

From the desk of Rabbi Baumann



Dear Parents,

Erev Shabbos Parashas Ki Sisa Parshas Parah 5780

The unprecedented events swirling around us and the entire world leave us bewildered and consumed with concern for the immediate future. Beyond the debate of how best to deal with the situation, everyone's life has already been disrupted to one extent or another. We have no *Neviim* to interpret Hashem's intentions for us, but we do have our faith that informs us that whatever He does, is for the ultimate best.

**We have no *Neviim...*,
but we do have our faith
that informs us that
whatever He does, is for
the ultimate best.**

We can also look into the exact nature of unfolding circumstances and try to learn lessons, perhaps a glimpse into what it might be that Hashem wants from us. One of the foundations of Judaism is the principle stated so eloquently by the *Tanna Hillel* - that loving one's neighbor is a foundation of our faith. We are commanded in so many ways to love each other, care for each other and be there for each other.

Along comes a pandemic and we are told to quarantine ourselves. Separate from your society, community, friend. Large celebrations, crowds at a wedding, closeness at shul are now being denied us. Could it be Hashem is hinting to us that we have been taking our responsibilities of being a good friend, neighbor, community member, fellow Jew for granted? Do we perhaps not properly appreciate the privilege of being enveloped by a wonderful circle of shul friends, neighbors and fellow Jews. Perhaps, Hashem is now taking away that opportunity for a period of time, to help us regain a sincere appreciation for our fellow.

In a different vein, one of the greatest gifts Hashem has given us is our family. We sacrifice everything for our spouse and children and view them correctly, as the center of our universe. However, do we actually spend enough time and focus enough attention on them, especially the children? We are busy at work, we run to daven and to learn, we do *Chesed*, we spend time with friends. What is left of us for our children? Could it be Hashem is giving us the opportunity, is forcing us to spend time with the children? We might contemplate 14 days locked up in the same premises with our darling youngsters as a source of dread, but it may just be Hashem's way of saying - "I'm giving you a rare chance to bond with your children, get to really know them, let them see how much

you care for them."

**Give them the gift of
seeing how you connect
to Hashem in a way that
they don't ordinarily
have...**

Whatever the deeper meaning and message of current events, we need to introspect and find ways to improve. We can also capitalize on the opportunity. If you are forced to daven at home, include the children. Give them the gift of seeing how you connect to Hashem in a way that they don't ordinarily have. There will be extra time to learn with your children. Make that an enjoyable activity.

Whether we welcome the bonding opportunities with our children or are somewhat apprehensive, we need to realize that this is also a potentially traumatizing period in their lives. It is up to us to comfort them, calm them and be the anchor of faith and confidence in Hashem and in our future, that will help them navigate the storm safely to shore, strong in health, emotion and spirit.

**Perhaps, Hashem is now
taking away that
opportunity..., to help us
regain a sincere
appreciation for our
fellow.**

Best wishes for a Shabbos of growth and bonding,

Rabbi Kalman Baumann