

The Jewish Imperative for Justice in the Face of Pandemic



As the COVID-19 pandemic escalates, many of us are grappling with a newfound vulnerability. It is natural to worry about our families and communities as we confront a major crisis and the question of how a community ought to respond to serious danger comes up throughout our sacred texts.

Last week, we celebrated **Purim**, the quintessential tale of Jewish defense. Our people have often been a fragile minority and it would be tempting for the Purim narrative to reign supreme: “They tried to kill us, we won, let’s celebrate.”

But our tradition’s true master story will in fact be marked three weeks from now during Passover, when we celebrate the Exodus from Egypt. The lesson that comes from escaping Pharaoh’s bondage transcends reveling in our own

commands the Israelites, “You shall not wrong nor oppress a stranger for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” The text continues, “You shall not ill-treat

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