



# Congregation Ner Tamid

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

## *Spiritual Lessons in the Time of Corona*

Have been doing a lot of thinking during this Time of Corona. Haven't we all? The frustrating ups and downs. Living with ambiguity. Thinking that we were done with the virus only to be confronted with the Delta variant.

Even so, as a rabbi I look for spiritual truths, lessons that might guide us during uncertain times. Here are three that came to mind.

Remember when the danger of the virus really hit us in March 2020? It seems like forever ago. We were told many things. But one thing we will all remember is how everything shut down overnight and we were told to stay indoors. We weren't in hiding, but we might as well have been. We were afraid and fearful of what might happen and what could happen. The first lesson I think to be learned is not to let our fears get the best of us. It is so hard not to; especially with conflicting messages, new data, and new variants. But the fear and anger that we have confronted and continue to confront is a virus in itself. Reb Nachman taught us, *"The whole world is a narrow bridge, the main thing is not to be afraid."*

Next, we were told to wear masks. The masks covered our mouths as if to say don't judge us by our words. They revealed only our eyes. Too many of us do not really see other people. Think of those parties when you were talking with someone and their eyes were looking past you waiting to talk to the next person. Think of the people in our lives who give us service or who show us kindness or just want to make a new friend. Who is it that we really take the time to see in life? We are taught that "Eyes are the window to the soul". If so, perhaps the second lesson is to really seek to understand other people. We are too divided, but perhaps rather than discounting other people we will listen more, and seek to understand each more. A little empathy goes a long way.

Lastly, the great irony of this time is that as isolated as we have felt, the more we came to understand that we are more connected than we ever could have imagined. The virus knows no state lines, no borders, no differences of race, creed or color. We have learned that what happens here, impacts someone over there. I am reminded of the story of the two men in a boat. The first man begins drilling a hole under his seat and the water starts pouring in. The second man says, *"What are you doing? You are going to drown us!"* The first man replied, *"Oh don't worry, I am only drilling under my seat."*

As we greet the new year, we must embrace this universal truth. As we pray for a year of happiness and joy, and especially one of health, it is not our individual prayers that will matter, but our *collective* prayers. We are in this world together, let us remember therefore, that we are stronger together.