

Spirituality in a Time of Crisis: Responding to the Coronavirus from the Jewish Tradition

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Coping with Crisis

1. [Rabbi Twerski's Response to Stress](#) - This is a very short video by Rabbi Avraham Twersky zt"l on one way to respond to stress. Take a look.
2. Suggested Psalms to be Recited During this Time: Chapters [20](#), [27](#) and [130](#)
3. Study Together - Find a partner or a group of people who might want to study together. Here is a [sign-up sheet](#) if you are interested in learning about the Meaning of Symbols this coming Sunday, March 29th at 2 PM.

Building and inspiring fellowship and community in a time of crisis

1. Bava Kama 60b - On why one should not leave their home

ת"ר דבר בעיר כנס רגליך שנאמר ואתם לא תצאו איש מפתח ביתו עד בקר ואומר (ישעיהו כו, ב) לך עמי בא בחדריך וסגור דלתך בעדך ואומר (דברים לב, כה) מחוץ תשכל חרב ומחדרים אימה

§ The Sages taught: If there is a plague in the city, gather your feet, i.e., limit the time you spend out of the house, as it is stated in the verse: "And none of you shall go out of the opening of his house until the morning." And it says in another verse: "Come, my people, enter into your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself for a little moment, until the anger has passed by" (Isaiah 26:20). And it says: "Outside the sword will bereave, and in the chambers terror" (Deuteronomy 32:25).

2. Chulin 10a - Endangering self and community takes precedence

ואילו ספק מים מגולים אסורין ש"מ חמירא סכנתא מאיסורא ש"מ

But in a situation of uncertainty where he left exposed water and then came and found the vessel exposed, the water is forbidden under all circumstances. **Learn from it that danger is more severe than prohibition.** The Gemara affirms: Indeed, learn from it.

Based on this teaching, many leaders have urged their community to not go to synagogue, not pray in a minyan (quorum of ten people), minimize preparations for Pesach, emphasizing that the current danger is "more severe than prohibition." (Please, consult with your community leader about your practice.) People should not go out and endanger themselves or others.

3. Rav Kook - הגמרא בשבת - ל"ב, ע"א הרב קוק בעין איה על הגמרא בשבת - On abundant caution

<p>It is not enough to "be careful" while trying to achieve a goal, but one needs to avoid danger altogether</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">לא לבד להוסיף זהירות במקום שאפשר לתקן, לבא אל המבוקש ראוי להיות זהיר, כי אם למנע גם כן לגמרי הליכה ועסק שיש בו חשש סכנה.</p>
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4. Shabbat 32a

לעולם אל יעמוד אדם במקום סכנה לומר שעושין לו נס, שגמא אין עושין לו נס. (...) רבי זיירא ביומא דשותא לא נפיק לביני דיקלי.

A person should never stand in a place of danger saying that they on High will perform a miracle for him, lest in the end they do not perform a miracle for him. (...) Similarly, the Gemara relates that Rabbi Zeira would not go out and walk among the palm trees on a day when there was a southern wind blowing due to the fear that the trees might fall on him.

Reflecting on gratitude and faith in a time of crisis

1. Songs

Tov Lehodot L'Hashem

<p>Tov l'hodot la'hashem, Ulzamer l'shimcha elyon hagid baboker chasdecha v'emunatcha baleylot.</p>	<p>It is good to thank God And to sing out to the Universe. To tell over of Your kindness in the morning and Your faith in the nights. To tell over of Your kindness in the morning And Your faith in the nights</p>	<p>טוב להודות לה' ולזמר לשמך עליון. להגיד בבקר חסדך, ואמונתך בלילות</p>
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Esa Einai - אשא עיני

<p>Esa einai el heharim, me'ayin me'ayin yavo ezri Esa einai el heharim, me'ayin me'ayin yavo ezri Ezri me'im Hashem, Oseh shamayim va'aretz Ezri me'im Hashem, Oseh shamayim va'aretz</p>	<p>I will lift up my eyes to the mountains. From where does my help come? I will lift up my eyes to the mountains. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.</p>	<p>אשא עיני אל ההרים מאין יבוא עזרי 'עזרי מעם ה' עושה שמיים וארץ</p>
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2. Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heschel, "Religion and Race" (1963)

"The most practical thing is not to weep but to act and to have faith in God's assistance and grace in our trying to do His will."

(From: <https://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/heschel-religion-and-race-speech-text/>)