

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

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www.chabadshul.org



March 21, 2020

VaYakhel—Pekudei — Parshat HaChodesh — Shabbat M'vorchim

25 Adar, 5780

Dear Mispallelim,

After much thought and consideration I have reluctantly decided to discontinue the current minyanim at Shul. May HaKadosh Boruch Hu listen to our tefilos, show us His rachamim, protect us from all harm and bring a refuah to all those that need it.

May we only share b'suros tovos.

Rabbi Shmuel Kaplan

Jewish Responses to Epidemics Throughout History

Although the recent outbreak of COVID-19 seems unlike anything we've seen before, plagues and epidemics are nothing new. And, in fact, it's been a lot worse in the past. Let's take a look at epidemics throughout history to put things in perspective and gain some insight into how Jews were affected and how leaders responded.

Aaron's Incense Saved

In the book of Numbers, after Korach's rebellion, a plague strikes the Jewish people and thousands begin to die. Moses tells Aaron to quickly take a firepan with incense (ketoret), go into the midst of the congregation, and atone for their sin. Aaron stands "between the living and the dead" with the ketoret, and the plague is halted.

How did Moses know that ketoret would avert the plague? The Talmud relates that when Moses went up to heaven to receive the Torah, the angels bestowed gifts. The gift that the Satan (who is, of course, an angel) gave was the secret of the power of the ketoret.

Ketoret Today

Although we unfortunately no longer have the Temple, the Kabbalists say that by reading the portion in the Torah that discusses the incense, it is as if one actually brought it. Thus, although many have the custom to recite this portion daily, one should take extra care to learn and recite it at the time of an epidemic.

It is said in the name of the first Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, that in a time of an epidemic one should learn the following verses, together with the commentary of Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, Rashi.

Exodus 30:1-10 (which discuss the making of the golden altar)

Exodus 30:22-38 (which discuss the making of the anointing oil and the ketoret)

Numbers 16:31-17:15 (which discusses part of the rebellion, the subsequent epidemic, and how they were saved with the ketoret)

Additionally, one should read the above sections twice in Hebrew and once in Aramaic translation.

If one is able to, one should also learn these laws in Maimonides' Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Temidin uMusafim, ch. 3:1-11.

Black Death and Handwashing

Perhaps the most devastating epidemic of history was the Black Death, the bubonic plague that decimated much of the world population during the 14th century. More specifically, between the years 1347–1351, it is estimated to have killed somewhere between 75 to 200 million people in Eurasia (30-60% of the population at that time).

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What is perhaps less known is that Jews were blamed for the plague, resulting in massacres of Jewish communities throughout Europe. In all, it is estimated that over 500 Jewish communities were decimated.

Besides the general anti-Semitism in that period, historians explain that, overall, the Jews seemed less susceptible to the plague. This was due both to the fact that many Jews had to live in ghettos away from the general population, and to the Jewish laws that compelled Jews to ritually wash and bathe. In an age when washing and bathing was difficult and not done often, the Jews were markedly more hygienic than their non-Jewish neighbors and were thus less likely to contract the disease. However, many saw this as evidence that the Jews had caused the plague.

Helping Others

One final note: During times like these, people can often become marginalized and overlooked. Let us do our part to ensure that does not happen in our communities.

Rebbetzin Chana (the Lubavitcher Rebbe's mother) relates that when her son (the future Rebbe) was twenty years old, "a typhus epidemic broke out in Yekaterinoslav and people were falling like flies. My son left his studies and assisted those who were ailing, bringing them aid himself and organizing others to do so. He paid a steep price for his effort. He helped others but he himself contracted the illness. He had extremely high fever, and in his delirium he was muttering words of Chassidut."

May G-d bring strength and healing to all!

(by Yehuda Shurpin from www.chabad.org)

<p>Sale of Chometz forms are online at www.chabadshul.org. Deadline for giving these filled-in forms to Rabbi Kaplan is Sunday, April 5, 2020.</p> <p>Purchasing Matzoh can ONLY be done online at www.chabadshul.org. The price is \$26 per pound and all orders must be submitted by Sunday, March 22, 2020.</p>	
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We extend our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to **Mrs. Malka Matyas**
 on the loss of her father, **Dr. Yitzchak Litt z"l**.
המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

Yahrzeits This Week:

Mitch Mayer	2 Nisan - Thursday night / Friday	for father	Yisrael ben Meyer
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DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE	
<p>Friday, 3/20 — 24 Adar Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma'aiv — 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>Shabbat, 3/21 — 25 Adar Shacharit — 9:00 a.m. Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 10:08 a.m. Beitzah Gemora Shiur — 6:15 p.m. Minchah — 6:45 p.m. Ma'ariv — 8:02 p.m.</p> <p>Sunday, 3/22 — 26 Adar Shacharit — 8:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m.</p> <p>Monday, 3/23 — 27 Adar Shacharit — 6:50 a.m. Mincha / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m. Kerisus Gemora Shiur — 7:45 p.m.</p>	<p>Tuesday, 3/24 — 28 Adar Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Mincha / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m. Kerisus Gemora Shiur — 7:45 p.m.</p> <p>Wednesday, 3/25 — 29 Adar Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Mincha / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m. Kerisus Gemora Shiur — 7:45 p.m.</p> <p>Thursday — Rosh Chodesh Nisan, 3/26 — 1 Nisan Shacharit — 6:40 a.m. Mincha / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m. Kerisus Gemora Shiur — 7:45 p.m.</p> <p>Friday, 3/27 — 2 Nisan Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Candles — 7:08 p.m. Minchah / Ma'aiv — 7:00 p.m.</p>