



Dear Parents,

*Erev Shabbos Parashas Terumah 5780*

The number one concern that has catapulted to the forefront of billions of people's consciousness this week is the scare generated by the Coronavirus. Its impact is being felt worldwide, in many different ways. As Torah Jews, our perspective and reaction to such a fast-moving, unexpected and potentially dangerous situation should be informed by a Torah worldview.

There are a number of lessons and insights that are important for us and our children to internalize:

1. Hashem runs the world and everything He does is for the best. We are obligated to take measures to protect ourselves, but remain assured we are in His protective hands. We need to stay calm.
2. We need to always be prepared for the unexpected. We must be careful to not assume things will always stay the same as they've been. Man is not in control.
3. Normative Halacha in areas of health and safety requires us to follow normative guidelines promulgated by those who are experts and in the know - the established governmental and public health agencies. We need to be aware of and follow safety protocols of the CDC – Centers for Disease Control. This is an Halachic requirement derived from *V'Nishmartem Me'od L'Nafshosaichem* – loosely translated as - *be extremely vigilant to protect yourself from harm.* (*Devarim 4:15*)
4. Don't be swept up by the media panic – whenever the unexpected occurs, opportunists abound who look to take advantage of the situation to benefit themselves. We see this every time there is a threat of a hurricane. Here too, take a step back and think about what is being said. Is it fact or opinion? Is it reality or merely someone's prediction? Is the speaker promoting an agenda with his predictions or analyses? Precautions yes, panic no.
5. Don't take unnecessary risks but don't stop doing what is necessary because of a far-fetched possibility. When in doubt, ask your *Rav*.
6. Your children look to you for reassurance and guidance in handling the unexpected both practically and emotionally. Be prepared for the unexpected but always be reassuring. Tell them that although we don't know what Hashem has in store, they can rely on Ima and Aba to protect them and be there for them. Don't express fears in front of the children. Be realistic to a point, but always within a framework of confidence and reassurance. Your children may come home with all sorts of wild rumors. Be in the know, and thereby be able to distill fact from fiction.
7. The potential impact on the world's economy and individuals' financial stability is another reminder that Hashem runs the world and we need to put our trust in Him and not our skills, knowledge and efforts.

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**Hashem runs the world and everything He does is for the best.**

**... increase our Tefillos to the Master of the world that we be spared from any sickness or harm.**

We all need to remain aware of developments, immediately focus on better hygiene and cleanliness, have at least an idea of a contingency plan in case restrictions are placed on our movement, and increase our *Tefillos* to the Master of the world that we be spared from any sickness or harm. As exemplars to our fellow Jews and the community at large, we also need to think of ways that we and our children can be sensitive to, reach out to and perform *Chesed* for others who may be more seriously impacted than we.

Have a safe, sane and wonderful *Shabbos*,

*Rabbi Kalman Baumann*