

FROM THE DOCTORS OF OUR COMMUNITY

Dear Community Member,

As the weeks go on, we continue to grapple with the profound impact that COVID-19 has had on our physical, emotional and financial health. True to character, we have seen our community rally its resources to contend with the formidable challenges the virus has presented, and the acts of Hesed, and support of one another that have emerged have been heartening. Most importantly, we take great pride in our community's commitment to mitigating the reach of the disease and flattening the curve by staying home and quarantining. Thankfully, within our community and on the broader national scale, it is working. Yet while we anticipate the day that we can return to our synagogues, yeshivot and to the full range of communal life, **we urge your patience. That day has not yet arrived.** The Orthodox Union and Agudat Yisrael have both put forth guidelines and plans for the eventual reopening of Minyanim and synagogues. They have stressed that no activity should begin in these areas until local government and rabbinical authorities deem this activity safe and allowable. **We haven't reached that point yet.**

We all have a desire to return to the practices and traditions that are the cornerstones of who we are as a community. However, as our country begins to relax its stay-at-home guidelines and workplaces and other places of gathering begin to re-open, please remain patient. We understand the urge to simultaneously re-open our synagogues and celebrate our occasions with one another, and together with our other community synagogues and institutions, we will set forth guidelines for doing so when we are reassured that the time has arrived. Now, we emphasize the importance of restraint, and of continuing to act in a thoughtful and responsible manner about the safety of our loved ones and the population as a whole. This means:

- 1) **No minyanim in our synagogues, private homes or outdoors.** The status quo must be maintained until our community rabbis, in consultation with medical professionals, re-evaluate and ultimately set forth a standard protocol that we could follow. We expect that once we can begin to re-open, outdoor minyanim will come first, followed by our synagogues, albeit with strict distancing and sanitizing rules.
- 2) **Restrict gatherings to immediate families residing in the same household.** One of the most difficult practices we have undertaken has also been our most successful: by refraining from contact with our extended families and friends, we have literally saved lives. As the Shavuot holiday and then summer approaches, we should not put any of our family members at risk by celebrating together and/or living together. For the time being, families should plan to remain apart until there is further clarity.
- 3) **Take the highest precautionary measures you can.** Please continue to follow all guidelines prescribed by the CDC and our state and local authorities to the highest letter of the law. Limit outings to those that are absolutely necessary, such as food shopping, doctors' visits and the like. Wear masks when out in public, and maintain social distances of 6 feet from others. Wash your hands frequently. Encourage your friends and family to do the same.

The more we limit the spread of the disease in our community, the quicker we can return to the community life we so value. Although we cannot physically be together, please take pride and comfort that the

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collective strength of our community is having the most profound impact: preserving life. We look forward to a speedy end to the pandemic and a refuah shelemah to all those affected.

Respectfully,

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