



## *Hineini, Here I Am*

This New Year, I invite you to have conversations with each other about being present and the use of technology. I have provided this list of questions for you to consider. *Shanah Tovah.*

### **Using Technology and Being Present**

- When you were a child, what were some of your favorite technologies (i.e., transistor radios, tape recorders, etc.)?
- Did you or your family have a favorite radio or television show? Did you listen or watch together?
- Do you remember making phone calls from telephone booths? (There are four left in Manhattan, all on West End Ave. at 66th, 90th, 100th, and 101st streets.)
- Which technologies do you use the most now? Why?
- Do you use technology during meal times?
- What do your family and friends say about your use of these technologies?
- Do you feel that technology helps you to be present or distracts you from being present?
- How much do you use your phone when walking on the sidewalks?
- What do you think about the televisions in NY City taxi cabs?

### ***Panim el Panim – Face-to-Face Time***

- Who are the people you enjoy being with? What is special about them?
- How often do you spend time speaking with them on the phone or in person? Do you speak to them too often or too little?
- How has technology changed your friendships?
- Do you have friends whom you prefer to talk with in person or on the phone? Why?
- Do you speak to friends and family on their birthdays? Do you send or email birthday cards? Which is more valuable to you, a birthday email or phone call?
- How do you determine whether to send a thank you note vs. a thank you email?

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## **Priorities**

- What are your most important priorities personally and professionally?
- Is technology helping you or hindering you in achieving your priorities? Explain.
- Do you have any particular goals with regard to your use of technology for this new Jewish year? If so what?

## **Shabbat and Setting Limits**

- What are your Shabbat memories from your youth?
- Do you have Shabbat rituals or customs today?
- If you have children how would you like them to observe and mark Sabbath time?
- Last year a diverse group of Jewish professionals joined together to encourage people to unplug on Shabbat. They created this list of Shabbat priorities for modern-day Jews: avoid technology, connect with the people you love, tend to your health, get outside, avoid commerce, light candles, drink wine, eat bread, find silence, and give back. Do any of these resonate with you? What and why?
- When and where do you turn off your devices or unplug? Do you have a no-phone zone in your home or life?
- When was the last time you went somewhere without your mobile phone or without turning your mobile phone on?
- Are there limits that you or your family and friends think you should consider regarding your technology use? What are they? Would you consider implementing them?

## **Experiencing Nature (Our ancestors refreshed and renewed outdoors)**

- Where do you recharge? What makes these places or events special? How often do you spend time in these places?
- What are your favorite outdoor places in New York City and beyond? Why?
- When was the last time you visited one of our city's parks? What did you do there?

Please visit our Central Synagogue website for links to articles on being present, technology and Shabbat. Happy New Year.