

## A Student's Journal Entries During Covid 19

When we left school right after Purim, none of us thought that would be our last day of Bais Yaakov forever. Forever. So none of us said goodbye, took one last look around, enjoyed that last day of school to the max, none of us did anything different. I thought for sure after Pesach we would return to school. After Pesach, when things weren't looking much brighter, I still didn't give up hope. I refused to believe that I will never return to school. I davened hard for school to resume, hoping each day something new will happen. Even as the chances turned bleaker and bleaker, I still hoped. Other states announced that school is closed for the year, but not Maryland. That comforted me. I felt like it was a message from Hashem, a small beacon of light. And then just like that, with no warning, that light was extinguished. Pitch black tunnel. Groping for a rope, for some guidance, for some comfort. Dreams turned upside down. What's going on?

I took out a notebook and pencil, went into my room, and called into Mrs. Rabenstein. She began by saying that when she heard Hogan make his announcement, she knew some of us would take it hard, and she just wanted to talk to us and comfort us. She didn't really know what she wanted to say, what message she wanted to give over, but she just wanted to be with us, her seniors, at this time. I really appreciated that. Mrs. Rabenstein is amazing. As Mrs. Rabenstein began, talking about how we probably will never be back in school, didn't have our last Student Shabbos, last week of school, last final... my tears started flowing. How could it be? How could it be? Just no more? Mrs. Rabenstein described her favorite part of teaching 12th grade: watching us in the months following Pesach, the freedom, the happiness, the excitement, the Achdus, and how she is also missing out. She cried at some points, which was very touching. We are all in this together. I'm crying just like Mrs. Rabenstein is crying. I took notes on everything she said through my tears. Mrs. Rabenstein told us about Emunah. We learn all about it in school, now we need to put it in practice. It's okay to feel disappointed, to want to cry, that is totally justified. But we need to realize that everything happens exactly how Hashem wants it. We thought we would have a normal senior year like the rest of the world, but we thought wrong. When I was born, Hashem decided that I will be a senior in 2020, the year of corona. Hashem knew I can handle this. Hashem wanted me to have this Nisayon, this opportunity, to put all my tools from school and put it into action. "I look up to all of you." Yup, Mrs. Rabenstein said that. She looks up to me. That was very powerful, very comforting...

...With corona comes a nisayon of self-knowledge and self-introspection. It is impossible for those like \_\_\_\_\_ to go through such a thing and not come out knowing their self better. Being alone with just your thoughts is not something most of us like doing. In fact, most of us will do something to distract ourselves even after just 30 minutes. But one cannot distract herself for over two weeks. Even those not in such a tough situation still have this test, although to a smaller degree. We are all in quarantine, some more strict than others. We are all seeing way less people each day than we are used to. With this comes more time for ourselves, more time to relax, more time alone. It is important, albeit something most of us do not enjoy, to know ourselves and our emotions. For myself, I know this is true. I have done more self-introspection and I have identified my thoughts much more over these weeks. There are fewer distractions and there is more time to just do nothing. This allows your true self to shine. I am lucky to be home with a bunch of other people. I am getting to know myself better and all my siblings and my parents better. When this ends, iy"h very soon, I think we will all be truer people.