



# The Scroll

CAS Scroll – The weekly newsletter of Congregation Ahavas Sholom

March 6, 2020

Adar 10, 5780

Volume 2

Number 1



*And you shall affix them to your doorposts*

## Rabbis Advise Jews to Avoid Touching & Kissing Mezuzahs

**✚**n consideration of the very real health risks associated with the coronavirus, rabbis in Israel and Europe are advising people not to kiss mezuzah.

Earlier this week, Israel's Ashkenazi chief rabbi, David Lau, requested Jews stop kissing mezuzahs to stem

### In this week's Scroll

***Rabbis advise Jews to Avoid Touching & Kissing mezuzahs***

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***Shabbat Services, Kiddush, & CAS News***

This Week's Torah Portion  
Tetzaveh



*Candle lighting*  
5:35 PM

*Shabbat Ends*  
6:36 PM

the spread of the disease. In a statement Lau said, "as we see the unfortunate spread of a terrible disease, certainly one shouldn't kiss mezuzahs or even touch them. Reflecting upon the verses written in the scroll will suffice." The next day the Conference of European Rabbis followed suit, advising people to avoid kissing or touching mezuzahs.

The USCJ didn't release any directives about



*Chief rabbi, David Lau, suggests Jews not touch mezuzahs; but, keep their meaning in our hearts.*

mezuzahs; but did provide a guide for protecting oneself and recognizing symptoms of the virus.

The coronavirus is believed to have originated in China last year and has since spread to 23 other countries world-wide.

So far, there have been a limited number of occurrences of the coronavirus in the U.S. There have been 159 reported cases of the coronavirus across 16 states in the U.S. It has resulted in 11 deaths, ten in Washington State and one in California. New York State has reported 22 cases of the coronavirus, including at least three 'suspected' cases in New York City. Governor Andrew Cuomo said he expects the

number of coronavirus cases to increase as more people are tested. New Jersey reported its first case of the coronavirus yesterday. As of this morning, Israel has reported 15 cases of the coronavirus.

In the Torah, Hashem commanded that all Jews attach mezuzahs to their doorposts; tradition dictates that a Jew kiss, or at least touch the mezuzah as they enter and leave Jewish spaces.

In many spaces frequented by ultra-orthodox Jews there might be a mezuzah attached to every door frame in the dwelling/ building which increases the possibility of infection exponentially. ✨

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*Note prior to going to live, new reports indicated the virus is spreading quickly. By the end of the day, the number of reported cases had jumped to 210, with another death attributed to the virus increasing the death toll to 12. Also, the number of states reporting a case of the coronavirus has grown to 18. These numbers will most definitely change over the coming days.*

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## **Congregation Ahavas Sholom**

**President – Eric Freedman**  
**Rabbi Simon Rosenbach**  
**Cantor – Fred Grabiner**  
**Gabbai - Hooshmand Delshad**  
**Webmaster – Jeff Haveson**  
**Scroll Editor – Bezalel Tim Lee**

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**Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness.**

**Symptoms\* can include**

**FEVER**



**COUGH**



**\*Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.**

**SHORTNESS OF BREATH**



**Seek medical advice if you develop symptoms, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.**



CS 315252-A 03/03/2020

For more information: [www.cdc.gov/COVID19-symptoms](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19-symptoms)

# Congregation Ahavas Sholom & the Jewish Museum NJ Hosts Sussex Avenue School's Art Exhibit at JMNJ



**R**ecently Congregation Ahavas Sholom hosted Sussex Avenue School's eighth Annual Art Exhibit and Auction.

This year's exhibit attracted its largest turnout to date. Nearly 100 students, parents, and staff crowded

into the Jewish Museum to support these young, talented students. The young artists, ranging from Kindergarten students to fifth graders had their creations beautifully framed and displayed on the walls of the museum. The framed artwork in a real exhibit space created an environment that gave the





students an inspiring taste of the possibilities that lay before them.

Once again, Congregation Ahavas Sholom opened its doors to the School's annual event. According to synagogue President, Eric Freedman, "the Synagogue is dedicated to working with and supporting the community...and we will continue to do so."



*CAS President, Eric Freedman said he was happy and proud to have the show at JMNJ each year.*

Also known as the Sussex Avenue School of Mathematics and Sussex Renew; Sussex School has been paving new paths in teaching and engaging with its young student body for years. Coupling academic achievement and artistic

exploration with music appreciation; Sussex provides young students with a well-rounded education that should aid them in the years to come. Although Ahavas Sholom Has been hosting the Sussex Art Exhibit for the last several years, it isn't the first time they've worked together; Ahavas Sholom also spearheaded the drive that brought the school (located off Route 280) a new playground, in 2008. ✨

# SIMON

# SAYS

## Thought Provoking Insights from Rabbi Simon Rosenbach



*Rabbi Simon Rosenbach*

**T**he Urim and Thummim make their appearance in this week's Torah portion. The High Priest carried them in the "breastpiece of decision" (whatever that was), maybe

part of the garments that High Priest wore, or maybe an accessory that the High Priest wore. We do not know what precisely they were, and the medieval commentators really did not know what they were; the commentators sniped at each other's descriptions.

What we do know is that the Urim and Thummim were two objects, maybe made of stone, wood, or bone, and they were thrown like dice to provide an answer to a binary question: is the defendant guilty or innocent? (There is some indication that the words are derived from the words "guilt" and "innocence.") Should we engage the enemy? Should we do some thing? It was like consulting the Magic 8-Ball.

Nachmanides concluded that Urim and Thummim were made by God, reasoning that the detailed construction instructions of the Mishkan do not include the Urim and Thummim. In any event, the users thought that the Urim and Thummim were imbued by the divine spirit, otherwise judges and generals would not trust the Urim and Thummim to

overrule their considered judgments.

It is “probably not coincidental” (Robert Alter’s words) that the Urim and Thummim begin with the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the Biblical equivalent of “the alpha and omega.” That way, they could be considered all-encompassing.

History does not record how many times the Urim and Thummim were correct or incorrect, but when I think of the High Priest (or other users) casting the Urim and Thummim, I can not help but think of General Eisenhower planning plans for the Normandy

invasion and then confirming them by consulting the Magic 8-Ball.

Josephus wrote that the Urim and Thummim were used until the Hasmonean period, but the Talmudic sages are unanimous that the use of the Urim and Thummim ended when Jerusalem was sacked in 586 b.c.e.

As Alter says, we can not be sure of their construction “unless someone actually digs up a pair.” All that we can say is, our ancestors, when confronted with momentous decisions, brought their better judgment to bear, and reinforced it by casting lots. ✨



## Help us Remodel Our Kitchen

**We need \$ 60,000, to remodel our kitchen properly.**

**April Modlinger, a long time pillar of Ahavas Sholom, got us started with a generous pledge of \$10,000. Others have also pledged;**

**but we need more!**

**With your help the congregation will soon have a kitchen that will serve us all for years to come.**

**Please, Make your  
Pledge Today!**

# Upcoming Events

## National Day of Unplugging

This Shabbat

March 6th. through March 7th. 2020



## Megillah Reading and Purim Party

Monday, March 9, 2020

7:00:pm

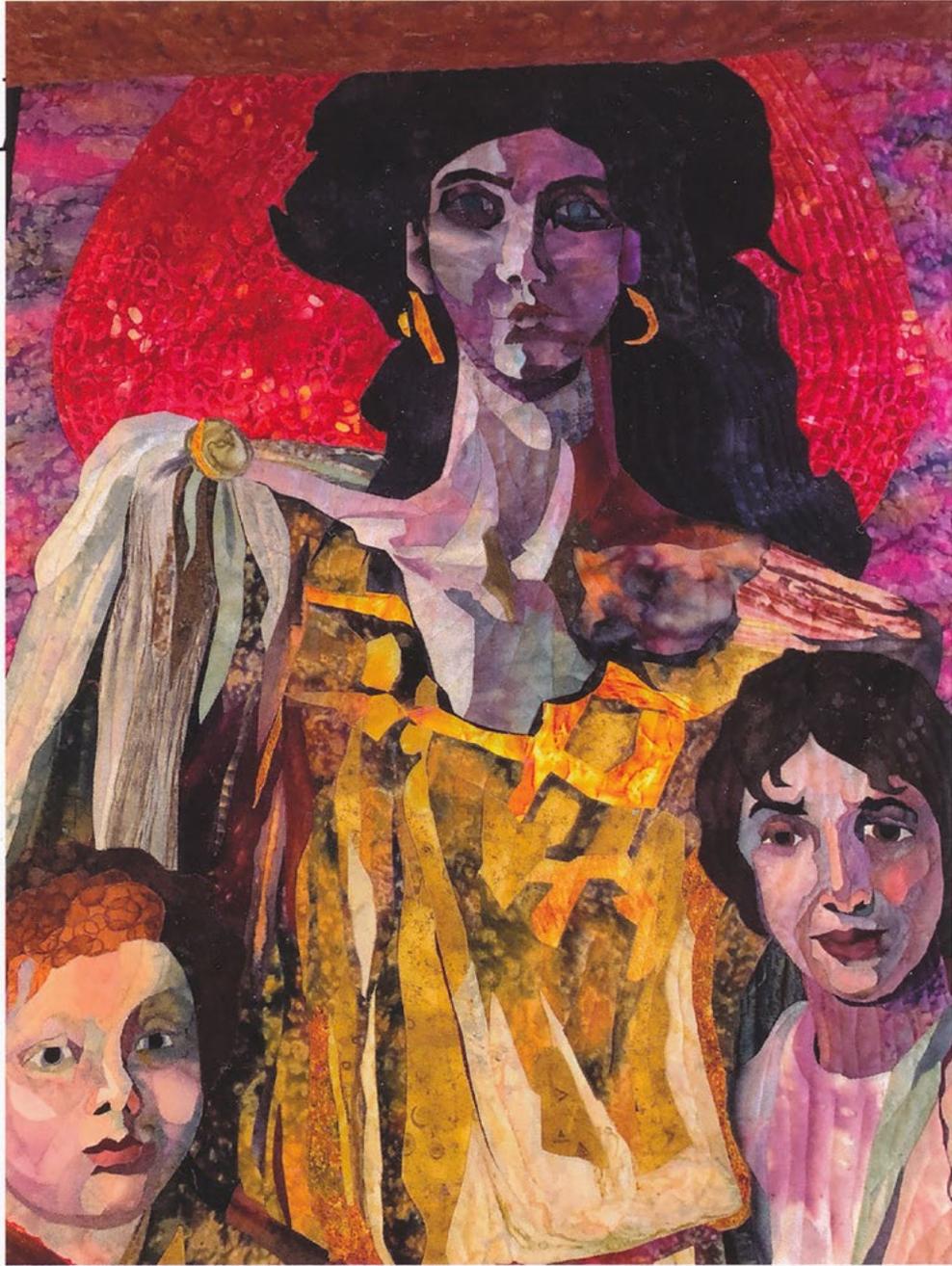
Congregation Ahavas Sholom

135 Broadway, Newark NJ



**JMNJ**  
The Jewish Museum of New Jersey

# *Reinventing Eve*



*"Medea" by Marilyn Belford*

## *Reinventing Eve*

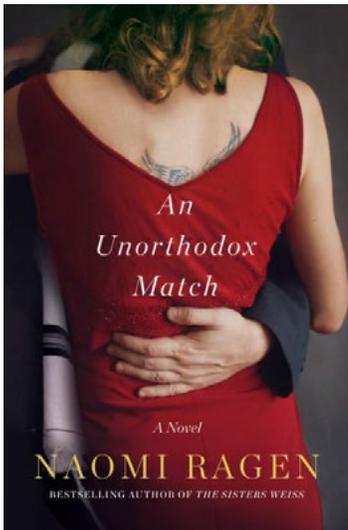
*Celebrating Woman's History Month*

**Opening Reception March 29 2020**

**Jewish Museum of New Jersey.135 Broadway, Newark, NJ**

## An Unorthodox Match

By Naomi Ragen, Hardcover, 336 pages



*Author Naomi Ragen*

American Born Naomi Ragen is a novelist, playwright and journalist who explores the intricacies, challenges and nuances of navigating the ultra-Orthodox Jewish world from a woman's perspective. Through her work she explores the realities of ultra-Orthodox life –revealing in its beauty, yet pushing back against its occasional inconsistencies, and challenging its communal double standards.

Naomi Ragen's new novel, *An Unorthodox Match* explores love acceptance, compatibility and Jewish law. The story follows Lola, a Jewish girl raised by a secular mother who lives by her own rules. Her mother's lack of boundaries moves Lola to seek the structure and stability she's always longed for. Lola's quest leads her to seek peace and kinship in Boro Park's Haredi community. Through a sympathetic rabbi Lola finds peace in G-d and changes her name to Leah. Under the tutelage

of the rabbi, Leah changes her manner of dress and adopts a humble pious lifestyle.

However, as she attempts to fully integrate into the Haredi world, it becomes painfully obvious the community doesn't accept her. Though a born Jew, she isn't one of them. She might be Baal t'shevah (one who has returned) but, she's still considered an outsider. Community members speak ill of her behind her back, matchmakers set her up with unacceptable, bottom of the barrel dates who are either too old, fat or have mental issues. Lola begins babysitting for Yaakov, a Talmudic scholar and widower caring for five children. This; however, only adds fuel to the gossip mill – accusations and innuendo soon follow, despite being forbidden by Jewish law. Exacerbating the situation even more Leah's unobservant mother is none too happy about her decision to join the Haredi community and is very vocal about it.

Ragen carries the story well, deftly exploring the injustice of the situation without explicitly attacking the community, all the while arguing for Lola's right to be accepted and find happiness. While she paints a beautiful picture of religious Jewish life, she is frank and honest about the problems some face when attempting to enter a closeted and insolated community. Does Lola prevail? Does she ultimately find the acceptance, and love she seeks? I guess you'll have to read the book to get the answer. ✨

# Kiddush Sponsorship Shabbat Services

Sponsoring Kiddush is \$150.00, which barely covers the cost of the lunch. Our goal is to have every Kiddush sponsored. To sponsor a Kiddush, email Rabbi Rosenbach or contact Allah Eicheldinger at [alla7815@yahoo.com](mailto:alla7815@yahoo.com). You can also help by shopping; which doesn't cost money, just a little time. We'll give you a list of items, you shop and we'll reimburse you. Whatever you can do will be appreciated, greatly.

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Join us at Ahavas Sholom this Saturday for Shabbat services. Strangers, visitors; friends - old & new - our doors are open to you. Looking for a new home? New members are always welcome at Congregation Ahavas Sholom. Shabbat services start at 9:00am. Our congregation is open and welcoming; feel free to pay us a visit, anytime.

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*Join us at Congregation  
Ahavas Sholom this  
Shabbat and help us  
make minyon*