



March 16, 2020

Dear Fellow Community Members,

Over the last several days we have been hearing urgent messages from our elected officials and Department of Health representatives asking us to eliminate communal gatherings and to minimize in-person contact to the greatest degree possible. This is the best and surest way to slow down the spread of the coronavirus in our city. It will literally save lives and will prevent our local hospitals from becoming overwhelmed to the point of having to turn patients away.

This is the reason that we the undersigned have made the unprecedented decision to close our shuls and schools. **It is vitally important, and a matter of *Pikuah Nefesh*, life and death, that everyone in our community abide by the following policies.**

In order to receive professional guidance for the community, we held a conference call this afternoon with Rabbi Dr. Aaron Glatt of New York, an infectious disease expert and an Assistant Rabbi at the Young Israel of Woodmere, and Dr. Rick Riggs, Chief Medical Officer at Cedars Sinai Medical Center in charge of overseeing Cedar's response to the Coronavirus. Considering our discussion with the doctors we the undersigned strongly recommend the following policies to be instituted immediately:

- 1) Our shuls and schools will remain closed until further notice, when we are informed by the health officials that it is no longer a danger and we may resume our regular schedules. Until that time, every person should daven at home. There should be no house or backyard Minyanim since they undermine efforts to minimize the spread of the virus.
- 2) We should all add *Avinu Malkeinu* at both *Shachrit* and *Mincha* until further notice. It should not be added on Friday afternoons or on a day when *Tachanun* is not said.
- 3) All members of our community should minimize in-person contact with anyone outside of their immediate families. If you can work from home, please do so. Visits even among families should also be limited. Communication with parents and grandparents who are not living in your home should be virtual whenever possible.
- 4) Although it is challenging in the absence of school, there should be no playdates or friend get togethers. One may play in the yard and go for a run, but it should not be with friends or with children of friends. We encourage people to go outside, but to stay distanced from other people even when outdoors.
- 5) As social distancing continues, we should plan to have our Shabbat, Yom Tov and Sedarim without guests.
- 6) "Shiva visits" should be made by phone or facetime.
- 7) Support our Kosher restaurants by ordering out from the restaurants. Avoid eating in the confined spaces of restaurants which can lead to greater transmission.
- 8) Only one person per household should go to the Supermarket. Children should not go to the store and people should not be socializing while in the store.
- 9) Any person who has had exposure (defined as being within 6-8 feet for a period of 10 minutes or more) to someone who has tested positive should immediately self-quarantine for 14 days. People without any symptoms who have been exposed to a COVID-19 patient should not at this time seek medical attention or seek to get tested. They should self-quarantine. Please note that while the official DoH position requires quarantine after

exposure only if the person has begun to have symptoms, we strongly advise to err on the side of caution based on the advice of the aforementioned two physicians.

- 10) Call your doctor if you start to have symptoms (increased congestion, coughing or fevers). Seek emergency medical treatment if you have difficulty breathing, but please do not go to the emergency room if you do not need emergency care. Call ahead if possible and advise health care workers of possible exposure to COVID-19. Ask for a facemask as you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider's office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.
- 11) For a COVID-19 test enter your zip code to find out the nearest COVID-19 test site. (from US HRSA.gov website) <https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/> Go to clinics instead of crowded large facilities. (Testing and Treatments are free.)
- 12) Any member of our community who has tested positive must immediately inform family and friends (or any acquaintances if applicable) who may have been exposed to him or her. This includes informing your rabbi or head of school.
- 13) We call on all of our community members and institutions to create formal systems and mechanisms by which people who are in need of assistance and people who can volunteer to provide assistance, are connected with one another. We encourage also helping the general public by donating to community charities of your choice. Please also remember to generously support Maot Chittim campaigns.

During these most challenging times when we all pray that Hashem accept our *Tefilot*, we encourage everyone to daven with exceptional *Kavanah* even though we are not meeting in our shuls for *Tefilah B'Tzibur*. We also ask you to set time for learning Torah and for doing *Chessed*. Each shul and school will be in contact with their members and students sharing their *Torah Shiurim* and *Chessed* opportunities that we all should join.

With *Brakhot* of good health and safety,

Rabbi Michael Abraham, Mogen David
Rabbi David Block, Shalhevet High School
Rabbi Yonah Bookstein, Pico Shul
Rabbi Asher Brander, LINK Kollel
Rabbi Daniel Cavalier, Young Sephardic Community Center
Rabbi Pini Dunner, Beverly Hills Synagogue
Rabbi Shlomo Einhorn, Yeshivat Yavneh
Rabbi Daniel Grama, West Side Shul
Rabbi Alan Kalinsky, Orthodox Union West Coast
Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky, Bnai David Judea
Rabbi Yehuda Moses, Kehilat Mogen David
Rabbi Elazar Muskin, Young Israel of Century City
Rabbi Adir Posy, Beth Jacob Congregation
Rabbi James Proops, Young Israel of Century City
Rabbi David Revah, Adas Torah
Rabbi Ari Segal, Shalhevet High School
Rabbi Joshua Spodek, YULA Girls
Rabbi Arye Sufrin, YULA Boys High School
Rabbi Y. Boruch Sufrin, Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy
Rabbi Kalman Topp, Beth Jacob Congregation
Rabbi Jason Weiner, Cedars Sinai Medical Center
Rabbi Aaron Wilk, Gindi Maimonides Academy