Tuesday, 3/31

I hope you are having a great day!

This situation with COVID-19 has brought up questions about rights. Does the government have the RIGHT to require businesses to shut down, or to require people to stay home? Those questions reminded me of the things we read in *Night* about the Jews’ dissolution of power and rights to the Fascist Nazi regime.

Today, we are going to look at a few things:

1) Review and analyze a small portion of Ch 1 of *Night* by Elie Weizel, included below.

Complete the following steps as you read:

1.Annotate (underline, highlight, or note) each right that is taken from the Jews.

2. Consider and note: Why werethese rights taken? What was the purpose of the people in power?

Budapest radio announced that the Fascist party had seized power. The regent Miklós Horthy was forced to ask a leader of the pro-Nazi party to form a new government. Yet we still were not worried. Of course we had heard of the Fascists, but it was all in the abstract. It meant nothing more to us than a change of ministry. The next day brought really disquieting news: German troops had penetrated Hungarian territory with the government's approval. Finally, people began to worry in earnest. One of my friends, Moishe Chaim Berkowitz, returned from the capital for Passover and told us, "The Jews of Budapest live in an atmosphere of fear and terror. Anti-Semitic acts take place every day, in the streets, on the trains. The Fascists attack Jewish stores, synagogues. The situation is becoming very serious ..." The news spread through Sighet like wildfire. Soon that was all people talked about. But not for long. Optimism soon revived: The Germans will not come this far. They will stay in Budapest. For strategic reasons, for political reasons ... In less than three days, German Army vehicles made their appearance on our streets.     ANGUISH. German soldiers--with their steel helmets and their death's-head emblem. Still, our first impressions of the Germans were rather reassuring. The officers were billeted in private homes, even in Jewish homes. Their attitude toward their hosts was distant but polite. They never demanded the impossible, made no offensive remarks, and sometimes even smiled at the lady of the house. A German officer lodged in the Kahns' house across the street from us. We were told he was a charming man, calm, likable, and polite. Three days after he moved in, he brought Mrs. Kahn a box of chocolates. The optimists were jubilant: "Well? What did we tell you? You wouldn't believe us. There they are, your Germans. What do you say now? Where is their famous cruelty?" The Germans were already in our town, the Fascists were already in power, the verdict was already out--and the Jews of Sighet were still smiling.     THE EIGHT DAYS of Passover. The weather was sublime. My mother was busy in the kitchen. The synagogues were no longer open. People gathered in private homes: no need to provoke the Germans. Almost every rabbi's home became a house of prayer. We drank, we ate, we sang. The Bible commands us to rejoice during the eight days of celebration, but our hearts were not in it. We wished the holiday would end so as not to have to pretend. On the seventh day of Passover, the curtain finally rose: the Germans arrested the leaders of the Jewish community. From that moment on, everything happened very quickly. The race toward death had begun. First edict: Jews were prohibited from leaving their residences for three days, under penalty of death. Moishe the Beadle came running to our house. "I warned you," he shouted. And left without waiting for a response. The same day, the Hungarian police burst into every Jewish home in town: a Jew was henceforth forbidden to own gold, jewelry, or any valuables. Everything had to be handed over to the authorities, under penalty of death. My father went down to the cellar and buried our savings. As for my mother, she went on tending to the many chores in the house. Sometimes she would stop and gaze at us in silence. Three days later, a new decree: every Jew had to wear the yellow star. Some prominent members of the community came to consult with my father, who had connections at the upper levels of the Hungarian police; they wanted to know what he thought of the situation. My father's view was that it was not all bleak, or perhaps he just did not want to discourage the others, to throw salt on their wounds: "The yellow star? So what? It's not lethal ..." (Poor Father! Of what then did you die?) But new edicts were already being issued. We no longer had the right to frequent restaurants or cafés, to travel by rail, to attend synagogue, to be on the streets after six o'clock in the evening. Then came the ghettos.     TWO GHETTOS were created in Sighet. A large one in the center of town occupied four streets, and another smaller one extended over several alleyways on the outskirts of town. The street we lived on, Serpent Street, was in the first ghetto. We therefore could remain in our house. But, as it occupied a corner, the windows facing the street outside the ghetto had to be sealed. We gave some of our rooms to relatives who had been driven out of their homes. Little by little life returned to "normal." The barbed wire that encircled us like a wall did not fill us with real fear. In fact, we felt this was not a bad thing; we were entirely among ourselves. Asmall Jewish republic ... A Jewish Council was appointed, as well as a Jewish police force, a welfare agency, a labor committee, a health agency--a whole governmental apparatus. People thought this was a good thing. We would no longer have to look at all those hostile faces, endure those hate-filled stares. No more fear. No more anguish. We would live among Jews, among brothers ... Of course, there still were unpleasant moments. Every day, the Germans came looking for men to load coal into the military trains. Volunteers for this kind of work were few. But apart from that, the atmosphere was oddly peaceful and reassuring. Most people thought that we would remain in the ghetto until the end of the war, until the arrival of the Red Army. Afterward everything would be as before. The ghetto was ruled by neither German nor Jew; it was ruled by delusion.     SOME TWO WEEKS before Shavuot. A sunny spring day, people strolled seemingly carefree through the crowded streets. They exchanged cheerful greetings. Children played games, rolling hazelnuts on the sidewalks. Some schoolmates and I were in Ezra Malik's garden studying a Talmudic treatise. Night fell. Some twenty people had gathered in our courtyard. My father was sharing some anecdotes and holding forth on his opinion of the situation. He was a good storyteller. Suddenly, the gate opened, and Stern, a former shopkeeper who now was a policeman, entered and took my father aside. Despite the growing darkness, I could see my father turn pale. "What's wrong?" we asked. "I don't know. I have been summoned to a special meeting of the Council. Something must have happened." The story he had interrupted would remain unfinished. "I'm going right now," he said. "I'll return as soon as possible. I'll tell you everything. Wait for me." We were ready to wait as long as necessary. The courtyard turned into something like an antechamber to an operating room. We stood, waiting for the door to open. Neighbors, hearing the rumors, had joined us. We stared at our watches. Time had slowed down. What was the meaning of such a long session? "I have a bad feeling," said my mother. "This afternoon I saw new faces in the ghetto. Two German officers, I believe they were Gestapo. Since we've been here, we have not seen a single officer ..." It was close to midnight. Nobody felt like going to sleep, though some people briefly went to check on their homes. Others left but asked to be called as soon as my father returned. At last, the door opened and he appeared. His face was drained of color. He was quickly surrounded. "Tell us. Tell us what's happening! Say something ..." At that moment, we were so anxious to hear something encouraging, a few words telling us that there was nothing to worry about, that the meeting had been routine, just a review of welfare and health problems ... But one glance at my father's face left no doubt. "The news is terrible," he said at last. And then one word: "Transports." The ghetto was to be liquidated entirely. Departures were to take place street by street, starting the next day.

2) Now, make a list of things that people did before the COVID-19 outbreak that people can NO LONGER do. List AT LEAST 5 things.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

3) Now, let’s analyze our situation:

1. Which rights that we have given up are the same as in Night? Which are different?

2. WHY have we stopped doing the things you listed above?

3. Is it okay for the government to require people to stop doing those the things you listed? Why or why not?

4) Next, read this article:

Police allowed to issue tickets, make arrests for 'shelter in

place' violations across North Texas

wfaa.com/article/news/police-allowed-to-issue-tickets-make-arrests-for-shelter-in-place-violations-acrossnorth-

texas/287-78233242-56f0-4d70-8cd9-a734717b8a3a

Some Dallas-area officers have been given the authority to stop people to make sure they

are essential workers and not people just out and about. They are being asked to protect and serve in ways they never imagined.

Law enforcement is tasked with making people comply with the shelter in place orders

across North Texas.

"We have to do what we have to do to make sacrifices in order to stop the spread of this

virus,” said Sgt. Sheldon Smith, National Black Police Officers’ Association President.

Officers have the authority to stop people to make sure they are essential workers and not

people just out and about. Dallas County was the first to issue a “shelter in place” order that

began at midnight Tuesday.

“We did hear some complaints today of people being stopped going to work. Let me be

clear, that is perfectly legal from our officers' perspective,” said Pete Schulte of the DeSoto

Police Department.

Offices across the region are trying to not fill up the jails with people committing nonviolent

or misdemeanor crimes.

“Just because we are not making arrest, doesn’t mean people are not going to be punished for the crimes they are committing during this period,” said Schulte.

Police said they will enhance crimes committed during this period.

For example, if you are arrested for shoplifting, the charge will automatically be enhanced.

The cases will be filed at large and you will face more jail time and higher fines.

“You may not go to jail today, but you will be held accountable and there will be stiffer

penalties for not following what you are supposed to be doing right now,” said Schulte.

5) Write a paragraph, answering the following questions:

Do you believe that the Dallas Police are correct in issuing tickets and punishments for the ‘shelter-in-place’ orders? Why or why not? As you answer, consider the rights of people in the US versus the government’s desire to protect. Who is more right, in your opinion?