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Dear Editor,

I live in a frum neighborhood. When I walk around, I see many frum people not wearing a mask. It seems to me that less than 1% of us seem to be wearing a mask. Last year, I asked some people I knew who chose not to wear a mask why they did not wear one. The answers were all along the same line: I was vaccinated and have antibodies... I already had Covid and have antibodies... I find the mask uncomfortable and don't want to wear it... I don't know what's in the vaccine and don't want to put it into my body.

Did you notice that their answers are all about "I," as in "me." They only considered how they felt about it and did not consider other people at all. What has happened to caring about other people? What about *ve'ahauta lereiyecha kamocha*? What happened to "if you save one life, it is as if you have saved an entire world"?

Let's look at Covid a different way. There is a large segment of the community who, if they get Covid, will suffer more than healthy people. Many of us are overweight (obese), smoke or are over the age of 65. Many of us have underlying

conditions, such as cancer, chronic heart, lung, kidney or liver disease, diabetes, dementia, multiple myeloma, Downs syndrome, or have had organ transplants or a stroke. Some people have weakened immune system for other reasons as well. If any of these people are exposed to the coronavirus, they are put at greater risk of getting very sick and may even die.

When you refuse to wear a mask, and/or refuse to practice social distancing, you may cause someone great harm. Maybe you do have the coronavirus but haven't felt symptoms yet. Maybe you don't have Covid, but you are carrying it. You can infect people without knowing it and cause them great suffering or death. Please remember that your decision to mask or not does not only affect you, it affects every single person you encounter as you go about your day.

Also consider that the amount of people who have Covid, and the amount of people who are hospitalized, have risen in the last few weeks. Also, a new variant called Omicron has arrived, and the experts believe that it is more contagious than the other variants we had before. And the more people that have Covid, the

farther it spreads (if 1,000 people have Covid right now, it will spread much farther than if 100 people have it right now). We need to stop this disease in its tracks. We need to be more caring about one another.

Sarah M.
Brooklyn, NY

Dear Editor,

Life and death are all relative in the Jewish religion. You can be alive but spiritually dead or dead but spiritual alive. We know the Next World is just the beginning of the tasting of the fruits of this world.

Before Yaakov's death, the Torah says he was *Vayechei*, lived, an active verb indicative of a continued state of being, not terminated by death. Yaakov was *metaken Arvit*, symbolic of the blindness of the night, galut, which personifies our existence. The Torah accentuates for us that his death was not his end, but rather serves as an eternal infusion of life for his future children. He exemplifies that the greatest test of faith comes when we don't understand yet continue to still steadfastly believe.

Steven Genack

Dear Editor,

I know that you have a weekly parenting article in your paper, and I thoroughly enjoy reading it. That being said, I have yet to read an article on parenting or on chinuch when it comes to carpool.

With six children, ka"h, I have had my share of carpools. Some have been so wonderful and so helpful – a true chessed for me so I don't have to drive my children back and forth every Sunday or legal holiday to school. But others have been so nightmarish.

The problems can stem either

from the parents or the children in the carpool. Some parents are not thoughtful – they won't ask for someone to take over if they're out of town, for instance. I've had other parents put on music that I wasn't comfortable with or even TV shows on the kids' way to school. It's a 15-minute drive! Why do they need to watch *Baby Shark*? One of the parents that I carpooled with never once said good morning to me or my daughter when she picked her up from my house. Can you imagine how comfortable I felt putting my little daughter in her car every day?

And then, there have been children that I've carpooled who have been so rude or disruptive or obnoxious. I know that they have a long day at school but being rude to either a parent or another child is unacceptable. Of course, there are many who see you as an Uber driver – they'll never say "thank you" or show any acknowledgment.

This is not a letter to share my gripes with dealing with carpools. In fact, overall, I've found carpools to be pleasant experiences. I'm bringing this up to raise awareness.

Number one: parents, be considerate. If you're running late, let me know. If you're going out of town, let me know. If you want to share the latest Nissim Black song, let me know.

Number two: middos and menschlichkeit do not stop at the car's door. Teach (or remind) your child to say "thank you" and be appreciative. Remind them to be nice to others and to think of others.



These ideas can go a long way into making carpooling a pleasure!

Sincerely,
A Reader

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