



Torah for Turbulent Times: **"Throwing Candy at the Computer"**

Sourdough bread is rising slowly in my kitchen and its smell is scrumptious. Baking has become an important addition to my weekly rituals and attempts at staying grounded during these wobbly times. The kneading allows me to let it all out through my hands and creates a rhythm my soul needs. The waiting (6 hours total rise) is a lesson in patience and is of course, the hardest part. Perhaps it's even just the right metaphor for now.

As it turns out, many of us are cooking and baking more often these days. In our Torah discussion this past week, we spoke about acts of holiness that are essential following times of darkness and death. We learned about the loss of life of Aaron's sons, which is immediately followed by a long list of varying acts of holiness. Diane Roston led the discussion, as we broke into Zoom chat rooms to connect and share ideas with each other. She noted that the Torah moves quickly, without pausing or dwelling on death and its rituals (somewhat surprisingly), to how we can bring holiness into life. In a nutshell, choose life! In relating to the portion we focused on this question: "What are we doing during these difficult times to bring more holiness into the world?" Reframing our lives in this way felt like a *m'hayyeh*, literally, a "life giving" conversation.

Speaking of life giving, this coming Saturday morning, we'll celebrate a Zoom bat mitzvah with Drew Kantor and her family. Yes, despite it all, we are a resilient people and life goes on! Our life cycle rituals help us affirm that this really is a rite of passage not just for the bat mitzvah student and her family, but for the community and the Jewish people. In many ways we're all living through a rite of passage of sorts. What else can we do now? What's more life giving now? What could be more symbolic and cathartic now than throwing candy at the computer to celebrate a *simcha*, a joyous occasion, in the only way we can!

"The toss" entered our traditional ceremony (despite the lack of decorum) to associate the process of learning with sweetness and to shower new Jewish adults with candied blessings. This is certainly a time of learning for us all. It's also a time when we could all use a little more sweetness and blessings in our lives. So, come along and join us, grab a handful, and throw some candy at the computer. It's a *m'hayyeh*!

And, just so I don't forget, to all the mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers in the community and beyond, Happy Mother's Day!

-Rabbi Mark