

## Friday Evening Message – 15 May 2020



*At the Western (Wailing) Wall  
Having a word with his maker or head in the sand?*

### **Shabbat Shalom (Shabbat Shalom to all my American friends)**

I hope you are all safe and well and managing with grub and your sanity.

While writing my last piece I decided to keep back a few ideas for a second article. However, Miriam used one quotation, which I was keeping up my sleeve, in her first Thoughts for the Week. It is one of my favourites, extremely appropriate at the moment, and without shame I shall repeat it. It was Abraham Lincoln who related the story of a Middle Eastern ruler in the Middle Ages, who had asked his wise men to come up with a phrase which would be applicable in any situation. The phrase was "and this too shall pass". The Black Death eventually passed, as did the influenza pandemic in the early 1900s. Our present broch will also pass.

I wrote previously about fear and how appropriate it is to feel fear, but not paralysing fear. My senior partner when I was a GP in Norwich in the 1970s had a wonderful saying. You have to think about it, adopt it and be philosophical about it. "It's much too

serious to worry about.” He meant that something is very serious, so serious that you would drive yourself meshigah if you worried about it all the time. So you have to practise putting it out of your mind. It does take practice and you need to distract yourself. You need to concentrate on something all absorbing. You won’t be able to take up knitting unless you can have some wool delivered via the internet, but you can start to write your memoirs; I have, although publication of mine should probably be delayed 75-100 years so that no-one is offended. We have started putting bits of celery and the sliced-off ends of onions in glasses of water. Remarkably they have begun sprouting upwards and downwards. It is a joy to see them growing bigger every day. Planting them out in the garden is like your children leaving home though.

Life is tough. It has always been tough. Humour is vitally important even at the worst of times. If I write a third Thoughts for the Week I may give some examples of amusing stories. The Joys of Yiddish by Leo Rosten not only defines a large number of Yiddish words, but illustrates them with wonderful stories. It’s a great read when you’re feeling fed up. I can thoroughly recommend it and you can order it via the internet. No, I don’t get any of the profits!

Philip

**Norwich Liberal Jewish Community**

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