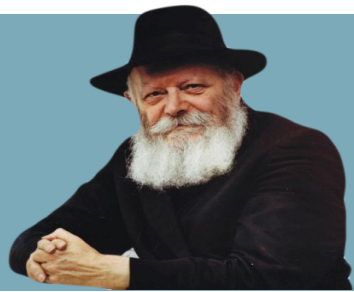


Opinion.

WHEN THE
REBBE
SELF-QUARANTINED
A2.



Tradition.

LEFT- AND
RIGHT-BRAIN
JUDAISM
A10.



JACK MA
DONATES
MEDICAL
SUPPLIES
TO ISRAEL
A11.

THE algemeiner

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US Coronavirus Death Toll Rises Past 3,000



The USNS Comfort passes the Statue of Liberty as it enters New York Harbor, March 30, 2020.
Photo: Reuters / Mike Segar.

BY REUTERS
& ALGEMEINER STAFF

The US death toll from the coronavirus pandemic climbed past 3,000 on Monday, the deadliest day yet in the country's mounting crisis, while New York cheered the arrival of a gleaming 1,000-bed US Navy hospital ship as a sign of hope in the city's desperate fight.

In a grim new milestones marking the spread of the virus, total deaths across the United States hit 3,017, including at least 540 on Monday, and the reported cases climbed to more than 163,000, according to a Reuters tally.

People in New York and New Jersey lined both sides of the Hudson River to cheer the US Navy ship Comfort, a converted oil tanker painted white with giant red crosses, as it sailed past the

Statue of Liberty accompanied by support ships and helicopters.

The Comfort will treat non-coronavirus patients, including those who require surgery and critical care, in an effort to free up other resources to fight the virus, the Navy said.

"It's a wartime atmosphere and we all have to pull together," said New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, who was among the digni-

Continued on Page A5

Israel Said to Be Making Progress Toward Coronavirus Vaccine

BY BENJAMIN KERSTEIN

Israel is making significant progress toward developing a vaccine for the coronavirus, the *N12* news site reported on Tuesday.

Earlier that day, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke with the director-general of the Israel Institute for Biological Research, Professor Shmuel Shapiro, and was updated on current efforts to develop a coronavirus vaccine.

Shapiro stated that pre-vaccination planning was well underway, and a model had been developed for experi-



An Israeli police officer helps a Health Ministry inspector put on protective gear before they go up to the apartment of a person in self-quarantine as a precaution against the spread of the coronavirus, in Hadera, Israel, March 16, 2020. Photo: Reuters / Ronen Zvulun.

menting potential vaccines on animals.

Further stages of research would involve actually testing the formulas on animals and then moving to human trials. Not all experiments that work on animals would succeed in human trials.

In the absence of a vaccine, Israeli medical workers are looking for stop-gap measures. On Tuesday, Israel's emergency service Magen David Adom (MDA) announced

Continued on Page A3

COVID-19 In Efrat

page A8



ShabbatCalendar

Parshat TZAV
פרשת צו

Times for New York City, Friday Candle Lighting
Shabbat Begins: 7:05pm | Shabbat Ends: 8:06pm



the algemeiner

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Opinion.

When the Lubavitcher Rebbe Self-Quarantined for Seder



PINI DUNNER
LOS ANGELES

One of the issues that has been coming up again and again in the past week during phone calls I have been having with my community, and with others from further afield, is the fact that people will be on their own for the Seder this year — or their Seder will be drastically reduced in numbers, with children or parents elsewhere, all isolated in the midst of the current coronavirus social-distancing self-quarantine situation that is so important to prevent the spread of the disease.

Some people will literally be by themselves, solitary, with no one to do the Seder with at all.

"How can we do Seder by ourselves?" they ask me. "Doesn't the Pesach Seder need to be done with family and guests?"

I have thought about this a lot, and would like to address everyone's concerns by sharing an extraordinary conversation that I had about 18 months ago.

I just happened to be in New York at the time, and a friend of mine messaged me that his daughter had become engaged. I texted him back that I was around and would be able to attend the engagement party, and that night, I drove to Monsey to celebrate the simcha.

While I was at the party, I bumped into a friend of mine, Rabbi YY Jacobson, a well-

known inspirational speaker on the East Coast. I knew that Rabbi Jacobson grew up on Montgomery Street in Crown Heights, in the heart of the Chabad community, just a few blocks away from the home of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe.

There is an aspect of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe's life that I feel is often overlooked, and we got to talking about it. The Lubavitcher Rebbe was incredibly down-to-earth and, together with his late wife Rebbetzen Chaya Mushka, the Rebbe led a very simple life. Indeed, as hard as it may be to believe, their life together was very private.

Rabbi Jacobson often tells stories about the Rebbe when he speaks to audiences, so I asked him if he ever focuses on this particular aspect of the Rebbe's greatness. Namely that the Lubavitcher Rebbe had no airs and graces at all, nor was he interested in the pomp and ceremony that is often the hallmark of other Hasidic leaders and "courts."

"For example," I asked Rabbi Jacobson, "do you ever tell audiences that in their 60 years of marriage, the Rebbe and his wife ate every Shabbes meal together on their own? No guests, no attendants, no public spectacle ... just a married couple eating together — bringing the food in, eating, clearing the table, doing the washing up. A man who had literally tens of thousands of people at his beck-and-call! What a powerful lesson!"

Rabbi Jacobson paused for a moment, and then he smiled. "I've got one better for you," he said. "A few weeks ago, I led a workshop for single mothers, and at the end of

the session, I took questions from the women and encouraged them to ask any question that was on their mind. One of the ladies put her hand up, and this is what she asked me ... it's a crazy story."

"A few months ago," she told him, "it was Pesach. The thing is, my ex-husband and I went through a very difficult breakup. After years in court over our kids, we finally settled on a shared custody arrangement, which means that we alternate Jewish holidays. This past Pesach it was my turn — my children were coming to me for Seder and I was so excited. I changed over my home for Pesach and prepared everything beautifully; it was going to be just me and the kids."

"I was so happy about them being with me, that I told everyone: my family, my friends, my neighbors. Then, one hour before yomtov, I got a phone call from my ex — for some reason, the kids were not going to be coming. I almost fainted from shock and heartache. I was also so ashamed. I guess I could have called my parents, or I could have called my neighbors — and gone to them for the Seder. But how could I actually do that? I had told everyone my kids were coming! Truth is, I did not have the energy to even be with anyone. I felt completely and totally numb — dry and lifeless.

"So I did the Seder by myself. On my own. It was the worst and most bitter Seder I have ever had. I just sat there crying the whole way through. Weeping. It wasn't Pesach. It was Tisha B'Av. I did not have to eat Maror. I — my entire life! — was Maror. Yes, I went through the Haggadah and ate the Matzah; but the



Menachem Mendel Schneerson — the Lubavitcher Rebbe — at the Lag BaOmer parade in Brooklyn, New York, May 17, 1987. Photo: Mordecai Baron via Wikimedia.

entire Seder took me 25 minutes.

"Rabbi Jacobson, did I do the right thing? Did I fulfill my Seder obligation? Was it even called a Seder? Because it did not feel like a proper Pesach."

Rabbi Jacobson told me — and believe me, as a public speaker, I know exactly what he means — sometimes your most inspirational moments in a speech are not prepared. They are a gift from God. You can prepare for hours. And then inspiration drops into your lap. Right then and there, Rabbi YY Jacobson had such a moment.

"Lady," he said, "in 1988 the Lubavitcher Rebbe's wife died, and he was left on his own, as they sadly had no children. She passed away in February, and two months later was Pesach. Every year the Rebbe and his Rebbetzen had Seder together, but this year he was on his own, totally by himself. Who would the Rebbe conduct the Passover Seder with?"

Continued on Page A7

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Antisemitism Is Thriving, and Coronavirus Will Fuel Its Growth



DEXTER VAN ZILE
BOSTON

I got called a lampshade on Twitter the other night.

I was called this hateful epithet by an anonymous defender of Giovanni Gasparro, the Italian artist who posted images of a recent painting of his on Facebook. The painting depicts an act of "Jewish ritual murder" perpetrated by a mob of hook-nosed Jews. The painting is based on a 15th-century blood libel in the Italian city of Trent, which cost 15 Jews their lives.

Predictably, E. Michael Jones, a noted and professional antisemite, just loved the painting, declaring in a Tweet that "Gasparro is clearly a great artist who is willing to contest the hegemony of modernism and post-modernist blasphemy and pornography by getting to the heart of the matter, namely Jewish control of the art world."

The painting put defenders of the Jewish people in a bind. By condemning Gasparro's lurid and pornographic painting, they risk drawing attention to it and prompting Jew-haters to come to Gasparro's defense — hence the lampshade jibe, which is a reference to Nazis allegedly using the skin of dead Jews to make lampshades and other household items. But remaining silent about the painting would send a message of acquiescence to its ugly message.

"Gasparro's painting is not a cartoon," said Brian Schrauger, a journalist based in Israel, and a Christian defender of the Jewish state. "This is Jew-hatred dressed up in the trappings of high art. It's going mainstream."

The troubling reality is that we are now confronted with a subculture of Jew-haters who can recruit new members into their ranks via the internet. The subculture was always present, even after the Holocaust, but their ability to transmit the virus of antisemitism into the larger American society was limited by a number of factors.

Antisemitism was a tough sell to children whose parents and grandparents had fought to defeat the Nazis in World War II. A lot of people who may not have liked Jews too much hated Nazis more, and understood that it was necessary to keep obsessive Jew-haters out of the mainstream.

Under these circumstances, dressing up in a white robe or donning the uniform of a neo-Nazi organization would put you so far outside the realm of polite society that most people wouldn't do it, even if they hated Jews. Their bosses and their relatives would shun them.

Anyone who was interested in participating in the American economy and raising a family had to think long and hard about coming out as a full-blown antisemite. They might have talked about Jews privately, but they kept their mouths shut in public.

These days, the anonymity of the internet allows Jew-haters to spread their message and recruit new members into their movement without having to reveal their identity. And those folks who do reveal themselves to be

antisemites are able to generate an income from their less-than-public supporters. Getting them kicked off Twitter, PayPal, and YouTube hinders them somewhat, but not entirely, because they can always go to other hangouts like Bitchute and Gab — the Brown Shirt District of the internet — to connect with their audience.

To make matters worse, the COVID-19 crisis has become an asset to Jew-haters throughout the world. Just recently, the FBI foiled a would-be killer in Missouri who was going to blow up a hospital. The suspect, who died after being shot by the FBI, had previously told his fellow Jew-haters that the COVID-19 virus was "engineered by Jews as a power grab. Jews are playing a long game and we are the only ones standing in their way."

With rhetoric like this, which closely mirrors the Iranian government's accusation that COVID-19 was a Zionist plot, the would-be killer was talking to the type of folks who call Israel and its supporters "lampshades."

In the coming months and years, we will probably see the development of a vaccine and effective treatments to drive COVID-19 into the dustbin of history, where it will remain.

Sadly, the virus of antisemitism has proven to be more resilient, making the need for a Jewish state ever more evident with each passing day.

Dexter Van Zile is Shillman Research Fellow for the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA). Van Zile's work has appeared in a number of publications including *The Jerusalem Post* and *The Boston Globe*.

World News.

Mossad Brings Massive Shipment of Medical Equipment to Israel

BY BENJAMIN KERSTEIN

Israel's foreign intelligence service, the Mossad, is bringing massive amounts of medical equipment to the country to fight the coronavirus, news site N12 reported on Monday.

A week and a half ago, the Mossad brought 100,000 coronavirus test kits to Israel and announced that it planned to bring four million kits in total.

On Sunday night, another Mossad-organized shipment arrived that included 27 respirators, 10 million surgical masks, 25,000 of the more sophisticated N95 masks, 20,000 test kits and 700 protective suits for use by the Magen David Adom emergency service.

Another 180 respirators are expected to arrive in Israel on Wednesday.

The source of the equipment is not



Health Ministry inspectors in Hadera, Israel, March 16, 2020. Photo: Reuters / Ronen Zvulun.

known, but Moshe Bar Siman-Tov, the director-general of the Health Ministry, said it was "in working order."

The Mossad is also involved in developing technological methods of fighting the virus, particularly the mobile phone app "Hamagen" ("The Shield"), which links phones with epidemiological data and alerts users if they are in the vicinity of someone infected with the disease.

Israeli Defense Minister Passover Warning: 'No Seders With Grandma and Grandpa'

BY ALGEMEINER STAFF

Ahead of Passover and amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, Israeli Defense Minister Naftali Bennett published a video on Monday imploring Jews around the world to

abide by strict social-distancing rules at their upcoming Seders.

"You do not do it this year with grandma and grandpa," he emphasized. "There will be no Passover Seder with young people and old people together, because that's the single most lethal combination."

IDF Converts Armored Vehicle Assembly Lines to Make Medical Equipment

BY ISRAEL HAYOM/JNS.org

The Israeli Defense Ministry's Rehabilitation and Maintenance Center at Tel Hashomer, outside Tel Aviv, is familiar to every member of the Israel Defense Force's Armored Corps. The center, a subordinate of the IDF's Technical and Logistics Directorate, produces Merkava tanks and other armored vehicles, builds command and control centers and upgrades other vehicles and communications systems for the army. In recent days, however, the center's assembly lines have been converted to help fight the war against Israel's number one enemy: coronavirus.

"Similar to the rest of Israel, we understood we are in a war right now against an invisible enemy, and therefore we decided to pitch in to help fight the coronavirus pandemic," said the center's commander, Col. Udi Amira.

Four days ago, the assembly line for manufacturing tank seats was repurposed to make protective goggles for medical crews.

"Within 12 hours we changed our entire work plan," said Amira. In recent days the center has produced 1,400 protective goggles per day.

The IDF's Technical and Logistics Directorate has initiated other such projects around the country as well. At a vehicle factory in Haifa, for example, one assembly line is refitting ambulances to protect their crews against the virus.

Workers at the Rehabilitation and Maintenance Center are currently operating in two shifts and are ready to move to three shifts to help the teams in the field.

Other initiatives are also taking shape, including an engineering project to manufacture ventilators made from medical equipment located in one of the factories.

"We also got a request from a hospital and we are trying to help them on a number of urgent matters," said Amira. "We have a team that wants to make Hazmat suits. The workers understand the challenge the country is facing and are ready for any task. We are working at full strength to find creative solutions that will save lives."

Israel's Declining Coronavirus Infection Rate May Indicate a Trend, Says Expert



A Magen David Adom worker on the way to test a patient with symptoms of COVID-19 (coronavirus), in Jerusalem, March 16, 2020. Photo: Yonatan Sindel / Flash90.

BY ISRAEL HAYOM/JNS.org

There has been a consistent decline in the rate of coronavirus infections in Israel since last week, with infections now doubling at a rate of once every eight days compared to once every three.

Professor Gabi Barabash, former director of the Israeli Health Ministry and of the Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center, told Channel 12 News that as this decline has been observed over a three-day period, it could, hopefully, indicate a trend.

"If the numbers continue looking like this, they [the government] could reconsider the lockdown after Passover," he said.

As of Tuesday morning, there were 4,831 confirmed coronavirus cases in Israel. Eighty-three patients are in serious condition and 66 of them are in need of respiratory support. Seventeen people have died, and 163 have made a full recovery.

Still, Barabash noted that infection rates could spike again unless certain sectors of Israeli society, and particularly the ultra-Orthodox sector, understand the importance of observing the Health Ministry's directives.

The disregard of some in the ultra-Orthodox community for the Health Ministry's directives is so severe that Health Minister Ya'akov Litzman—head of the Ashkenazi ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism Party—has asked Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to impose a quarantine on the ultra-Orthodox city of Bnei Brak, one of the areas hardest hit by the coronavirus.

On Monday, Netanyahu himself went into self-quarantine after a parliamentary aide tested positive for the virus. The prime

minister later tested negative for COVID-19.

In a televised address issued prior to receiving his test result, Netanyahu said that "this evening I am speaking to you from the Prime Minister's Residence in Jerusalem. Even though my medical tests have still not concluded, I have decided to enter into voluntary quarantine in order to set a personal example. The cameraman is six meters away." He added: "I am continuing to work from home."

"I must say that most of you are adhering to Health Ministry directives, [and] I thank you for that. But we have still not reached the desired point. There are individuals—and more than this, there are certain groups in the country which are pointedly ignoring, and are even showing contempt for, the clear directives that have been published," said Netanyahu.

The prime minister stressed that the "vast majority" of the public, including the ultra-Orthodox, were following the directives, but that the minority that wasn't was putting everyone in danger.

"The vast majority is disciplined, in the ultra-Orthodox public, the secular public, the Jewish and the non-Jewish public—but the undisciplined minority is endangering the majority. It is endangering both itself and the majority together. This is unabashed lawlessness."

"Therefore," he concluded, "I have ordered the security forces to prepare to step up enforcement in neighborhoods and communities in which there are such violations and in which there are events that endanger the lives of all of us. We will prevent extremist elements from harming public health and we will prosecute whoever attacks police, health, and military forces, who are trying to carry out their mission on behalf of all of us."

Continued from Page A1
Vaccine

it was starting an effort to collect blood plasma from those who have recovered from the coronavirus, believing the antibodies found in the blood may help fight the disease.

Professor Eilat Shinar, the director of the MDA Blood Services Division, explained, "In biological systems, when we are exposed to viruses or bacteria, our immune system responds by producing proteins called antibodies. These proteins are found in the plasma of each of us after exposure to the coronavirus."

"We want to take those who have recovered from corona and assessed as healthy," she said, "and ask them to come to MDA's Blood Services 14 days after they heal, and donate the plasma fluid in which these antibodies are concentrated to us."

She said of the procedure, "The donor is connected to a machine that will only extract plasma without the other blood components, which we collect. The advantage is that you can take a much larger volume — almost half a liter of plasma."

World News.



A combination picture shows Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Tel Aviv, Israel, November 17, 2019; and leader of the Blue and White party Benny Gantz in Tel Aviv, Israel, November 20, 2019. Photo: REUTERS/Nir Elias, Amir Cohen/File Photo.

Differences on Key Issues Threaten to Bog Down Netanyahu-Gantz Unity Talks

BY DOV LIPMAN/
JNS.org

The *Israel Hayom* newspaper reported that the senior Likud members have said “application Israeli sovereignty in Judea and Samaria under the auspices of the Trump administration’s peace outline was ‘non-negotiable,’” and added that the issue was on the table at the very start of the negotiations with Blue and White.

A second impediment is the assignment of senior government portfolios. As part of the agreement between Netanyahu and Gantz, the Blue and White Party chairman will

serve as defense minister, often considered the highest-level job after prime minister. In addition, Gantz is demanding that the Justice Ministry portfolio be given to former labor union chief Avi Nissenkorn, a member of Gantz’s left-wing camp.

Netanyahu wants the post assigned to one of his right-wing allies, as he seeks to reform the powers of Israel’s High Court and simultaneously assure that new laws will not be passed to bar a prime minister from serving while under indictment.

Former justice minister Ayelet Shaked, of the right-wing Yamina Party, told *JNS* that “the handing over of the defense and justice ministries to the left means ideological enslavement to the

left. It means the destruction of the entire justice ministry revolution and the regularization effort we have led in Judea and Samaria in recent years.”

Shaked said her party could not join a government which would undo the conservative agenda she advanced in the Justice Ministry. Many members of Netanyahu’s own Likud Party have the same hesitation about moving forward with a unity government because of this issue.

A third challenge is the assignment of the next Knesset Speaker. Gantz is refusing to consent to Netanyahu’s demand that longtime Speaker Yuli Edelstein return to the post. Last week in a contentious political drama, the High Court of Justice ordered Edelstein to call for a vote for a new Speaker prior to the formation of a coalition government, per the wishes of Gantz’s left-wing bloc as well as a 15-seat Arab Joint List. Rather than hold the vote, which contravened the Knesset’s own bylaws, Edelstein resigned, insisting that the court did not have jurisdiction to involve itself in legislative procedures.

Gantz is now insisting that having refused to carry out a High Court ruling, Edelstein cannot return to the position—even if Edelstein believes his move was justified. Netanyahu believes Edelstein was correct in acting to prevent the court from interfering in the independent affairs of the Knesset.

Meanwhile, *Channel 13* reports that Edelstein, who is No. 2 on the Likud Party list behind Netanyahu, has said he would “give up the Knesset Speaker position in return for the Foreign Minister portfolio.” The senior post is tentatively set to be given to Blue and White No. 2 Gabi Ashkenazi.

Similarly, Gantz is demanding that current Health Minister Yaakov Litzman, chairman of the United Torah Judaism Party (UTJ), be replaced by a medical professional. Gantz blames Litzman for the deterioration of the Health Ministry which he has led for five years and is attacking the health system’s lack of preparedness for the coronavirus crisis.

Last week, a group of senior doctors

submitted a letter to the government stating that the coronavirus pandemic “has exposed and caught the healthcare system at a low point from an organizational and operational point of view, which everyone had been aware of,” and adding that “it is right for a professional to be appointed to head the Health Ministry; a doctor with vast experience in Israeli healthcare.”

Gantz is now similarly insisting that Israel needs a professional from the medical industry, as opposed to a political appointee, to lead the Health Ministry and guide Israel through the coronavirus crisis. Netanyahu on the other hand believes that Litzman has performed well so far during the crisis.

Netanyahu needs to hand at least one ministerial portfolio to UTJ, a key member of his right-wing bloc, and supports the experienced Litzman continuing in his current position.

The final challenge which both Netanyahu and Gantz face within their respective blocs relates to the division of the remaining ministry portfolios.

In addition, Netanyahu is facing challenges over ministerial appointments from members of his own party. In the past government Likud members held 16 portfolios. As part of the generous agreement with Gantz, Netanyahu agreed that half of the ministries would be given to Gantz’s much smaller bloc, leaving significantly less available positions for Likud and the larger right-wing bloc.

In the current alignment, Likud is expected to have 10 ministries at most. One idea being floated is expanding the executive branch to 36 ministries. However, ministries are expensive to operate, particularly during a budgetary crisis. To make up for the lack of available posts, Netanyahu may instead dispatch senior Likud members and soon-to-be-former ministers as ambassadors to the United Nations, United States, Great Britain and Russia.

Defense Minister and chairman of the Yamina Party Naftali Bennett is demanding two ministries for his six-seat party, including

Continued on Page A7

BETH SHIFRA

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RAATUW
RABBINICAL ALLIANCE OF AMERICA

1 Adar, 5780
February 26, 2020

Dear Friend:

In years past, Beth Shifra maintained a Free Soup Kitchen all year round, open seven days a week, serving free meals three times a day, without charge. During the week of Pesach, Beth Shifra sponsored free Kasher for Pesach Sederim and daily meals around the city. We are personally familiar with their significant work and urge you to help Beth Shifra with any support that you can, including publicizing their inspiring work in your Shul or organization.

This year, Beth Shifra is sponsoring free Kasher for Pesach Seders and meals daily from Wednesday, April 8th, through Thursday, April 16th, at The White Shul, 2102 Avenue T & East 21st in Brooklyn. Free Kasher for Passover food packages will be offered on Wednesday, April 8th, at the White Shul, 2102 Avenue T & East 21st in Brooklyn from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm.

We proudly invite you to join us in making this year a memory of a Lifetime for those in need. Take the time now to have the merit and joy of helping a hungry family celebrate Passover. Please help Beth Shifra with any assistance that you can, including publicizing their good work in your Shul or organization.

May all those that participate in this holy effort be blessed from Heaven. On behalf of the Iqdu/RAA Presidents and of the Beth Din, I extend greetings of Torah.

Sincerely,
Mendy Mircovnik
Executive Vice-President, Rabbinical Alliance of America

SIMCHA EICHENSTEIN
Assembly Member • 49th District

February 26, 2020

Dear Rabbi Prusman:

I am aware that for fifty years, your organization, Beth Shifra, has provided year-round, daily free meals to those who are most needy in the New York Jewish community. My office staff is personally familiar with the outstanding work that you do, and I would like to urge everyone to help Beth Shifra in any manner possible, including publicizing the work they do in your Shul or organization.

During the Pesach holiday, Beth Shifra will be sponsoring Kasher for Passover sederim, food packages, lectures and programs to hundreds of people who would otherwise be unable to celebrate the holiday.

In 2020, these free Kasher for Passover Seders and daily meals will take place from Wednesday, April 8th through Thursday, April 16th at the White Shul located at 2102 Avenue T (East 21st Street) in Brooklyn. Pesach food packages will be distributed on Wednesday, April 8th at the synagogue between the hours of 12:00-2:00PM.

Please take the time to help a hungry family celebrate Pesach. Join in making this year a memory of a Lifetime for those in need.

In the merit of helping the hungry and poor, may you only receive the choicest blessings from Heaven.

Sincerely,
Simcha Eichenstein
Member of Assembly

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RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER ZT”L

“We are personally familiar with their important work.”
RABBI GERSON TANNENBAUM ZT”L
Director, The Rabbinical Alliance of America

Date	Time	Activities
Wed. 4/8	12-2 pm	Pick up packages
Wed. 4/8	8:00 pm	Doors Open
4/8 Sedar I	8:30 pm	Ancient Secrets of Judaism
Thurs. 4/9	12:00 pm	Meal/Seuda
	8:30 pm	Q & A: Judaism
	8:30 pm	Doors Open
4/9 Sedar II	8:30 pm	Exodus: Legend or History
Fri. 4/10	12:00 pm	Meal/Seuda
	7:30 pm	Lecture- 7 Wonders of Our Jewish Nation
Shabbat 4/11	12:00 pm	Defending The Faith
	7:30 pm	Meal
	7:30 pm	Oral vs. Written Torah
Sun. 4/12	12:00 pm	Meal
	7:30 pm	Lecture: The Deeper Beauty of Shabbos
	7:30 pm	What is kosher food?
	7:30 pm	Meal/Seuda
Mon. 4/13	12:00 pm	Meal/Seuda
	7:30 pm	Spectacular Children’s Program: Arts and Crafts
	7:30 pm	Meal/Seuda
	7:30 pm	Popular Aish HaTorah Speaker: Matzah = Affliction = Redemption Shomer Shabbos Singles Program With Live Music, Matchmakers & Smorgasboard.

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“We urge you to do whatever you can do to help Beth Shifra, תבא עליהם ברכה”
RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER ZT”L

Bogus Purim Service Broken Up

A group of missionaries in Brighton Beach who rented Public School 225 on the premise they were holding a social, attempted to hold a bogus “Purim Megilla” reading. The missionaries widely advertised their program in Russian as well as English throughout the Manhattan Beach and Brighton Beach area in an effort to entice young people to their service.

However, when the real purpose of the “service” was discovered, groups from Boro Park, Flatbush, Crown Heights and Monsey descended on the area to help the

staff of the Beth Shifra Institutions break up the rally. Since many of the protesters missed the Megilla reading, the staff of Beth Shifra held to Megilla readings, so those who were instrumental in breaking up the rally could observe the Mitzva properly.

The Beth Shifra rally, held at the Jewish Center of Ocean Parkway, was termed a huge success by the children and parents who attended. There was a live band and a puppet show to entertain the children.

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U.S. News.

Continued from Page A1

Death Toll

taries to greet the ship's arrival at the Midtown Manhattan pier.

Hospitals in the New York City area have been overrun with patients suffering from COVID-19, the respiratory illness caused by the virus. Officials have appealed for volunteer healthcare workers.

"We can't take care of you if we can't take care of ourselves," said Krystal Horchuck, a nurse with Virtua Memorial Hospital in New Jersey. "I think a lot of us have accepted the fact that we are probably going to get this. It's just that we want to survive. We're all being exposed to it at some point."

The United States has the most confirmed cases in the world, a number that is likely to soar when tests for the virus become more widespread.

President Donald Trump told a White House briefing that more than 1 million Americans had been tested for coronavirus — less than 3% of the population. While the United States has ramped up testing after a series of setbacks, it still lags countries like Italy and South Korea on a per capita basis.

In California, another hard-hit state, Governor Gavin Newsom said the number of COVID-19 hospitalizations had nearly doubled over the past four days and the number of ICU patients had tripled. Officials there also appealed for medical volunteers.

Central Park hospitals

To ease the pressure in New York, construction of a 68-bed field hospital began on Sunday in Manhattan's Central Park. The white tents being set up evoked a wartime feel in an island of green typically used by New Yorkers to exercise, picnic and enjoy the first signs of spring.

The makeshift facility, provided by the Mount Sinai Health System and non-profit organization Samaritan's Purse, is expected to begin accepting patients on Tuesday, de Blasio said.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, one of the most prominent public figures of the coronavirus crisis, told a news conference the state might have to step in to close playgrounds in the country's most populous city in order to enforce social distancing and slow the spread of the virus.

Cuomo and de Blasio are among a growing chorus of officials who have voiced frustration at Trump's handling of the crisis and a shortage of ventilators and personal protective equipment.

"I am not engaging the president in politics," Cuomo, a Democrat, said of Trump, a Republican. "My only goal is to engage the president in partnership."

Ford Motor Co said on Monday it will produce 50,000 ventilators over the next 100 days at a Michigan plant in cooperation with General Electric's healthcare unit, and can then manufacture 30,000 a month.

Officials in states hard hit by the pandemic have pleaded with the Trump administration and manufacturers to speed up production of ventilators to cope with a surge in patients struggling to breathe. On Friday, Trump said he would invoke powers under the Defense Production Act to direct manufacturers to produce ventilators.

Chilling numbers

US health officials are urging Americans to follow stay-at-home orders until the end of April to contain the spread of the virus, which originated in China and has infected about three-quarters of a million people around the world.

"If we do things together well — almost perfectly — we could get in the range of 100,000 to 200,000 fatalities," Dr. Deborah Birx, coordinator of the White House's coronavirus task force, told NBC's "Today" show.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said at a White House briefing that he expected a coronavirus outbreak in the fall, as well, but he said the nation would be better prepared to respond.

Authorities in New Orleans were setting up a field hospital at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center — the same site where thousands of Hurricane Katrina refugees gathered in 2005 — to handle an expected overflow of patients.

Dr. Thomas Krajewski, an emergency room doctor at St. Barnard Parish hospital in New Orleans, said he had watched patients be admitted to the hospital and seem ready to get better only to get worse.

"Many of them have passed away already in a way that ... it's not normal," he said. "It's not something that any of us had prepared to do. And we're kind of writing the book as we go."

The governors of Maryland, Virginia and Arizona issued "stay-at-home" orders as cases rose in those states, as did Washington, DC.

At the Stateville Correctional Center in Crest Hill, Illinois, 12 prisoners were hospitalized and several required ventilators, while 77 more showing symptoms were isolated at the facility, officials said.

Renowned country and folk singer John Prine was among the latest celebrities — including several members of Congress — to come down with the virus. Prine was in stable condition on Monday after being hospitalized with symptoms of the illness, his wife said on Twitter. Prine, a 73-year-old cancer survivor, lives in Nashville, Tennessee.

Victim of Monsey Stabbing Attack Dies Three Months Later

BY BENJAMIN KERSTEIN

A Jewish man who was critically wounded in an antisemitic stabbing attack in Monsey, New York, late last year died of his injuries on Sunday.

Josef Neumann, 72, had gone into a coma after suffering a head injury on Dec. 28 at the hands of a man who burst in on a Hanukkah celebration and began slashing attendees with a machete.

The Monsey attack capped a string of incidents in which Jews were physically attacked or accosted in the New York metropolitan area — including a Dec. 10 shooting at a kosher supermarket in New Jersey that left two members of the Hasidic community dead.

CNN reported that Yisroel Kraus, who survived the Monsey attack, described Neumann as "one of the most selfless people I know" and an "incredibly kind human being."

"Since I knew him, he was a very poor man," he said. "He never had a dime to his name and always goes around collecting money for other poor families. It was never about himself."

Neumann's attacker, Grafton Thomas, 37, was charged with attempted murder and pled not guilty to federal hate crimes charges in January.

The New York Post reported that sources indicated Thomas could now face a murder charge.

Neumann is survived by seven children, many grandchildren, a great-grandchild and several siblings.

WARNING



ENVIRONMENTAL
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Opinion.

Quarantining the Body While Liberating the Soul



SHMULEY BOTEACH
ENGELWOOD

These are the times that try parents' souls. How do we keep our spirits up and be a blessing rather than a burden, and uplift rather than a weight, to our families and children? How do we inspire all those around us when we feel deflated ourselves?

We are in dark times.

Locked in our homes, we feel unsure of what's happening and clueless of what's coming. Those who aren't already struggling to make ends meet are worried they might soon have to.

Augment that with the shrill tone of the 24-hour news-cycle and social media streams choked with calls for Psalms and recoveries — and the pain and confusion begins to reach a fever pitch. The darkness, for many, has begun to feel complete.

And yet, we are urged — as Jews, by our faith; as Americans, by our values — to believe that somehow in this darkness, there remains something good.

To be clear, I believe firmly that there is nothing to redeem the deadly viral contagion that has brought endless physical suffering and even death to many. As I learned from my teacher the Lubavitcher Rebbe, it is incumbent upon Jews to demand an end to death, loss and apparent injustice on earth. God promised us that he would perfect the world, and in such states of terrible disrepair — we dare not justify any further delays on him lifting his concealment.

So I won't try and find the light in death and illness, but will only protest it, and hope for and demand for the days where "death is swallowed forever (Is. 25:8)" and peace reigns across the earth, down to our minds and bodies, too.

However, with regard to the panic and uncertainty, the lockdowns and the quarantines, it seems that we have no choice but to redeem it, and to at least try and explore how, somehow, within this darkness there can be some good.

In the world of Chassidic thought, darkness

is said to be redeemable in two distinct ways.

The first is well-known if not ubiquitous in Jewish philosophy and Kabbalistic thought. It's what Ecclesiastes calls *Yitaron Or Min Hachoshech* — "the advantage of light from the darkness (Ecc. 2:13)."

It's a deep spiritual concept, but it can be explained simply: During daytime, you'd barely notice if you left your headlights on. Yet, in the darkness of a moonless night, striking a single match can be transformative. Darkness emphasizes light, in physically obvious terms. Thus, the sages tell us, acts of kindness shine in a time of crisis with a special brilliance. Indeed today, stories swirl around the media spheres of heroic doctors and neighbors, each proving in their own way that trying times bring out the best in us.

President Trump seems to believe this, too. He's told us in a number of tweets that terrible as this scourge may be, it's brought out "a spirit in our country like never before." In a press conference last Sunday, he even gave the concept an economic incarnation.

While it might seem like the economy is failing, the President insisted that in fact it wasn't. On the contrary, he assured our nation, the crisis was actually generating an invisible yet potent desire among the masses to get out and spend — something he termed a "pent-up demand." I would personally and respectfully put it differently, not referencing this in a material light but rather in the human desire to connect with others and be social. Now more than ever, people are itching for a restaurant and dreaming up an uplifting vacation that will put smiles on their children's faces. Sure there may be darkness, but from our inability to fly, there would soon be an abundance of adventure, parents exposing their children to the wonders rather than dangers of nature.

All of this may be true. I have seen friends on social media offering to PayPal cash directly to anyone feeling the crunch, and have personally witnessed the heroic staff at hospitals around the country working far-above overtime to save those in need. I have felt the darkness, but I have also felt its special light.

That said, these theories do not fully redeem the darkness. After all, the darkness

remains dim and uninspiring — it's still the light that we desire. The darkness is merely a medium which serves to amplify the light.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe discussed the mystical concept of darkness at length in his many deep, complex Chassidic discourses, known as *Ma'amorim*. He spoke of how God was more accurately found in hiddenness than in revelation. He spoke of how "God makes his abode in darkness (Ps. 18:12)" and how one day, when the world would be inevitably perfected, darkness would shine like light. "Even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you." (Ps. 139:12)

Darkness wasn't just a medium, but, mystically, an end unto itself. In fact, darkness itself would soon shine, he promised. Darkness itself would be transformed and exalted far beyond even light.

This is Jewish mysticism at its deepest point, to the extent where I can all but question my own understanding of it. But I know that somewhere therein lies the second path toward a mental rescue from this plague of night.

All around us, as families huddle together, we see people reordering their priorities. Family dinners, which seemed confined to the two nights of Thanksgiving and Christmas, are becoming regular events. The lost art of intimate conversation between husbands and wives is experiencing a rebirth as couples find solace in togetherness. Celebrities have lost their power to mesmerize as people search for deeper meaning and lives suffused with greater purpose.

Yes, I know that we're watching more Netflix and Amazon Prime than ever before. People need escapes. But we're not following the daily breakfast activities of our favorite stars as obsessively as in the past.

I hate the coronavirus with very fiber of my being. I pray to God that it is utterly vanquished. I will not find an ounce of redemption in the virus itself. But I will focus on those things that were so precious well before this plague invaded our lives and which remain precious even as we fight it.

By this logic, it's not just those defying the darkness that deserve our attention, and it would be a waste to live already now inside the bright future that surely awaits when we find a cure for this horrid disease. But a time like this might hold something valuable for each of us, in and of itself.

It's not for me to tell you how to build on this confusion. Each of us faces internal strife and struggle that cannot be addressed en masse. But what's sure is that this uniqueness of our circumstances presents an opportunity

equally unique: to look inside and introspect and to look outside and reconnect.

We have all spent much of the past few years escaping from those issues that we'd be better off to solve. Who can blame us? Modern American life has made it all too easy. Even if we haven't physically run for far-off destinations, or turned to stimulants or cigarettes, have we not buried our heads in TV's, shopping malls, or work?

When distractions are everywhere, it's hard to get around to the heavy-lifting of the heart. So, we escape, because we can. That is, until many of those escapes are cordoned off. And we are left alone with ourselves, our families, and our God. In this special isolation, perhaps we could reinforce these crucial bonds — and re-learn to talk, to care, and to love.

I believe that at this painful time for the world God wants me to be a more loving, less judgmental, and more compassionate human being. I believe that God reveals Himself in the world through the lovingkindness his children show to one another. And I believe that the time for this love is now. We must strive to be more caring.

This is a time that tests our character. As the head of a family I know my children are always watching. I believe that I have a strong responsibility to be positive, hopeful, and filled with faith in God and prayer for humanity. We mourn the losses. We heed the advice of doctors. We accept our responsibilities to the elderly and the infirm.

We ought not to only lament these days as hard quarantine of the body. Rather, as our selfless health care professional and dedicated medical researchers battle the virus, we should transform these days into a soft rehab of the soul. We should reconnect with our wives and our husbands, our brothers and our sisters, our sons and our daughters, and our friends, old and new. Daunting though it may be, we can also turn our minds toward the world around us and do what we can to perceive God Almighty who guides and animates everything we see.

Perhaps then we can be warmed by the knowledge that He, too, is in all the things we cannot see.

Darkness, King David tells us, is God's abode. May it soon shine like the light of day, granting healing to the sick, comfort to the bereaved, destruction of this diabolical plague, and hope to all humankind.

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, "America's Rabbi," is founder of the World Values Network and the author of 33 books, including "Judaism for Everyone."

Will a Rotation Government Turn to National Priorities?



DANIELLE ROTH-AVNERI
TEL AVIV

After covering three consecutive Israeli election cycles, and despite the announcement of a rotation government between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his chief rival Benny Gantz, the question of whether ego will continue to act as an obstacle to effective governance still remains.

As a political correspondent in Israel's most-read newspaper, *Israel Hayom*, I watched as the general public went from enthusiastic electoral interest to utter indifference as the political stalemate dragged on.

Journalism is my life's passion — a career that I live and breathe every waking minute. So when the nation went to the polls three times, each election cycle required a massive and intense effort on my part, as it does for every journalist who covers political affairs.

Over the past year, Israel has been locked in an intolerable situation — that of political turmoil. The instability could continue regardless of what transpires next and much of it has been driven by a single factor: ego.

The unwillingness of political leaders to compromise sent the people to the ballot box again and again, and the ego factor could well continue to dominate political developments, even after the latest news.

The fact that a country brimming with technological achievements, which is busy dealing with enemies that surround it, and

is now facing a massive coronavirus crisis, should be politically stymied for as long as it has been represents a major and unreasonable political failure. That needs to change.

The unfortunate truth is that elections in Israel have turned into a reality show. Many voters are guided by emotions when they cast their ballot. Netanyahu conjures the image of a strong leader; Gantz's good looks play to his advantage; Lieberman has created an imposing image of a tough figure; Bennett projects the image of a friendly leader.

After three election rounds, with each yielding largely the same result, it is time that politicians understand that they must work together to overcome deep divisions. So far, and despite all of the recent developments, they have not demonstrated any ability to do so.

The voters, in the meantime, are fed up with hearing about the same old promises and messages. Members of the Israeli public are united by their lack of patience with our political system, yet they are largely divided between two camps. One camp seeks stability and the status quo in the areas of defense, international affairs, and areas of key national



Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Blue and White leader Benny Gantz. Photo: Yonatan Sindel / Flash90.

importance. Netanyahu meets those requirements fully, and has excelled in delivering on such expectations. But the other camp seeks change and the arrival of a new leader. Until last week, that camp found its wishes expressed in the Blue and White list.

But as we now see by way of the disintegration of that party, the Blue and White political alliance was founded for the express purpose of toppling Netanyahu from power. Three elections revolved around the question of whether Netanyahu would retain power or not.

None of the elections discussed how to improve the lives of Israelis, our place among

Continued on Page A9

Opinion.

Continued from Page A2
Self-Quarantined

"I recall that a young boy, Ari Halberstam — who was later tragically gunned down on Brooklyn Bridge, in 1994 — approached the Rebbe after Maariv on the first night of Pesach and, on behalf of his mother, invited the Rebbe to his home for Seder. Ari's family lived at 706 Eastern Parkway, just one block away from '770.' The Rebbe smiled at Ari, and shook his head. He thanked him profusely, but told Ari he would be having the Seder in his private office in '770.'

"I was a yeshiva student at the time," continued Rabbi Jacobson, "so I am a first-hand witness to this story. In fact, the Rebbe's longstanding assistant Rabbi Leibel Groner offered to stay with the Rebbe, but the Rebbe sent him home to have Seder with his wife and children."

"And so, the great Lubavitcher Rebbe — the man who inspired countless people around the world for their Seders, who personally undertook to provide a meaningful Pesach Seder for Israeli Army personnel who were on duty on the first night of Pesach via his shlichim in Eretz Yisrael — had the Seder on his own. Not one other person was present. As the Talmud says: if you are on your own, you ask yourself the 'Ma Nishtana' questions, and then you answer them to yourself.

"A few of us yeshiva boys did not go home that night; we waited outside in the street — and after a couple of hours, the Rebbe opened the door to welcome Eliyahu Hanavi and recite Shefoch Chamatcha. He walked outside holding a candle and his Haggadah, said the prayer, gave us a wave, and then went back inside to finish the Seder — by himself."

"My dear lady," said Rabbi Jacobson, "if it was good enough for the Lubavitcher Rebbe to have the Seder on his own, trust me, your Seder was perfect!"

"He could have had his Seder with 100 people, 1,000 people, or 10,000 people. He personally arranged for all the army Seders in Israel to be sponsored. He was responsible for hundreds of thousands of people celebrating Pesach on Seder night, from Kathmandu to Alaska, from San Francisco to New Zealand. But at the end of the day, he went and did the Seder on his own. He didn't need anyone else to be close to God. He didn't need adulation. He didn't need validation. He sat alone and relived the Exodus from Egypt."

"I was only 15 at the time," concluded Rabbi Jacobson, "but despite my youth, I felt sad that the Rebbe had nobody to be with for the Seder. Why did he not invite even one person to be with him? But today, after hearing your story, I may have discovered the answer — and it is just a personal feeling. As a true Jewish leader, the Rebbe wished to empower all those souls who would ever need to do their Seder alone. He wanted them to know that their solitary Passover Seder was powerful, meaningful, and real. Jewish history and the Divine presence would dwell at their Seder just as it does at a Seder that has many people there."

Over the past couple of weeks, as the coronavirus crisis has unfolded across the world, and the reality of our isolated situations has become ever more evident — this incredible and very moving story about the Lubavitcher Rebbe has been at the forefront of my mind.

This year, so many people — probably more people than at any other time in Jewish history — will be having the Seder on their own or without their families. All of our Seders will be diminished and anxiety will be hovering in the air. And all of us will be thinking to ourselves — "is this really a proper Seder?"

I think Rabbi Jacobson's story about the Lubavitcher Rebbe in 1988 answers that question, and it eases any doubts we may have about our impending "depleted" experience. After all, "if it was good enough for the Lubavitcher Rebbe to have the Seder on his own, trust me, your Seder is going to be just perfect!"

Rabbi Pini Dunner is the senior spiritual leader of the Beverly Hills Synagogue.

Continued from Page A4
Key Issues

one senior post. However, seemingly all of the high-profile positions which would appease Bennett are expected to be given to Blue and White as part of the unity deal.

Current reports suggest Bennett may be offered the lesser internal security portfolio which oversees the police, fire and rescue departments.

Meanwhile, Yamina—which has remained loyal to Netanyahu throughout an extended election season—is threatening to take its six seats into the opposition. Netanyahu does not want to see the defection of any right-wing parties from his bloc, as he believes the loyalty of smaller parties give him further leverage against Gantz.

In response, the Likud Party stated that "the prime minister made it clear that the preservation of the national camp is more important than ever," while insisting that rumors currently circulating through the media regarding portfolio assignments are "fake news."

Gantz, on the other hand, faces an opposite challenge: While the Blue and White chairman has demanded that his bloc receive the same number of

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portfolio assignments as Netanyahu's bloc, his party is entering the government with only 17 MKs. If Gantz assigns 15 ministerial portfolios to Blue and White members, there will only be two remaining MKs who can reasonably remain active within the legislative branch. To free up some of its members to advance its legislative agenda, Blue and White may appoint professionals rather than politicians to key ministries.

The left-wing Labor Party faction is also expected to join the government as part of Gantz's bloc. Gantz has tentatively agreed for Labor chairman Amir Peretz to serve as economy minister and Labor MK Itzik Shmuli to serve as welfare minister.

At the core of the agreement between Netanyahu and Gantz is a rotation agreement for the premiership. Netanyahu will serve as prime minister for the first 18 months, according to the deal, and will then yield the

post to Gantz in September 2021.

During the first 18 months, Gantz, a former Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff, will serve as both deputy prime minister and defense minister.

Yet to be worked out during the negotiations is the challenging question of what post Netanyahu will receive during the second half of the rotation. Israeli law prohibits ministers—with the exception of the prime minister—from continuing to serve while under indictment.

Legislation will need to be passed by the new government to enable Netanyahu to continue to serve as a deputy prime minister and as a member of Israel's Security Cabinet despite being charged with criminal offenses.

If the two sides cannot reach an agreement in the coming days, Israel may be headed toward an unprecedented fourth election.



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Impressions.

As Corona Advances Through Efrat, Residents Buckle Down on Individual Home Fronts

BY JOSH HASTEN / JNS.org

Less than 20 kilometers south of Jerusalem in the Gush Etzion bloc, the community of Efrat and its 13,000 inhabitants made headlines this week as having one of the highest levels of coronavirus-infected residents percentage-wise in the country.

According to Efrat Mayor Oded Revivi in a conversation with JNS, at least 49 residents are coping with COVID-19 (as of Monday, March 30), with all of them considered to be in “light” condition.

Some 47 of those infected are being isolated and treated at home with only two residents spending some time in the hospital. Both are currently in one of the two “corona hotels” set up by the government as locations for patients to recover while not being sick enough to justify them taking up a precious hospital bed.

Revivi said “we now know that the first group of people were infected by one person during the Purim Megillah reading” on March 10 in the Tamar neighborhood. “The next day, 17 people had Purim *seudah* [a festive meal] with that same person. Then on the following Shabbat, that group split up into different *minyanim*,” public prayer quorums of 10 Jewish men.

In stark terms, he said “they were efficient as possible in spreading the virus without even knowing it.”

While Revivi remains adamant that nothing was done intentionally, “this is where we are.”

‘We decided as a family to quarantine’

As a result of the breakout, those who were in contact with infected neighbors were put into mandatory quarantine. In addition, one of the fifth-grade teachers in a local elementary school tested positive, forcing many young children to be quarantined as well.

Dvir Weinberg, who lives with his wife and six children in the Dagan neighborhood next to the Tamar, said when he was notified that his daughter’s teacher tested positive two days after Purim, instead of isolating her in a single room at home, the entire family decided to self-quarantine. Many other Efrat families have taken similar measures.

Weinberg told JNS that “when we told our daughter that her teacher had the virus and she had to quarantine, she broke down. It was traumatizing to hear. It was too much. So we decided as a family as a whole to quarantine.” The Weinbergs stayed inside for the next 12 days.

Going through the experience—and now at this juncture with most Israelis quarantined in one form or another, and unable to leave their homes except for essential needs—Weinberg said his message is that “it’s hard to stay in your house, whether this is going to be for one month or two. But the virus will suffocate itself and have nowhere to go if we continue social distancing, which is the safest way.”

He appreciates the Efrat Municipality for keeping in touch with residents and constantly updating them on the situation.

Rachel Abelow, who lives with her husband and four children in Efrat’s Zayit neighborhood, also decided to quarantine the entire family after

one of her sons had possible exposure to the virus. An educator herself who ran after-school programs for children, Abelow tells JNS that her focus these days is on “homeschooling and ‘mom’ stuff.”

“We’re lucky to be together as a family,” she said. “Every day feels a bit like Shabbat, in more of a rest mode where you don’t have to rush in the mornings.”

While acknowledging that the number of

into isolation as quickly as possible, even before they were ordered to by the Ministry of Health.

“Those two initiatives”—training local MDA volunteering and quickly mapping routes—“were copied in other places in the country,” he added.

Shmil Atlas is the director of the non-profit Efrat Foundation, which is aimed at assisting and enhancing the lives of the residents of Efrat beyond



Efrat in Gush Etzion. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

COVID-19 cases in Efrat is “frightening,” she is striving to view it all “in terms of the whole world. It doesn’t make me more worried [being in Efrat.] There are ups and down; times when we are more nervous and more calm. I am focusing on taking care of my family, on *davening*, and I’m happy to just stay home.”

‘Reacting to situations as they occur’

Revivi insisted that despite Efrat’s publicized high percentage rate of those infected, the figures were confusing and didn’t tell the full story of what was going on.

He explained that “within the first day or two, we understood the bureaucracy involved in getting people tested for corona through the Ministry of Health. Magen David Adom [Israel’s official emergency-response organization] would have to report to the ministry that someone wasn’t feeling well and get permission in order to come to someone’s home to carry out a test. They then have to get the test kit, do the test and bring it to the lab.”

So Ravivi decided to avoid the delays caused by the process. Instead, the community trained 10 local MDA volunteers on how to carry out the testing procedure.

“Within no time, we were able to carry out as many tests as all of Jerusalem, even though their population is 100 times bigger,” he related. “So that put Efrat at the top of the charts because it let us know about those who were sick, while at the same time allowing us to put those in quarantine as quickly as possible.”

He said the community also quickly gathered volunteers to map out the routes of those infected in order to get those who needed to be quarantined

the scope of municipal budgets.

While his donors are usually philanthropists from abroad, as a result of the pandemic he said that Efrat’s residents have been the ones stepping up to donate in order to help their neighbors and community.

Two weeks ago, Atlas assisted in raising funds for protective masks, gloves and other essential equipment for first responders, while now he is working with the social-services department in the community to hand out specialized kits for residents.

“For families who are in quarantine with little children, we have been handing out kids’ activities booklets, Play-Doh, markers and more,” he said. “For seniors, it’s crossword puzzles, elastic bands for exercise, etc.”

Atlas said, “I see myself as a tool for people who run the municipality to achieve their goals. During the year, we usually initiate fundraising projects, but now we are reacting to the different needs and situations as they occur.”

He said he is optimistic about the situation when he sees “people helping each other out and the bonds being formed between neighbors.”

“These are extremely challenging times—something we haven’t gone through in the past. This is the first time at the seder I’ll understand what it means to be hit with a plague,” Revivi said of the upcoming Passover holiday. “Human nature is being tested to change the way we have been doing things for years. This is a time of reflection on how we will emerge the day after [corona], and I hope we’ll learn some lessons and improve for the future.”

Legal Notice.

Opinion.

LEGAL NOTICE



Notice of formation of limited liability company(LLC) Name: THE FIX LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on 02/07/2020. Office location: Kings county. SSNY has been designated as the agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served.SSNY shall mail copy of process to: The LLC 315 3RD Avenue,2ND floor Brooklyn, NY 11215. Purpose: all lawful activity AJ; 2/28; 3/6/13/20/27; 4/3

Notice of formation of limited liability company(LLC) Name: MKE BY DEE,LLC. Articles of organization filed with the Secretary of State of New York on 01/07/2020. Office location: Kings county. SSNY has been designated as the agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to:Diana Perez 226 97th St.Apt. C3 Brooklyn, NY 11209. Purpose: all lawful activity AJ; 3/6/13/20/27; 4/3/10

Notice of formation of limited liability company (LLC) Name: TRILLIAN VFX LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the secretary of state of New York(SSNY) on 12/23/2019. Office location: Kings county. SSNY has been designated as the agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to: Victoria Osborn 836 Bergen St., Apt. 402, Brooklyn, NY 11238. Purpose: all lawful activity AJ; 3/13/20/27; 4/3/10/17

Notice of formation of limited liability company(LLC).Name: JK SYCAMORE LLC.Articles of organization filed with the secretary of state of New York(SSNY)on 12/17/2019. Office location: Kings county. SSNY has been designated as the agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served.SSNY shall mail copy of process to: The limited liability company 316 10th Street. Apt. #1 Brooklyn, NY 11215 purpose: all lawful activity AJ; 3/13/20/27; 4/3/10/17

SUPREME COURT – COUNTY OF KINGS JPMORGAN CHASE BANK, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION S/B/M CHASE HOME FINANCE LLC, Plaintiff against CAROLINE THUNDER, Defendant(s). Pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered on January 28, 2020. I, the undersigned Referee will sell at public auction in Room 224 of the Kings County Courthouse, 360 Adams Street, Brooklyn, NY, on the 16th day of April, 2020 at 2:30 p.m. premises described as follows: All that certain plot, piece or parcel of land, with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, situate, lying and being in the County of Kings, City and State of New York. Said premises known as 711 Schenck Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. 11207. (Block: 4308, Lot: 32). Approximate amount of lien \$ 938,870.75 plus interest and costs. Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed judgment and terms of sale. Index No. 14657-13. Bruno Codispoti, Esq., Referee. FEIN SUCH & CRANE, LLP Attorney(s) for Plaintiff 28 East Main Street, Suite 1800 Rochester, N.Y. 14614 (585) 232-7400 AJ; 3/13/20/27; 4/3/

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF SALE SUPREME COURT COUNTY OF KINGS, MTGLQ INVESTORS, L.P., Plaintiff, vs. MERLEY ALLEYNE A/K/A MERLEY C. ALLEYNE, ET AL., Defendant(s). Pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale duly filed on June 1, 2017 and an Order Pursuant to CPLR 2004 Extending the Time to Set Sale and to Ratify Sale Nunc Pro Tunc filed June 14, 2019, I, the undersigned Referee will sell at public auction at the Kings County Supreme Court, Room 224, 360 Adams Street, Brooklyn, NY on April 23, 2020 at 2:30 p.m., premises known as 9101 Avenue N, Brooklyn, NY. All that certain plot, piece or parcel of land, with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, situate, lying and being in the Borough of Brooklyn, County of Kings, City and State of New York, Block 8275 and Lot 9. Approximate amount of judgment is \$365,355.18 plus interest and costs. Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed Judgment Index # 510655/2015. Jageshwar Sharma, Esq., Referee Knuckles, Komosinski & Manfro, LLP, 565 Taxter Road, Suite 590, Elmsford, NY 10523, Attorneys for Plaintiff Cash will not be accepted. AJ; 3/20/27; 4/3/10

PROBATE CITATION – File No. 2019-1296 - SURROGATE'S COURT - QUEENS COUNTY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, By the Grace of God Free and Independent TO: Public Administrator of Queens County, Adele Ledas the heirs at law, next of kin and distributees of Mirga Viciulis, deceased, if living, and if any of them be dead, to their heirs at law, next of kin, distributees, legatees, executors, administrators, assignees and successors in interest whose names and places of residence are unknown and cannot be ascertained after due diligence A petition having been duly filed by Laima Sileikis-Hood who is/are domiciled at 40 Fifth Ave, Apt. 13B, New York, NY 10011 YOU ARE HEREBY CITED TO SHOW CAUSE before the Surrogate's Court, Queens County, at 88-11 Sutphin Blvd., Jamaica RM 62, New York, on June 25th, 2020, at 9:30 o'clock in the forenoon of that day, why a decree should not be made in the estate of Mirga Viciulis lately domiciled at 86-11 Whitney Ave, 6D, Elmhurst, New York 11373, United States admitting to probate a Will dated January 18, 2018, a copy of which is attached, as the Will of Mirga Viciulis deceased, relating to real and personal property, and directing that: Letters Testamentary issue to Laima Sileikis-Hood Dated, Attested and Sealed, March 19, 2020 - HON. Peter J. Kelly, Surrogate – James Lim Becker, Chief Clerk Attorney for Petitioner: Michael D. Lissner, Esq. Firm: Lissner & Lissner LLP Address of Attorney: 162 W. 56th Street, Suite 506, New York, NY 10019 Telephone Number (212) 307-1499 [NOTE: This citation is served upon you as required by law. You are not required to appear. If you fail to appear it will be assumed you do not object to the relief requested. You have a right to have an attorney appear for you.] AJ; 3/27; 4/3/10/17



Continued from Page A6 Rotation

the international community, or any other core issue. They have only been about Netanyahu staying or going.

Even the coronavirus pandemic failed to push the sides into an emergency unity government. Weeks went by without movement or compromise when it was so badly needed. And though Netanyahu and Gantz have now moved toward a rotation government, tough negotiations still lie ahead, and former political parties remain unwilling to budge, remaining divided over the core question of Netanyahu.

Covering these developments has been like working 24/7, and political reporters have barely rested for a full year.

As a political correspondent, I am aware of the weight of my words. What and how I report has the ability to shape the opinion of the public. The responsibilities of the job therefore require constant self-appraisal.

Although Israel Hayom is a right-leaning newspaper, my task was to focus on the Blue and White list, an assignment that came with its own complexities. These included facing pushback at Blue and White press conferences due to articles I had written the previous day.

The first elections in April 2019 were fascinating. A new list of parties had gelled together to form Blue and White, attracting new people, and the experience of getting to know them was refreshing for me and for my readers. We were interested in learning about the viewpoints of the new opposition.

The second elections of

September 2019 created a significant challenge for reporters, who had to find new ways of covering what were essentially the same electoral issues. By the time the third elections rolled around, everyone had lost interest. My sense was that we journalists were, by then, writing and speaking to ourselves. The people had become exhausted and uninterested in political affairs. On taxi rides to Channel 13's morning studios, even drivers stopped asking what the day might bring — a product of the sense of endless stalemate.

With the coronavirus dominating the headlines, a new and cynical joke developed among political correspondents: that the coronavirus would win the elections. Perhaps, in light of recent announcements, there's more to that than was initially expected.

After all is said and done, it's become clear that most people are not deeply interested in politics. A small fraction of the population follows political developments, and you can see and gauge their views on Twitter and other social media platforms. Most people, however, are simply seeking a better life, and they will vote for those likely to help them to build secure businesses or provide better education for their children. For that to happen, a government must now form.

Despite, ironically, increases in voter turnout after the mudslinging between the political camps, the electorate seems more disenfranchised than before. Public disgust increased and the estimation of politicians among the voters reduced.

It is too soon to know where developments will lead exactly, but whatever these latest announcements

produce, ultimately a fundamental change to the electoral system is needed and long overdue. It's the surest way to restore public faith and interest in the political system.

That fundamental change should begin with the raising of the threshold for parties to enter the Knesset to a level that leaves no more than four main parties on the ballot paper. Doing so would remove the ability of small parties to extort whole political blocs and grind the country into the political paralysis we have known for a full year, across three elections.

Additionally, and no less importantly, politicians must learn how to get along with one another, and to finally begin cooperating for the national interest. Battles of ego are not what will win the war against the coronavirus in Israel or restore public faith — a core foundation of any healthy democracy.

Let's hope that we are now finally entering an era characterized by the subjugating of ego and the raising up of national priorities. I, along with my colleagues, will be watching — and reporting.

Danielle Roth-Avneri is an expert at the MirYam Institute and is currently a leading political correspondent and editor for the Israel Hayom/Israel Today newspaper, the most widely circulated publication in Israel.

The MirYam Institute is the leading international forum for Israel focused discussion, dialogue, and debate, focused on campus presentations, engagement with international legislators, and gold-standard trips to the State of Israel. Follow their work at www.MirYamInstitute.org.

National Anxieties and Doomsday Scenarios in HBO's 'Plot Against America'



THANE
ROSENBAUM/
JNS.org

Improbable as it may seem during a global pandemic, HBO is airing a miniseries that could very well take your mind off of the coronavirus. And while it's not a news program but a multi-part movie, and has nothing to do with COVID-19, it does involve infections, national anxieties and doomsday scenarios.

HBO's "The Plot Against America" (the first two episodes have already aired) is a remarkably fine and chilling adaptation of the Philip Roth novel by the same name. It was created and written by Ed Burns and David Simon, the same TV tandem that gave us "The Wire." Roth's political thriller presented them with the challenge



A scene from the HBO miniseries
The Plot Against America. Photo:
YouTube screenshot.

of dramatizing the "what if" possibility that during the Holocaust, the United States followed the lead of Nazi Germany and erected its own barbed-wire concentration camps for American Jews — or at least stripped them of their urban Jewishness and converted them into heartland Americans. Americanized Jews, naively confident in the constitutional liberties afforded to them under the Bill of Rights, never see it coming.

This is Roth's re-imagining of

the presidential election of 1940. In his counter-history, Franklin Roosevelt, the man who brought America out from the Depression, does not lead it during World War II. In fact, America stays out of the war entirely. A wave of America First nativism overwhelms the country and gets behind the national hero Charles Lindbergh, a known antisemite and Hitler sympathizer. He immediately signs non-aggression pacts with Germany and Japan.

The Greatest Generation stays home and loses its moment.

It's worse than that. America under the Lindbergh administration soon becomes a place where, as one character declares in the HBO film, "These goddam American Firsters have always been here, but they now have permission to crawl out from under a rock!"

Sound familiar? Early in the Trump administration, and particularly during the skirmish in Charlottesville, Va. — where alt-right protesters chanted "Jews will not replace us!" — there were, and are still, those who would suggest a dangerous parallel between the actual 2016 presidential election and the fictional "The Plot Against America": an outside-the-box, pop-cultural celebrity of a candidate catches fire, rouses the public at large rallies, exhibits anti-democratic and authoritarian impulses, and taps into an

Continued on Page A10

Tradition.

Left- and Right-Brain Judaism



JONATHAN SACKS
LONDON

The institution of the Haftarah – reading a passage from the prophetic literature alongside the Torah portion – is an ancient one, dating back at least 2000 years. Scholars are not sure when, where, and why it was instituted. Some say that it began when Antiochus IV's attempt to eliminate Jewish practice in the second century BCE sparked the revolt we celebrate on Chanukah. At that time, so the tradition goes, public reading from the



Torah was forbidden. So the Sages instituted that we should read a prophetic passage whose theme would remind people of the subject of the weekly Torah portion.

Another view is that it was introduced to protest the views of the Samaritans, and later the Sadducees, who denied the authority of the prophetic books except the book of Joshua.

The existence of haftarat in the early centuries CE is, however, well attested. Early Christian texts, when relating to Jewish practice, speak of “the Law and the Prophets,” implying that the Torah (Law) and Haftarah (Prophets) went hand-in-hand and were read together. Many early Midrashim connect verses from the Torah with those from the haftarah. So the pairing is ancient.

Often the connection between the parsha and the haftarah is straightforward and self-explanatory. Sometimes, though, the choice of prophetic passage is instructive, telling us what the Sages understood as the key message of the parsha.

Consider the case of Beshalach. At the heart of the parsha is the story of the division of the Red Sea and the passage of the Israelites through the sea on dry land. This is the greatest miracle in the Torah. There is an obvious historical parallel. It appears in the book of Joshua. The river Jordan divided allowing the Israelites to pass over on dry land. “The water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away ... The Priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation

had completed the crossing on dry ground.” (Josh. ch. 3).

This, seemingly, should have been the obvious choice as haftarah. But it was not chosen. Instead, the Sages chose the song of Deborah from the book of Judges. This tells us something exceptionally significant: that tradition judged the most important event in Beshalach to be not the division of the sea but rather the song the Israelites sang on that occasion: their collective song of faith and joy.

This suggests strongly that *the Torah is not humanity's book of God but God's book of humankind*. Had the Torah been the our book of God, the focus would have been on the Divine miracle. Instead, it is on the human response to the miracle.

So the choice of haftarah tells us much about what the Sages took to be the parsha's main theme. But there are some haftarat that are so strange that they deserve to be called paradoxical, since their message seems to challenge rather than reinforce that of

the parsha. One classic example is the haftarah for the morning of Yom Kippur, from the 58th chapter of Isaiah, one of the most astonishing passages in the prophetic literature:

Is this the fast I have chosen – a day when a man will oppress himself? ... Is this what you call a fast, “a day for the Lord's favour”? No: this is the fast I choose. Loosen the bindings of evil and break the slavery chain. Those who were crushed, release to freedom; shatter every yoke of slavery. Break your bread for the starving and bring dispossessed wanderers home. When you see a person naked, clothe them: do not avert your eyes from your own flesh. (Is. 58:5-7)

The message is unmistakable. We spoke of it in last week's *Covenant and Conversation*. The commands between us and God and those between us and our fellows are inseparable. Fasting is of no use if at the same time you do not act justly and compassionately to your fellow human beings. You cannot expect God to love you if you do not act lovingly to others. That much is clear.

But to read this in public on Yom Kippur, immediately after having read the Torah portion describing the service of the High Priest on that day, together with the command to “afflict yourselves,” is jarring to the point of discord. Here is the Torah telling us to fast, atone and purify ourselves, and here is the Prophet telling us that none of this will work unless we engage in some kind of social action, or at the very least behave honourably toward others. Torah and haftarah are two voices that do not sound as if they are singing in harmony.

The other extreme example is the haftarah for today's parsha. Tzav is about the various kinds of sacrifices. Then comes the haftarah, with Jeremiah's almost incomprehensible remark:

For when I brought your ancestors out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices, but I gave them this command: Obey Me, and I will be your God and you will be My people. Walk in obedience to all I command you, that it may go well with you. (Jer. 7:22-23)

This seems to suggest that sacrifices were not part of God's original intention for the Israelites. It seems to negate the very substance of the parsha.

What does it mean? The simplest interpretation is that it means “I did not only give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices.” I commanded them but they were not the whole of the law, nor were they even its primary purpose.

A second interpretation is the famously controversial view of Maimonides that the sacrifices were not what God would have wanted in an ideal world. What He wanted was *avodah*: He wanted the Israelites to worship Him. But they, accustomed to religious practices in the ancient world, could not yet conceive of *avodah* shebalev, the “service of the heart,” namely prayer. They were accustomed to the way things were done in Egypt (and virtually everywhere else at that time), where worship meant sacrifice. On this reading, Jeremiah meant that from a Divine perspective sacrifices were *bedi'avad* not *lechatchilah*, an after-the-fact concession not something desired at the outset.

A third interpretation is that the entire sequence of events from Exodus 25 to Leviticus 25 was a response to the episode of the Golden Calf. This, I have argued elsewhere, represented a passionate need on the part of the people to have God close not distant, in the camp not at the top of the mountain, accessible to everyone not just Moses, and on a daily basis not just at rare moments of miracle. That is what the Tabernacle, its service and its sacrifices represented. It was the home of the Shechinah, the Divine Presence, from the same root as *sh-ch-n*, “neighbour.” Every sacrifice – in Hebrew *korban*, meaning “that which is brought near” – was an act of coming close. So in the Tabernacle, God came close to the people, and in bringing sacrifices, the people came close to God.

This was not God's original plan. As is evident from Jeremiah here and the covenant ceremony in Exodus 19-24, the intention was that God would be the people's sovereign and lawmaker. He would be their king, not their neighbour. He would be distant, not close (see Ex. 33:3). The people would obey His laws; they would not bring Him sacrifices on a regular basis. God does not need sacrifices. But God responded to the people's wish, much as He did when they said they could not continue to hear His overwhelming voice at Sinai: “I have heard what this people said to you. Everything

they said was good” (Deut. 5:25). *What brings people close to God has to do with people, not God*. That is why sacrifices were not God's initial intent but rather the Israelites' spiritual-psychological need: a need for closeness to the Divine at regular and predictable times.

What connects these two haftarat is their insistence on the moral dimension of Judaism. As Jeremiah puts it in the closing verse of the haftarah, “I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” (Jer. 9:23). That much is clear. What is genuinely unexpected is that the Sages joined sections of the Torah and passages from the prophetic literature so different from one another that they sound as if coming from different universes with different laws of gravity.

That is the greatness of Judaism. It is a choral symphony scored for many voices. It is an ongoing argument between different points of view. Without detailed laws, no sacrifices. Without sacrifices in the biblical age, no coming close to God. But if there are only sacrifices with no prophetic voice, then people may serve God while abusing their fellow humans. They may think themselves righteous while they are, in fact, merely self-righteous.

The Priestly voice we hear in the Torah readings for Yom Kippur and Tzav tells us *what* and *how*. The Prophetic voice tells us *why*. They are like the left and right hemispheres of the brain; or like hearing in stereo, or seeing in 3D. That is the complexity and richness of Judaism, and it was continued in the post-biblical era in the different voices of halachah and Aggadah.

Put Priestly and Prophetic voices together and we see that ritual is a training in ethics. Repeated performance of sacred acts reconfigures the brain, reconstitutes the personality, reshapes our sensibilities. The commandments were given, said the Sages, to refine people. The external act influences inner feeling. “The heart follows the deed,” as the Sefer ha-Chinuch puts it.

I believe that this fugue between Torah and Haftarah, Priestly and Prophetic voices, is one of Judaism's great glories. We hear both how to act and why. Without the how, action is lame; without the why, behaviour is blind. Combine Priestly detail and Prophetic vision and you have spiritual greatness.

Shabbat Shalom

*Continued from Page A9
Doomsday*

American vein that is hateful towards immigrants, and especially Jews.

No doubt the results of the 2016 presidential election – the Make America Great Again (MAGA) hats; the hesitations to condemn right-wing, anti-Semitic hate; and the ceaseless scapegoating that is President Donald Trump's go-to trump card – propelled HBO to green light this project.

The quality and overall dramatic scope of “The Plot Against

America” is noteworthy for many reasons – not least of which is that it's entertaining and suspenseful. (Those who read the novel know what happens at the end; I won't spoil it here.) There has been a long history of trying to adapt Roth's fiction into feature films – largely unsuccessfully. He wrote 32 books over a six-decade career, nearly all of which were novels. Eight, including “The Plot Against America,” have made it to the screen – from “Goodbye Columbus” (1969) to “American Pastoral” and “Indignation,” both in 2016. None has been especially noteworthy, although the obscure “Indignation” was probably the most critically acclaimed.

Of their many failings, these films never seemed to get the Jewish references right – the mix of street-wise banter and old-world neurosis, the suffocating history and caustic skepticism of greeners, the American brass rings that come with many attached strings. Both Bruce Springsteen and Philip Roth are faithful sons of working-class New Jersey, and despite Bruce's Jewish-sounding name (he is not a Jew), the humiliations and slights of Asbury Park are nicely aligned with the shattered dreams of Roth's Jewish Weequahic.

Unlike the other adaptations, “The Plot Against America” is pitch-perfect Roth. John Turturro is stellar as Rabbi Bengelsdorf, the quintessential court Jew and unwitting shill who comes to learn that his place in the Lindbergh administration is provisional. His South Carolina courtliness is valued only insofar as he can delude American Jews, worshipers of FDR, to briefly believe that the notoriously antisemitic aviator has no malice toward them.

Zoe Kazan is sublime as the intuitive homemaker who never fully buys into the premise that America was founded as a pogrom-free nation. She is the first to see that all is not right in America for Jews, and that brushing up on French and moving to Montreal is the next step for the Diaspora in North America.

Today, she would go the way of French Jews who are buying apartments in Tel Aviv.

“The Plot Against America” is a cautionary tale for when a country becomes incautious, its democratic values imperceptibly erode, true nativist feelings are unleashed, ancient prejudices receive makeovers, and the promises of inclusion and acceptance are revealed as delusions.

This was make-believe for Roth, a clever thought experiment. But you don't need a pandemic to be reminded of the viral rot that sometimes infects the political culture of a nation. Vaccines then are only placebos; and sounding the alarm comes too late.

Thane Rosenbaum is a novelist, essayist, law professor, and Distinguished University Professor at Touro College, where he directs the Forum on Life, Culture & Society. His latest work, Saving Free Speech... From Itself, was just published. He can be reached via his website.

Social.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu takes a selfie with chairman of Alibaba, Jack Ma, during a meeting with leaders of large corporations in China, during Netanyahu's visit to China on March 20, 2017. Photo: Haim Zach/GPO.

Jack Ma, Alibaba Foundation Donate Medical Supplies to Israel to Fight Coronavirus

BY ADI PICK/CTech

Jack Ma, the founder and former chairman of Alibaba Group Holding, through the Alibaba Foundation and Jack Ma Foundation has donated medical supplies to Israel to help fight the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, the foundations announced Sunday. The supplies include Covid-19 test kits, face masks, face shields, and protective clothing.

The two cargo flights loaded with the medical supplies

departed from Shanghai and arrived in Tel Aviv Sunday.

The foundations have also donated medical supplies and testing kits to 24 Latin American countries including Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, testing kits and masks to 54 countries throughout Africa, and 800 ventilators to different countries in Europe.

Ma has visited Israel twice, both times in 2018, during which he met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, local tech entrepreneurs, and received an honorary doctorate from Tel Aviv University.

Jerusalem Orchestra Members Perform Virtual Concert From Homes in Israel, New York

BY SHIRYN GHERMEZIAN

The Jerusalem Orchestra East & West did a virtual performance last week to help lift spirits amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Tom Cohen, the orchestra's artistic director and chief conductor, and the 35 musicians he worked with recorded a new original piece called "Darbuka la Corona" from their homes in Israel and New York. The almost 3-minute clip featured the musicians in various parts of their home and even outside.

"One morning during the first week of this corona frenzy, I suddenly realized that for me, as well as for my orchestra's members, this is the first time in 11 years we do not wake up for days of rehearsals, concerts, arrange-

ments, composition and other creative activities that have become our daily routine," Cohen wrote on the orchestra's Facebook page. "When I realized that the orchestra's whatsapp group continued to be vibrant and active — I immediately sat down to do the only thing I know how...I wrote a small piece that aims to make us all happy and show our love and familiarity (sic), that is more powerful than anything else. I wanted it to be both very simple yet complexed, 'high' but at eye level — just like us."

He added, "I hope these sounds and images, of all 35 members of the orchestra, regardless their age, religion, gender or origin — from Majd al krum to Ashkelon, from Jerusalem to New York — celebrating love and longing for friendship and music, will help us all go through this period together."

Workers in Hazmat Suits Collect Prayers From 'God's Mailbox' in Jerusalem

BY REUTERS
& ALGEMEINER STAFF

Twice a year, cleaning teams using long sticks gouge out tens of thousands of written prayers that visitors traditionally cram into the crevices of Judaism's Western Wall in Jerusalem.

It was spring cleaning again at the wall on Tuesday. But this time, the rite was held with precautions against coronavirus infection in place.

Workers in hazmat suits and gas masks sprayed



A laborer sanitizes the stones of the Western Wall as part of measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), in Jerusalem's Old City, March 31, 2020. Photo: Reuters / Ammar Awad.

sanitizer on the wall's ancient stones while others held onto their sticks with gloves as they extracted the paper notes left in "God's mailbox."

Religious authorities also operate a service in which people can email their prayers for placement between the stones.

One would-be worshiper, who stepped up to the wall and kissed it, was removed by police, a day after Israel tightened public prayer restrictions.

The rabbi of the Western Wall, Shmuel Rabinowitz, who oversees the collection of the notes to ensure there's always room for more, offered a prayer for salvation "from this difficult virus that has attacked the world."

The papers were placed into bags for ritual burial on Jerusalem's Mount of Olives. A short distance away from the Western Wall, Al-Aqsa Mosque was also being sanitized.

The Western Wall is a remnant of the compound of the Second Temple that was destroyed in 70 AD. It stands today beneath a religious plaza revered by Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary and by Jews as the Temple Mount.



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