



Congregation Ner Tamid

on the Greenspun Campus for Jewish Life, Learning, and Spiritual Renewal

Endings in the Time of Corona

It's been said that nothing is certain but "death and taxes." But even these have "loopholes." What about the "afterlife?" And tax rebates? I mean, is anything *really* certain?

Endings. The End. How many movies, conclude with this only to grant us a sequel? The same with novels. Races come to an end. But then there seems to be yet another race. And another.

Is anything *really* final?

Loopholes aside, we both fear and revere endings. Something as simple as a good meal. Ah, we just want one more bite. Or a good vacation. Please, just another day. Or a romance. Who doesn't love the feeling of being in love?

And yet, as December approaches, so too does the conclusion of another year. Some years we wish would go on forever. These are the years of prosperity and success. If we are afraid, it is that this abundance will end. It is the not knowing when that gives us pause for concern.

And then there are those years, that we wish would indeed just END. Please, God, let this year end! I would imagine for most of us, 2020 is such a year. Oh, there are exceptions. Loopholes if you will. People who have given birth to babies or those who managed to make some money because they understand that in this crazy economy not everything went haywire. Those who love their jobs and still have them. Those who didn't get Covid, and are afraid that next year they might. But for the most part, can't we agree that we wish 2020 with all of its craziness would simply end?

Enough of politics. Enough of unemployment. Enough of empty shelves. Enough of Covid. Enough.

"*Tah-dah!* Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you "the vaccine!" The notion that all of this will end. That magically, everything will return to normal. Or what's left of normal.

The vaccine is our new loophole. Our escape from this reality. Our source of hope. Our holy grail. Our last page in a book whose story we really didn't want to be a part of. We can't wait to come to the last page and read those words...the end.

Nothing is that simple. Not even endings. We have a second wave coming the scientists tell us. (Or is it a third wave?) We are stuck with politics and all of its messiness. (Who was it who said something like "Our political system is the worst; except all the rest?!) And while we long for a return to normalcy, we begrudgingly admit that some things have changed for the better.

Which things you may ask? Well, I suppose that's up to you. For some it has been spending more time with family. For others it has been being gently forced to learn new technology which has opened new worlds. For others, it has been exploring a new hobby. For others, it has been learning the true meaning of friendship. And for others it has been learning that nothing is certain. Loopholes. Sometimes they are our friend.

Not always, but sometimes, if we are lucky, we get to write our endings. Shape our own destiny. Our own history and sense of self. Not always, but sometimes.

Will we recognize that opportunity if it comes? And will we be prepared?

The new year awaits us. With new opportunity. And please God, new endings. Ones that we can live with.

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