

# Against Modern-Day Pharaohs

With spring on its way and the world apparently moving on from COVID, I was looking forward to attending Passover Seder at the temple my family and I have attended for some 30 years. We have been less involved as the children have gotten older, but I wanted to reunite with old friends and celebrate our Festival of Freedom together.

Before committing, however, I inquired whether the temple required masks. Happily, it did not. Alas, there was another catch: all Seder attendees needed proof of vaccination, meaning that the celebration was off-limits for my family.

Passover is one of the central holidays of the Jewish calendar. At Passover we celebrate the Exodus, the event in which our greatest prophet, Moses, was called by God to deliver His people, the children of Israel, from Egyptian bondage after 400 years of slavery. We recall the 10 plagues God imposed on Egypt in order to force its ruler, Pharaoh, to let the Israelites go. Yet in the midst of our celebrating release from the harmful edicts of Pharaoh, the temple was imposing its own misguided decrees upon those who wanted to celebrate the holiday with fellow Jews. They were simply joining with our modern-day Pharaohs, the ruling elites.

Today's Pharaohs shut down our economy, destroyed businesses and jobs, locked our children out of school, and forced us to social distance, quarantine, test, and mask. They censored and canceled those who disagreed; they stole our medical freedom and suppressed therapeutics that could have saved lives. And as my experience with the temple demonstrates, they have also pressured us to take a risky vaccine against our will.

Much has been written about the vaccines, their experimental nature, their emergency use authorization, and their questionable efficacy, especially as the virus continues to

mutate. The [adverse events](#) associated with the vaccine—including [serious](#) life-threatening conditions and even death—concern many of us. Since the vaccine was released in December of 2020, the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) [credits](#), as of April 1, nearly 27,000 deaths, more than 217,000 serious injuries, and some 1.2 million adverse events as a result of the vaccines. Even with these disastrous outcomes, we are still accounting for only a fraction of vaccine-related injuries, because of [underreporting](#).

Despite these vaccinations and their subsequent boosters, many are still infected by the virus, spread it, require hospitalization and ICU admission, and die of COVID. International numbers paint a particularly dismal picture. In the U.K., 77 percent of [COVID](#) deaths in those over 70 are triple-vaccinated, while 80 percent of severe cases in [Israel](#) are among the fully vaccinated.

By contrast, the continent of [Africa](#) has a low vaccination rate (11 percent) but far lower rates of COVID deaths than the U.S. and other advanced nations, all of which are heavily vaccinated. Nigeria, for example, has [vaccinated](#) roughly 8 percent of its 200 million population. It has a COVID death rate of 15 per [million](#), while the U.S. has a death rate of more than 3,000 per million, one of the worst in the world.

Then there is the matter of natural immunity, which is far more durable and robust than the weak, transient immunity obtained from the vaccines. More than [40 percent of Americans](#)—including my family—have already had the virus. Given this information, one wonders why the temple would require previously infected individuals to have the vaccine before attending.

Another important point to consider is that the vaccine is still [experimental](#), rushed through the approval process in the midst of a pandemic and without the benefit of long-term studies. It generally takes four to six years to bring a

vaccine to market. What safeguards were bypassed in the rush to produce a vaccine for COVID? Early release of the data from clinical trials by the FDA (initially to be hidden for 75 years until reversed by a [court](#) order) showed that there were more than 1,200 deaths in the first 90 days of the Pfizer vaccine rollout, among other significant issues. That alone should have prevented the vaccine from ever being released to the public.

We know that the original COVID viral strain likely emerged from the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China—with funding from our own National Institutes of Health—and that it has mutated multiple times. The current COVID strain is [several generations removed](#) from the original, making the vaccines outdated and ineffective against [Omicron](#). Indeed, they may even have negative [efficacy](#).

But even if the ineffectiveness and harm of the vaccines wasn't an issue, there is still the critical matter of medical freedom, bodily autonomy, and the right of individuals to *choose* which medicine or treatment they wish to take. This is particularly important under the circumstances of an experimental vaccine. Does not the temple agree that individuals, made in the image of God and blessed with powers of reason, should have ultimate authority over which medicines or gene therapies they introduce into their bodies? One would think that, given our knowledge of the medical experimentation carried out on fellow Jews in Nazi death camps by Josef Mengele, it would be considered immoral to mandate any medicine, vaccine, or gene therapy as a condition for attending a religious service.

I asked my temple what Moses would say to the Pharaohs of today. How would Moses respond to those that mandated a vaccine as a condition for attending a Seder?

I think he would say, "Let my people go," as he said to the Pharaoh. "Let my people go to our Festival of Freedom, our

feast of unleavened bread, to celebrate our redemption, our liberation from slavery and tyrants, free of mandates, lockdowns, closures, and wicked decrees." *Let my people go* were the words of Moses and have been the words of the Jewish people since.

We all should embrace those words.

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Image Credit: Tenor