

Erev Shabbat Zachor Update: Important Public Health and Halacha Announcement

Dear friends,

The minute by minute information that has been flooding through our community has truly been distressing and with the latest news that my friend and colleague, Rabbi Fink, has tested positive for COVID-19, along with several more of our neighbors at YINR, has been even more upsetting. First, let me say that Rabbi Fink's strength and leadership is nothing short of inspiring, may we all follow his lead of encouraging calm, maintaining public health and being Mekadesh Shem Shamayim - sanctifying God's name - by following our County's quarantine directives and reflecting on our personal and family's religious and spiritual growth during this period of home seclusion for so many.

We have also been impacted by the quarantine of our own YIS children, and parents/faculty members from both SAR, WDS and WTA. This has caused a major upheaval in our families' lives; in my home alone, all of my children's schools are closed due to Coronavirus concerns so all of them are home - along with many other families in our community. All this being said, it has been so heartwarming hearing and seeing how so many people have been willing to help those who are subject to the quarantine. While these are trying times, indeed; these are the times that we realize how much we actually need each other, irrespective of what Shul or school community we are a part of. Haman referred to us as a nation that is "Mefuzar U'Meforad" - people that are disparate - separate and apart from each other. How beautifully ironic it is that at a time when so many people are "Mefuzarim U'Meforadim" - secluded from one another through quarantine, we prove just how wrong Haman was in his assertion. **We are united. We are together. We are one.** Whether we are at home alone or in Shul together. *And together we will emerge from this ordeal with stronger bonds that tie all of us B'yachad.*

In this spirit, a special Kol Hakavod goes to the leadership of all of the schools impacted by the recent quarantines. They deserve nothing but our respect, praise and appreciation for how they are so actively dealing with something that is truly unprecedented for all of us. Criticism, fear and panic feed into the spirit of Haman Ha'Rasha, who seeks to divide and malign - when constructive comments and unifying behaviors are the best course forward. Special Mazal Tov to Rabbi Chaim and Suzie Marder on their son, Dani's, Bar Mitzvah. May their Simcha bring Mazal, Beracha, Refuah and Yeshua to all of us.

For this Shabbat in Shul, please note the following:

- In deference to all children who are quarantined at home this Shabbat, we will have no Shabbat morning Youth Programming. And we advise all other children to stay home, as children have been found to be asymptomatic potential carriers of the virus.
- As late as this afternoon, we, and the surrounding Shuls, have been repeatedly advised by the County Health Department to hold regular services and to limit any risk by not having people sit within 6 feet of one another.
- If you are experiencing any symptoms, please call your health care provider or the Westchester County COVID-19 Hotline: [\(888\) 364-3065](tel:8883643065)
- If you are under an order of quarantine, experiencing symptoms or worried for any reason (whether you are vulnerable to illness or just exceedingly anxious about coming to Shul) we advise you to stay home. You can read Parshat Zachor in a Chumash at 10:30am on Shabbat morning (when we'll be reading it), or fulfill your obligation on Purim morning with the communal reading of "Va'Yavo Amalek," followed by a special reading of Zachor, and the reading of the Megillah (either live or by livestream) - having in mind the Mitzvah of "Zechirat and Mechiyat Amalek." You can also fulfill this when we read Zachor in Parshat Ki Teitzeh later in the summer.
- We advise that people not kiss religious items, not shake hands and to limit physical contact with each other.

Finally, a notice which we thought would be a good idea to share with everyone, is the recent communication sent by the President of YU, Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, from the YU Office of Public Affairs, regarding **adults** who've been in contact with asymptomatic individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19. The statement is as follows: ***The NYC DOH's doctors including Dr. Don Weiss, Dr. Scott Harper and Dr. Marcelle Layton have shared with us that "Individuals who have been in contact with an asymptomatic person who has tested positive for COVID-19 virus do not need to be placed in quarantine."*** Also, [click here](#) for the County Health Department COVID-19 Cleaning Guidelines.

Wishing everyone a Shabbat of Refuah V'Yeshua,
Rabbi Jonathan Morgenstern
Rabbi Nuriel Klinger

Ari Raskas and Josh Rosenbaum, Co-Presidents
Lizzy Trump, Vice-President - Youth

