



Tifereth Israel April 24 · 🌐

Howie Werman shares A Thought Before Shabbat - My experience with COVID-19

This week's Torah portion is Tazria which deals with the diagnosis of leprosy (which modern day scholars believe to be another dermatologic disease unrelated to true leprosy) among individuals presenting with a variety of skin lesions by the biblical priests. In reading the portion, one is struck by the similarities between the presentation of what was described as leprosy and today's pandemic with COVID-19. This is where we learn of the uncertainty of diagnosis of the disease, the variety of presentations among those who have the disease as well as the notion of quarantining individuals suspected of possessing leprosy. It appears that people in biblical times were also plagued with a paucity of definitive testing.

In our weekday morning service, we read the following passage from Psalm 147: "God pelts the earth with a storm of ice. Who can withstand His wintry blasts? At God's command the ice melts, He stirs the wind and the waters flow." As much as we understand about the world around us and in some ways, can control our own environment, there simply remain forces that are beyond our comprehension and control. Unfortunately, it takes a pandemic such as COVID-19 to clearly remind us of this fact. For me, the pandemic provided a stark realization that there is a certain arbitrariness in life that is beyond my personal comprehension or intervention. As some may know, I contracted a COVID-19 infection at some point during my travels to Florida and New York to be with my mother who ultimately passed away from respiratory complications. By the time I was diagnosed with the coronavirus infection, it was clear that patients, particularly those in my age group, were being afflicted with severe symptoms including intense body aches, fevers, protracted coughing and profound shortness of breath. In fact, one of my physician colleagues was suffering from exactly these symptoms. Furthermore, many who were becoming ill ultimately succumbed to this tragic illness. To this day, I have no explanation why I only experienced mild symptoms which included a runny nose, fatigue and a sore throat.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a stark reminder of the tenuous nature of our lives, for sure. These times are also challenging in the manner that we choose to respond to our current circumstances. Clearly, the drastic response to this pandemic has caused a major upheaval in our daily routines, in fact, it has produced profound economic, psychological, emotional and physical effects on our lives. It would be very easy to simply focus on the negative impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on us individually, which in some circumstances is indeed significant. There are certainly economic hardships to businesses and individuals. Our modern quarantine (similar to the suspected 'lepers' in Tazria) and social distancing means that we cannot travel freely and enjoy the companionship of our friends and family. The pandemic has had a major impact on the manner in which we work (if we're working at all) and has restricted the way that we secure food and essential services.

On the other hand, there are certain unexpected bright moments that have emerged in our response to the pandemic. As with every disaster, there are numerous acts of kindness and courage that can be found, which have been highlighted in the newspapers, on social media and on television. I have certainly been fortunate to witness acts of selflessness and compassion on a daily basis in the work of my EMS (Emergency Medical Services) and Emergency Department colleagues who have stepped up to meet this latest challenge in providing patient care. I would specifically mention one other positive experience that has impacted me personally: there is a strong community that has developed around the daily religious services hosted via Zoom by our synagogue. As mentioned before, I have been saying kaddish for my mother. At each of the daily services as well as on Shabbat, there is significant participation not only from members of Tifereth Israel but from other communities throughout the US. If you haven't taken advantage of this opportunity, I would invite you to join one of the Zoom services held throughout the week.

In summary, the current pandemic is a painful reminder of the frailty and tenuousness of human life. How we respond under these circumstances will say a lot about our character as individuals and as a community. For me, there is special meaning when we recite the words in the Nishmat prayer, "never could we fully state our gratitude for one ten-thousandth of the lasting love (and gift of life – my words) that is your precious blessing."

Shabbat Shalom,  
Howie Werman



👍❤️ 29

1 Share

🔗 Share

Related Pages



JewishColumbus Charity Organization



JCC Columbus Community Center



Columbus Jewish Film Festival Nonprofit Organization



Columbus Torah Academy Private School



Chabad Columbus Religious Organization



Ncju Columbus Section Nonprofit Organization



Congregation Torat Emet Synagogue



Shelco Garcia & Teenwolf Musician/Band



Voodoo Taco Tex-Mex Restaurant



Jewish Meditation Project of Col... Community Organization



CJDS Elementary School



Wexner Center for the Arts Art Museum

Pages Liked by This Page



Congregation Agudas Achim, Be...



Columbus Jewish News



I Support the Girls - Columbus

Recent Post by Page



Tifereth Israel Today at 5:30 AM 🌐

📖 Perek Yomi; Psalms 43-49

👍 1

1 Comment 72 Views

🔗 Share



Tifereth Israel June 12 at 5:14 AM 🌐

📖 How to Read the Jewish Bible - Friday Morning Book Group: The Ancest... See More

👍👍 4

143 Views

🔗 Share



Tifereth Israel June 12 at 4:55 AM 🌐

📖 Rabbi Braver shares A Thought Before Shabbat This week, I came acro...Continue Reading

👍❤️ 28

1 Comment 1 Share

🔗 Share

English (US) · Español · Português (Brasil) · Français (France) · Deutsch +

See more of Tifereth Israel on Facebook

Log In

or

Create New Account