

## **“Covid-19: Who do you think you are?”**

By Rabbi Jeffrey M Cohen

*Dedicated to the memory of all who have died as a result  
Of the Coronavirus and to all who are suffering its effects.*

I don't want you, *Covid!*

I didn't invite you in!

I don't know who sent you;

You just get under my skin!

And who named you, 'Covid,'

When that's just the thing you lack;

For there's surely no *Covid\**

In your murderous attack?

Worse still, it's the aged

Whom you put at greatest risk,

And whose suffering appears to be

The most acute and brisk.

And don't think you're so clever,

Or the new kid on the block;

'Cos you've had antecedents,

grievous as hemlock.

Since the plagues of Pharaoh's Egypt,

Whose firstborn sons were felled,

With life wholly disrupted

Wherever families dwelled,

There've been countless outbreaks—

Pandemics to boot—

Leaving millions of fatalities,

And countless destitute.

None of those contagions  
Or those fearful ills  
Could in any way be contained  
With man-made pills,  
Or tested herbal remedies,  
Leeches or bleeding;  
Nor even by fervent prayer—  
For God wasn't heeding!

Let's turn now to the Jew—  
An eternal pariah;  
Following God's law,  
And awaiting the Messiah—  
While others devoured  
Anything that moved,  
Our people only ate  
What was strictly approved,  
And prepared in accordance with  
Kosher specification,  
Calculated to avoid  
Cross contamination.

Hence, in our communities,  
Hygiene was the norm;  
And the spread of pernicious plague  
Was given no platform.

But Jew-haters seized the chance,  
Not to be ignored,  
Of ensuring that surviving Jews  
Were put to the sword.

It wasn't our dietary laws,  
They boldly asserted,  
That ensured contagion,  
Among us, was averted,  
But the sorcery that Jews  
Consistently embrace,  
Which was the very reason  
For our ancient fall from grace!

Now, I told you what *Covid* means,  
At the outset of this rhyme,  
And why, within Judaism,  
It will always be prime;  
Now let me expand on it,  
For, in my vocabulary,  
It denotes a demonstration  
Of care and empathy  
To those who are housebound,  
Confined to isolation,  
And support for the needy,  
With no selfish calculation.

It connotes self-respect,  
And human dignity;  
A call to serve the cause  
Of all humanity.  
It means viewing in fellow man  
God's image, bright and sharp;  
Each deed of kindness,  
A new chord on His harp;  
It means singing a medley

Of praise to His Creation—

Each one a floral gift,

A rose or a carnation.

So, what lesson shall we take

From this fearful episode?

Perhaps it's from the "look at me!"—

Our youngsters' favourite ode;

"See how much more beautiful

I am than my peers!

Acclaim what I've got to say—

Let me hear your cheers;

Look at my selfie,

Forward it all around;

Let your adulation

Be my seductive sound."

So, let this isolation

Be a clarion-call;

A time for introspection

For one and all,

On our values and thoughtfulness,

To carefully ponder;

So, the last reserve

Of divine grace,

We'll be sure

Not to squander.

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\* Yiddish pronunciation of the Hebrew *kavod*, meaning  
(among other nuances) 'respect.'

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