traditional

handshake after a person had an honor. The Rebbetzin wore rubber gloves when preparing the wine for kiddush or putting out cake for the Oneg.

Numerous congregants attended services on Zoom, cautious about contracting the virus. This is certainly understood and respected. And we missed your presence at services, it was not the same without you. Now that many of us have received both doses of the vaccination, please consider returning to shul in person. We have also resumed Kiddushes on Shabbat after Services.

At the end of the Amidah we pray " May it be your will, Hashem, our God and the God of our forefathers, that the Holy Temple be rebuilt, speedily in our days; and may we serve You there with reverence, as in the days of old and in former years." For this we may have to wait until the Messiah comes. But you can come to the Whitestone Hebrew Centre right now and worship and serve G-d with reverence surrounded by your friends as part of our holy congregation.

See you in shul!

President's Message

(Continued from page 1)

more complicated, but the points made by non-attendees that caught my eye were - God lives in their hearts; they can pray at home, God does not live in the four walls of the place of worship and "If God is God," they say, "He can hear my feelings; I do not have to pray out loud."

These are of course unusual times we live in, what with Covid subverting all attempt at normal life, but it's always been the case many people attend only for the usual occasions such as Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, bar/bat mitzvahs or to say Kaddish on the anniversary of a loved one's death.

In our Faith, we Jews are supposed to give benefit of the doubt to our co-religionists. Those who choose not to attend services may have their own ways – through study, acts of service, or even just expressing gratefulness for the beauty of The World. Simple as it sounds, I finally concluded that everyone does as their conscience dictates and you may just have your own path to experience God. If you feel Shul is where you need to be for Shabbat, Yom Tov, etc. then we will (hopefully) always be here to welcome you at the door.

Wishing you a healthy and Blessed Summer.

FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

(Continued from page 2)



crushed by the Roman Emperor Hadrian (135 CE). The city of Beitar – the Jews' last stand against the Romans – was captured and liquidated. Over 100,000 Jews were slaughtered. (5) The Temple area and its surroundings were plowed

under by the Roman general Turnus Rufus. Jerusalem was rebuilt as a pagan city – renamed Aelia Capitolina – and access was forbidden to Jews.

Later on in our history, many more tragedies happened on this

day, including the 1290 expulsion of England's Jews and the 1492 banishment of all Jews from Spain.

Tisha B'av is the only fast-day that, like Yom Kippur, begins at sunset the night before. Also, like on Yom Kippur, leather shoes are not worn and there is a custom to sit low to the floor (as during Shiva) until after prayer services the morning of Tisha B'av. The custom is not to greet people in the customary manner the entire day. Services are usually conducted with dimmed lights and in the morning Tallis and Tefillin are not worn during services, but they are donned during the afternoon services instead.



Thank you for Donations -- March and April 2021

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Ellis Rosenblatt

In honor of Rabbi and Rebbetzin Axelman & the Whitestone Hebrew Centre

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In honor of the bar mitzvah of Doris Shankman's great-grandson, Lucas

Ellis Rosenblatt

In honor of the birth of William Alan, grandson of Lee and Bruce Berenson

Michele Splain

For joining services on Pesach and Shavuot

Sheldon Glass



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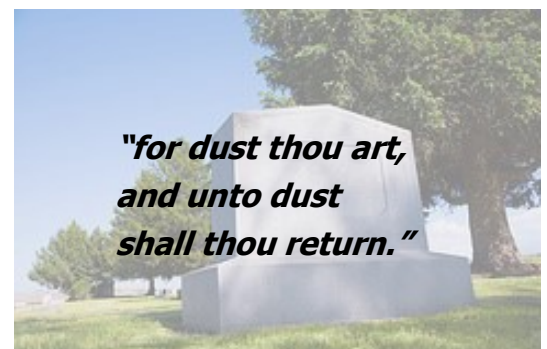
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at WHC (718) 767-1500**SCHEDULE OF WHC CLASSES**

(led by Rabbi Axelman)

Mondays @7:00 PM -- Judaism 101 Explore Your QuestionsPlease check our website for updated days and times of classes.
Currently classes are being streamed on zoom and not being held in person.