This Shabbat I’m Staying Home

This is going to be one of the most special Shabbat of our lives.

Unlike other times, like Hurricane Sandy, when I remember that some people had to leave homes because their basements were flooded and there was no power , many people came to Kanissa, that was like the safest place to be. Now, this Shabbat, we will have to avoid Kanissa and stay home.

We will miss each seeing each other, greeting, hugging each other and praying together,

Just to make sure: Missing and not being physically with each other for a short while, is not necessarily a bad thing. First, It teaches us that we need to value the gifts and blessings that we have WHEN we have them, and second, like Nidda time, longing for each other RENEWS our love and desire to be together again, BH very soon.

Why we are not going to Kanissa?

Basically, it is my understanding that this is basically a preventive measure. It is not ONLY because CDC gives us some medical guidelines. It is also our Tora that urges us to be EXTRA careful when it gets to keeping ourselves and those around us safe and healthy. □□□□□□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□□□

We need to separate from each other, mainly, to protect the elders and those with a medical condition. Because, BH for most of us even if we get the virus, it won’t mean anything worse than the flu. But, if we get the virus and we go home to our parents or grandparents, we might affect them. And the older someone is, the more expose he or she is. That’s the main reason we are ALL doing this. We are all sacrificing ONE SHABBAT because we want to avoid a risk that even ONE of our elders will be affected by this virus that is more contagious

than the flu.

In my personal case, ever since we were informed that one of my family members was in contact with someone that tested positive we have all decided that because we MIGHT represent a bigger factor of risk for others, we will stay home for a few days. Why? Because the most rational thing to do will be to test yourself best and eliminate the doubt. However, testing is extremely limited, and Urgent care will ONLY test you if you have been in direct contact with someone who tested positive AND you have symptoms. So, we wait home and see if we develop any symptoms. Which BH after a week, did not happen. AGAIN ALL THIS IS DONE MOSTLY TO AVOID A POTENTIAL SPREADING OF THE VIRUS IN THE UNLIKELY CASE YOU HAVE IT AND IN THIS WAY PROTECT OTHERS, THE ELDERS AND PEOPLE WITH CERTAIN MEDICAL CONDITIONS.

So, this Shabbat I'm staying home .

This is a very special Shabbat for me. Because this Sunday is the anniversary of my father, z"l. And I should be saying Kaddish for him from this Friday night. BUT, AS A RABBI I KNOW that protecting lives, and avoiding the risk of someone else's life, is more important than saying Kaddish. Please, learn this thing from me. And if you are saying Kaddish, and you will be in contact with any elder person or with someone that might be close to an elder, stay home and ask someone else to say Kaddish for you.

Finally, let me tell you what I have done for my father's Kaddish.

Last night, I called my friend and colleague Rabbi Mordekhai Kohanim. I knew that Rabbi Kohanim will be attending a very small Minyan this Shabbat, so I asked him to say Kaddish for my father.

Rabbi Kohanim, as expected, told me: "Of course rabbi Bitton I will be very honored to do so". Then I said to him that is

going to be just until Sunday, because my father passed away Adar 19th. Then, after a few seconds of silence Rabbi Kohanim said: “Adar 19th? That is also my own father’s Yahrtzait “.

We got very emotional. I cried a little bit…. and it it hit me very strongly to feel the incredible ways in which despite all these physical isolations, we are indeed united and together in so many mysterious paths, in this world and beyond…

I will miss you all. I wish for everyone a great Shabbat

LEILUY NISHMAT YAAKOB BAR YEHUDA BITTON AND AHARON BEN MORDEKHAI KOHANIM, z’l.

THIS IS A VERY SPECIAL EMAIL FROM A JEWISH COMMUNITY IN CHICAGO GREAT GUIDELINES FOR THIS SPECIAL SHABBAT

PLEASE PRINT IT AND FOLLOW IT! IT WILL ENHANCE YOUR SHABBAT DAY

Shabbat Parashat Ki Tisa, Shabbat Parah

March 14th, 2020

Dear Families,

In the coming days and weeks, we all may find ourselves spending Shabbat at home with our families, unable to attend shul or the other kinds of playdates and social gatherings that make up the special flavor of a normal shabbat in our community. Unlike on weekdays, where digital distractions abound, Shabbat poses unique challenges. How do we make the day fun, special and religiously significant even without attending services, kiddush or shabbat meals?

We've included some ideas below, to make your Shabbat at home feel as special and holy as possible under the circumstances.

Pre-Shabbat Ruach: Get in the Shabbat spirit with a dance party and watching parsha videos.

- Parshat Ki Tisa: Moses Breaks the Tablets at Sinai – Rabba Yaffa Epstein (BimBam)
- Parshat Ki Tisa: Seeing the Golden Calf – Sarah Gershman (BimBam)
    - Comprehension questions:
        - What does B'nei Yisrael do when they think that Moshe is not returning?
        - What does Aharon do to try to delay them?
        - What does Hashem want to do in response to the Egel HaZahav?
        - What does Moshe do when he sees the Golden Calf?
    - Questions for discussion:
        - What is something you know to be true that you have trouble believing until you've seen it for yourself (with your own eyes)?
            - (ex. Snow day, rainbow, etc)
        - The storyteller sees the Egel HaZahav as a representation of Moshe. That's her opinion. There are many ways to interpret this story. What's another way of seeing it?
- If you can't join the ASBI Zoom dance party, host your own! Youtube playlist here:
    - https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLokUsVxY1i3d3CAhupElxRhZheY2H39fr

Friday Night:

- Do you have tunes from Kabbalat Shabbat that you love? After candle lighting, sing them out loud with your family, dance in a circle– holding your own little service at home to welcome in the Shabbat queen. Adults

can make sure to pray a full Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv service as well, but bring your children into it as is appropriate.
- Over dinner, start to discuss the Parsha with your children. You can use the Parsha Themes infographic included in the family email to kick off your discussion.

Shabbat Day:

- Shabbat day can feel like a very unstructured time. One way to help everyone in your family feel like they know what to expect and look forward to is to make a plan and a written schedule for how your Shabbat will be spent and review it with your children before Shabbat.
- In addition to your own personal tefillot of Shacharit and Musaf, daven with your children. If they are in Tot Shabbat, sing your favorite songs with them. The children in drop-off groups may well know what Tefillot they normally do in groups. Hopefully in the coming days the leaders of those groups will produce at-home guides for you and your children, but we might not have them ready in time for this Shabbat. Nevertheless, you can ask your children of any age which Tefillot they know and love from groups, school or summer camp, and you can sing them together.
- There are many different ways to explore the Parsha with your children, depending on their age.
    - With older children, you could learn it together out of a chumash. You could practice some leyning together, to hone skills they are learning in school or have learned for their bnai mitzvah.
    - For elementary aged children, you could talk about the Parsha (perhaps the story of the Golden Calf) and put on a skit together utilizing any costumes and props you might have around the house. Add in challenge with unusual types of props (eg,

"incorporate this spatula into the story!"). If you have some time before shabbat, have your child(ren) create puppets for the main figures in the parsha and put on a puppet show in a unique style or using silly voices (think B'nei Yisrael heads to the opera or rodeo).
    - For younger children, you might want to talk about counting. Our Parsha begins with a census, but instead of counting people, they are commanded to collect a coin per person and then count the coins. What other kinds of things can you count?
- Extend your Shabbat lunch by singing zemirot between courses and saying birkat hamazon out loud together. If it is age-appropriate, practice the words of Kiddush with your children.
- Reading together is a great Shabbat activity for all ages. Adults also enjoy gathering together for dramatic readings of Shakespeare and other theater greats. Find books to read to your children that might be new for them and for you– the more participatory the better. Challenge yourself to come up with tunes for any parts that might be sing-song, so as to break up the monotony for yourself and further engage your children.
- Playing board and card games for many hours straight can be strenuous, but starting a board game and then taking a break for another activity before continuing can keep everything exciting and fresh for longer. Don't wait until everyone is bored before pausing an activity– always leave people wanting more, so that when you come back to it, it will feel like a treat.
- Make sure to incorporate physical activity. Whether this is a Shabbat Zemirot dance party (appointing a table-drummer to keep a beat while everyone else dances will go a long way here), a game of Simon says, or just some good laps around your apartment (one time in a crab walk, one time in a crawl, one time backward, one time wheelbarrow, one time blindfolded, one time singing the

Tot Shabbat “on my way to shul one day” song, etc), will help everyone feel less stir-crazy.

End of Shabbat:

- As shabbat winds down, eat Seudah Shlishit together as a family. Sing slower songs as the day flows away. Get everyone into pajamas and ready for your pajama havdallah party!
- When Shabbat ends, turn out the lights, light up your havdallah candle, and reflect together on how special this Shabbat was that you all spent together. Remind each other of the parts you liked the most, the fun times you had together. This is important because if we have to do this all again next week, you want everyone to remember the good parts!

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbanit Leah Sarna & Molly Jaret