

Thursday, February 13, 2014  
13 Adar I, 5774

While I am not able to offer you hot chocolate and movies today (unless you can walk to my house, in which case, please come over!), I do want to share a few thoughts with you on this snowy day:

- As I typed the Hebrew date above, I realized that if this were not a leap year, tonight would be Purim. Indeed, as we endure our 11th snow storm of the season, it does seem like this winter is some type of cruel joke. Except, of course, that these storms are no joke, but truly pose a danger to many.
- I just returned inside from shoveling and can report that **this snow is far heavier and deeper** than any of the previous storms this winter. Those who are able to shovel should exercise extreme caution and take their time so as not to overexert oneself. Those with heart and back conditions should consider asking a neighbor for help. If you have able-bodied teens in your house, encourage them to help out your neighbors who you know are elderly, infirmed or otherwise unable to shovel.
- Because the snow is so heavy, it is likely to take much longer for our municipalities to clear our streets. **Please be patient** with them and remember that the drivers of the trucks have been working overtime for the past six weeks digging us out of these storms. If you have the opportunity, thank the snow-plow drivers, mail carriers, etc. A little smile, wave, and thank you go a long way - a hot cup of coffee or a brownie even more so!
- While we have not had the vast power outages (yet), those without power this time are likely to be more isolated and in greater danger because the streets are impassable. **If you lose your power or are in other need of help, please contact Ken Krivitzky immediately and let him know what your needs are and the best way to keep in touch with you.** Ken will be coordinating our efforts to try and help congregants in need over the next few days. As he indicated in last night's e-mail, he can be reached at his work email (kkrivitzky@tbhbe.org) or, in case of a synagogue power failure, his personal email (krivitzky@hotmail.com). His home number is 484 278 4771 and his cell phone number is 513 503 9559. Please also don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance, either by e-mail or my cell at 484-278-1690.
- Thankfully, most of us do have (or have access to) warm homes with sufficient food and clothing. For the vast majority of us, this storm will be a significant inconvenience, but not life-endagering. For that, we should

express our *hakarat hatov*, our appreciation of the good things in our lives. One way to do that is to make a donation to organizations that help the less fortunate, whose resources have been severely stretched during this difficult winter. [Jewish Relief Agency](#), [PhilAbundance](#) and the [American Red Cross](#) are just three examples of organizations in this area that are set up to help the poor and needy. Consider making a donation to one of these or any similar organizations in appreciation of the blessings we have in our lives.

- Finally, for those who are safe and healthy and have children (or are children at heart) - **go out and enjoy!** This is the best snowman building and snowball fighting snow I have seen in a long time - a great opportunity for family fun. Send us pictures of your snowmen (and snow-women) - we will give a prize for the best one!

Wishing you much warmth and safety over the next few days,

Rabbi Marc Israel