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NYC Mayor Bill Blasio

NYC Mayor Bill Blasio Accused of Anti-Semitism Over 'Jewish' Comments.

As of the writing of this article, there have been 1,064,737 reported cases of coronavirus in the United States alone. It has caused 61,670 deaths. With 855,656 persons affected by the virus that causes

In this week's Scroll

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This Week's
Torah Portion
Acharei-Kedoshim


Candle lighting
7:33PM

Shabbat Ends
8:38 PM

Covid-19 at this very moment, that number is sure to rise. With the Federal government dragging its feet and putting more emphasis on reopening the economy than coming up with a comprehensive testing strategy and developing a workable solution, it could, in fact, get far worse than previous estimates.

NYC mayor Bill de Blasio recently came under fire for his comments concerning Ultra-orthodox Jews essentially ignoring the city's social distancing guidelines. While he referenced other groups as well, he explicitly called out Jews. Now, we can debate whether his statement constitutes anti-Semitism as some papers have suggested; but let's save that for another time.

While it may be accurate that New York's Haredi community has not taken the threat of coronavirus seriously enough and have been lax in following social distancing mandates. It may even be reminiscent of the recent news stories about an alarming rise in measles cases, in the New York area that have been linked to the Ultra-Orthodox Jewish community's aversion to vaccinations; but, to imply Jews are behind some sort of nefarious plot to infect God fearing (read Christian) Americans with coronavirus is beyond absurd.

Personally, I do not think Jews (or any other group) should be above scrutiny, and there are times that warrant Jews being called out for their actions; but, never for who they are, how they live, or how they dress. That's what makes up my litmus test – if there is something about a group's actions that concern me, I have to ask myself would I have the same concerns if a different group had taken the same action.

Blasio faced a slew of criticism for his zero tolerance

comments when he specifically called out Jews, before adding all groups would be held to the same standard.

What's usually glazed over is that Blasio's comments came in the wake of large groups of Haredi Jews defying, or if you prefer, ignoring the city's social distancing guidelines to attend the funeral of a local Rabbi, who ironically died of complications from Covid-19.

This was not some party that others might or might not find out about, this was a massive funeral turnout, complete with news coverage by the major NYC networks. We also cannot ignore it was not the first time they defied the rules. Last month members of the Haredi community flaunted their disregard for the guidelines by holding multiple weddings involving hundreds of guests. A video taken at one of the weddings shows just one man wearing a mask as a group of men dance arm in arm celebrating the event.

Blasio's comments were in direct response to their defiance of the city's directive. Let's be honest, he called out the people who were ignoring the rules, and potentially endangering others.

Blasio is responsible for the entire city, if one group can defy the city's guidelines with impunity, others will surely follow. ✨

Congregation Ahavas Sholom

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

Join us this Shabbat via Zoom for Torah Service with Congregation Ahavas Sholom Rabbi Simon Rosenbach



Here's the link for Shabbat services: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/632968113>

This weeks has a double Torah portion, and it will take us around 30 minutes to read it. I propose to sing P'sukei D'zimrah, read the Torah, and Fred will recite the Musaf Amidah entirely, not with a silent Amidah. After the end of the Torah reading, we'll assess the time remaining until 12, and if we have time, we'll do the haftarah. The haftarah is Amos 9:7-15, one of the Kedoshim haftarot. It is really short.

Havdalah is at 8:40 Saturday night, Here is the Zoom link for the Havdalah service at 8:30:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85117598402?pwd=VXFmenFkcE-hzM3BBdkRLY2EwTndPdZ09>

and the meeting password, if you need it, is 792082.

SIMON

SAYS

Thought Provoking Insights from Rabbi Simon Rosenbach



Rabbi Simon Rosenbach

Two weeks ago, in Parashat Shemini, Aaron's older sons, Nadav and Avihu, die when offering a sacrifice at the wrong time, or in the wrong manner, or with the wrong intentions. When their bodies are removed from the

Mishkan, Moses tells Aaron and his two younger sons that they should not manifest the signs of mourning: "do not bare your heads and do not rend your clothes . . ."

I was thinking about Moses' admonition to Aaron during the funeral of my friend Randy Newman, who died of Covid 19 last Shabbat after recently turning 70. The funeral was on Zoom, and there were almost 200 participants, but, in New Jersey, only five actual people are allowed to attend in person. If the mourners at graveside are intelligent and cautious, they can not hug each other, they can not kiss each other, and they can not shake hands with each other. I have officiated at two funerals since the inception of the pandemic, and I have gone from telling people to wear gloves when they handle the shovels, to telling people to bring their own shovels and use the shovels to throw a few shovelfuls of earth on the grave, because the cemetery workers have already filled in the grave. (At Randy's funeral, the members of the family were not allowed to bring shovels; they needed to use small, plastic cups to throw cupfuls of dirt on the grave.)

Besides prohibiting hugging and kissing, we are prohibited from burying our dead with dignity; the last favor we pay the deceased that he or she can not repay. Moreover, we can not have gatherings like shivah or wakes. We are all prohibited from displaying signs of mourning in public.

Randy's wife Beth had a Zoom shivah, which was attended by more than 50 participants. She asked the participants to speak individually, and they all had good things to say about Randy, who was a great person. Zoom meetings, however, can not convey the emotional content of interpersonal contact. Zoom

meetings are good for business conferences, and maybe religious services, but they are not good for emotional events. You are at home alone (depending on your age), and you can not be consoled by the human touch.

We now know personally, if before we knew intellectually, that Moses' instruction to Aaron not to display outward signs of mourning was cruel. We are all Aaron and his two younger sons nowadays, until the social-distancing restrictions are loosened. We can not allow people who suffer losses to be like Aaron. We need to reach out to them, to tell them that they are not alone in their grief. ✨



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!

The angel of death has passed over our household

By Max Herman

 On April 9th, the second day of Pesach, Jen's 95 year old mother was transferred from the Atrium Subacute Rehab and Nursing Center to our home as cases of Covid 19 proliferated in that facility. The management had neglected to inform families that the facility had begun accepting active Covid 19 patients in addition to those living in the facility who were already sick with the virus. So we chose to get her out of there. Underscoring our decision, as Jen accompanied her mother to the ambulance taking her to our house, a family member of another resident mourned the death of her father, who resided on the same floor and had died that morning. Since then Claudine Creary has been with us, safe from the virus and attended to her by a bevy of aides and her loving daughter. Bed bound, on oxygen and unavailable to feed herself, and needing to be turned every four hours, she is like a baby. Yet she recognizes her daughter, watches her favorite Hallmark Channel romances and smiles at the occasional guest. Despite her advanced medical problems, she still has a desire to live. She will live out her remaining days with us.

Approximately 10 days later, we brought my 87 year old mother. Catherine Herman, out of Daughters of Miriam in Clifton for an unspecified leave. Since April 1st we had been receiving daily updates from the facility indicating the number of residents and staff who were afflicted with the virus. At that point there had not been any deaths, nor had the virus spread to my floor. But over the next two weeks, the number of sick and suspected sick continued to rise along with

the first reported deaths at the facility. Believing that it was only a matter of time until Covid 19 hit my mother's unit, we decided to bust her out. Now she and I are quarantining upstairs, keeping our distance from Jen's mom upstairs. My mom enjoys sleeping long hours on the couch, watching replays of classic baseball games and trying to loosen up the mats on my cat's fur, which the cat seems to enjoy.

It has been both a blessing and a burden to take care of our vulnerable seniors. We are glad to have taken them out of harms way of the virus spreading through their respective nursing facilities, and yet it has required major adjustments in our schedules/lifestyles. Jen spends most nights sleeping downstairs on a twin bed beside her mother's bed, waking up to change her and turn her. I stay semi-awake at night listening for the sound of my mom getting up to use the bathroom. As the ripe age of 52, I am tasked with helping her to the toilet, cleaning her up and changing her diaper. As I change her, I hum my version of the Lizzo song Good As Hell with a few lyrical changes: "I pull my pants up, wash my hands, baby how you feelin....."

I continue to work from home as a sociology professor at New Jersey City University. I now teach my four classes on-line, sometimes sitting in the chair next to the sofa as she naps while I lecture using Blackboard Collaborate. Sometime I have to pause the lecture and tell students to take a short break while I attend to mom. Sometimes my mom is awake and listens in. At one point while on a Zoom session with my old college


classmates she regaled them with her stories of working as an occupation therapist in the polio wards with people in the Iron Lung. From one past pandemic to the present.....

When it comes to eating, bathing and taking her pills, my mom alternates between compliance and petulance, almost like a toddler tries the limits of her parents. I feel victorious when I can get her to eat something more than toast and coffee, and when she takes her pills in one shot rather than making me hector her for a half hour until she finally complies. It must be tough for her to be bossed around by her adult son who constantly reminds her that he is doing his best to take care of her. I have the occasional urge to spank her like she spanked me when I was a child, but then I see her snuggling with her stuffed tiger and that

feeling dissipates.

So one day bleeds into the next. More pills to administer, more games/romances to watch, more diapers to be changed. We have brought the nursing home home. Jen suggested that we name our house *Le petit maison des vieux gens*---the little house of old people. Seems like an apt title. Someday this too will pass and our old folks will no longer be with us, so we try to enjoy the time we have with them and try not to be too impatient or frustrated with them. We are adjusting to this new normal with love, anger, and occasionally, grace. While our lives may seem to be on hold, we are grateful to be alive and thankful that we have the space to take care of our loved ones during this challenging time. ✨

Congregation Ahavas Sholom donations of protective facemasks surpasses the 1,000 mark.

 In the battle against the deadly coronavirus pandemic that is sweeping our country and has so far, resulted in the deaths of over 60,000 Americans and more than 200 Israelis, Congregation Ahavas Sholom has stepped into the fray.

Working with the local community and within the larger community, over 1,000 protective masks have been donated to organizations, medical professionals, store employees and countless individuals. Recipients

of the donations include St. Michael's Medical Center, Newark, Integrity House, Newark, and the City of Newark's health dept for the homeless. We would like to especially thank Marsha McGowan, who decided to come out of retirement to help turn the tide against this most formidable foe – risking her own health to help others. According to CAS President, Eric Freedman, "Our Tikun Olam initiatives are "alive and well" at Ahavas Sholom as we navigate our way through this CO-VID19 Pandemic."

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. 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.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, services and events are temporarily suspended at Congregation Ahavas Sholom; however, you can still join us via [Zoom](#)



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