



Dear Chabad of Bedford family,

Our hearts go out to all those that have been affected by the coronavirus and we wish all those that are sick a speedy recovery.

The rapid global spread of this novel virus has many people in our community understandably scared and many gripped with fear.

Fear comes from **uncertainty**, we fear that which we cannot predict nor control. But it is important to remember that the only certainty in life – is uncertainly. So rather than trying to control the future as a means of feeling secure, we are better off learning how to live peacefully with uncertainty.

To this end, Jewish tradition has some very useful instruction that I encourage everyone to try and incorporate to whatever degree you can.

We are required to control everything we have the capacity to control. This includes taking care of our health, putting effort into our livelihood and doing all we can to ensure our safety and security. This means we need to follow all guidance of the CDC and local health departments as they relate to protecting ourselves and our families from coming in contact with the virus.

However, as much as we would like it to be different, we cannot control **outcomes**. In fact, trying to control outcomes is not only a futile pursuit, it is self-defeating as the fear weakens our health and immune systems and works against our primary responsibility of controlling all that we **can** control. For most healthy people, our level of fear **is** in our control.

It is a core Jewish belief that there is a Divine master plan behind **everything** that happens in the world. This means that while outcomes are uncertain to **us**, there is meaning, purpose and design to every event. After we finish doing our part, we can rest calmly with absolute faith, that whatever happens is exactly what is supposed to happen. This does not necessarily give us a sense of certainty, but it does help us cope with a life of inevitable uncertainty.

Practically speaking: If you are afraid – that is natural and normal. Here are ways to shift your mindset:

1. We need to realize that the fear is weakening our health, scaring our children and not getting us any closer to the stability we so crave. See this as an opportunity to educate your children about how to deal with disappointment, fear and uncertainly. See this as an opportunity to teach your family basic tenets of Jewish tradition.

I recommend gathering your family together and telling them that we are going to control everything we can. After that, whatever happens is exactly what is

supposed to happen. Whatever outcome G-d chooses for us, He has given us the tools and means to keep doing what it is we need to be doing on this earth. Get comfortable with uncertainty and your family will learn to do the same.

2. One of the best ways to avoid the victimhood of fear, is to turn it into a catalyst for positive action and mitzvot. Designate a charity box that your family will deposit coins in each day as a way of creating an additional vessel for G-d's blessings. Add a Jewish prayer that your family will say each day. Know someone who is ill or in quarantine – think about how isolating that must be and reach out with a call, card or gift.
3. In the spirit of the holiday of Purim we just concluded: If a virus can spread with such ease all over the globe, certainly happiness, confidence and good cheer can spread with even greater ease. Be a source of positive energy to those around you. It is a timeless and infectious tool!

May we all be blessed with good health and minimal disruption to our lives. Both of us are here for anyone in our community in any way we can and please do not hesitate to call or email.

With love and blessing,

Rabbi Arik & Sara