



Rabbi Yaakov Hopfer
President

Rosh Chodesh Nissan, March 25th

To the Baltimore Jewish Community,

We hope that everyone is coping as best as possible during these difficult times. Please know that there are many people spending day and night to provide service and relief to people in need throughout our broader community. We encourage you to reach out if you need assistance.

As the COVID-19 situation continues to worsen, we want to provide further guidance, especially as it relates to observing and celebrating Pesach, and the proper procedures for people infected with, or experiencing symptoms of, the COVID-19 illness.

We have indicated in a prior statement that people should remain in place for Pesach and not travel out of Baltimore. As a corollary to that, **nobody should host out-of-town guests, under any circumstance.** The extraordinary actions that we have taken to date are because we, our medical experts and our government leaders believe that social distancing is the only way to stem the tide of infections and deaths in our community. Already, many people within our nuclear community have tested positive and we join you in davening for their complete, speedy and enduring recovery. If people invite and host out-of-town guests or family members, it severely undermines efforts at containment. This directive is addressed to Pesach guests, but also covers the period between now and then, as well as after Pesach, until the state-wide restrictions and state of emergency are lifted.

If anybody has already come to Baltimore and is staying with you, please ensure that they immediately observe a strict quarantine for the next 14 days.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you must immediately self-quarantine yourself, observe proper isolation protocols and notify people with whom you had direct contact (all people who were within 6 feet of you for more than 5 minutes, as well as anyone you may have embraced or kissed) during the last 14 days. While the people you notify need not self-quarantine, they should avoid people older than 60 and those who have underlying medical conditions, and be especially attentive to symptoms they may experience.

If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or you are assumed by a medical professional to have contracted the illness, you must immediately quarantine yourself and instruct all people with whom you have had direct contact (defined above) in the last 14 days that they must self-quarantine.

Given the grave risk that is posed to our community by people who may have become infected by contact with you and who continue to circulate in our community, these quarantines and public notifications are an absolute halachik imperative and, unfortunately, you cannot choose to continue to circulate in public, nor maintain your privacy.

We continue to daven that the Ribbono Shel Olam send His beracha of refuah to every corner of our world.