

INTRODUCTION: THE COVID-19 CRISIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SANCTIFY OUR HOMES

As we go to press with this year's Pesach edition of the *Benjamin and Rose Berger Torah To-Go*®, it is difficult to believe that only weeks ago, our theme of anti-Semitism was the most pressing concern for world Jewry. While anti-Semitism certainly remains a serious concern, and the COVID-19 crisis certainly has the potential to exacerbate it, we find ourselves preparing for Pesach this year in the context of an entirely new reality. *Torah To Go* is branded as a publication that can be picked up at a local shul or school and enjoyed at home or anywhere else. Over the past few days we have watched as the entire Jewish world has transitioned to the world of "Torah to go."

The Torah (Shemos 25:15) tells us regarding the Aron, the Holy Ark of the Mishkan:

בְּטַבְעֹת הָאָרֶן יִהְיוּ הַבְּדָיִם לֹא יִסְרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ.
In the rings of the Ark there shall be poles. They may not be removed from it.

Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch, in his commentary to that verse, writes that the poles used to carry the Aron were never removed, even when the Aron was stationary, because ultimately our Torah is always "to go." It is portable.

It can be transported to any place, any time, and any circumstance.

This crisis has shown the incredible strength of the Jewish people. We have seen that our values and service to Hakadosh Baruch Hu can be applied to any environment in which we find ourselves.

The korban Pesach offered in Mitzrayim was unique in that it was a korban that was offered in the home.

The korban Pesach was the first sacrifice commanded to the Jewish people. The korban Pesach offered in Mitzrayim was unique in that it was a korban that was offered in the home. It personified the notion that the foundation of our people, of our nation, is the sanctity of our homes.

Our preparation for Pesach 5780 is completely different than what we are used to. We find ourselves confined almost entirely to our homes. Beyond the opportunity for more focused

cleaning, it is a chance to infuse those homes with the sense of meaning and purpose that Pesach is all about. Our faith in Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and a recognition that He controls both nature and history, is the greatest source of our resilience and perseverance through this challenge.

Rav Kook, *Midbar Shur* pg. 139, writes that the word "Pesach" does not mean to "pass over." Rather, based on the verse in Melachim I 18:25, "*poschim al shtei haseifim*" — hopping between two opinions — it means to "hover." Hakadosh Baruch Hu did not simply "pass over" the Jewish homes; he hovered and made his presence felt while the final plague of Egypt was carried out. May Hakadosh Baruch Hu hover above our sacred homes and protect us once again. May He provide our community with the strength and the blessings to emerge from this great challenge with health and with bracha.

Wishing you a wonderful Pesach,