



UW Hillel Team Mar 13

## Being Together When We're Apart

This is a time of uncertainty, as our community disperses for spring break. We do not know what the weeks ahead will hold, but we do know that life on campus and the semester ahead are not unfolding as we had planned. We will be apart when we want to be together. I want to share a piece of Torah that I am reflecting on.

My teachers at Svara shared this teaching from the Talmud: Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai says, "Come and see how beloved the Jewish people are before the Holy One, Blessed be God. In every place they were exiled, the Divine Presence went with them." In a sense, we are all in our own exiles: this is not the spring we had dreamed of. And yet, Rabbi Shimon teaches, you are not alone. The Divine Presence - a manifestation of God that can be felt but not articulated - is there with you. Just when you feel most alone or most frustrated or most scared, take a breath and know that you are not alone. Maybe we can even feel this Presence more when we are alone than when we are in community. I don't know what this Divine Presence will feel like, but I pray that we are each able to feel it as we find our places for these coming weeks. And may we know that in our dispersion we are still one.

-Rabbi Judy Greenberg

Pandemic

What if you thought of it  
as the Jews consider the Sabbath—  
the most sacred of times?  
Cease from travel.  
Cease from buying and selling.  
Give up, just for now,  
on trying to make the world  
different than it is.  
Sing. Pray. Touch only those  
to whom you commit your life.  
Center down.  
And when your body has become still,  
reach out with your heart.  
Know that we are connected  
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.  
(You could hardly deny it now.)  
Know that our lives  
are in one another's hands.  
(Surely, that has come clear.)  
Do not reach out your hands.  
Reach out your heart.

Reach out your words.  
Reach out all the tendrils  
of compassion that move, invisibly,  
where we cannot touch.  
Promise this world your love--  
for better or for worse,  
in sickness and in health,  
so long as we all shall live.  
~ Lynn Ungar

Even though we might not be together, Hillel is here for you.

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