



Rabbi Yaakov Hopfer
President

7 Tishrei 5781
September 25, 2020

To Our Beloved Community,

We hope this letter finds you well. As a community we have been privileged to feel the spiritual elation of the *Yomim Noraim*. We hope that our *tefilos* will be accepted and this year will bring *bracha* and *refuah* to *Klal Yisroel*. We eagerly await the *Yom Tov* of *Succos*, *Zman Simchaseynu* and the concluding *Yomim Tovim* of *Shmini Atzeres* and *Simchas Torah*. Our sacred mission is to infuse ourselves with *simcha* and optimism even in these trying and challenging times. Yet, we must be careful and vigilant in the continuing fight against COVID-19. We must make sure to maintain our health and the health of our fellow community members. We must each do our part so that our *Yeshivos* and *mosdos hakodesh* can remain open. It is of utmost importance for the spiritual, educational, and mental needs of our children and their parents that our schools continue to function and remain open.

We are therefore, asking for the community to pay special attention to the following requests:

1. *Simchas Torah* is a time of incredible joy. Each *Shul* should create a responsible plan which allows for *Hakafos* in a safe manner and considers the continued need for masks and social distancing. Lack of proper preparation (and creation of an appropriate plan) puts the members of the *Shul* and the greater community at risk. We are asking the lay leadership to work with their *Rabbanim* to develop a comprehensive plan to be shared with their respective *Kehillos* before *Yom Tov* (or over *Chol HaMoed*).
2. During *bein hazmanim*, our community is enriched by the presence of *Bnai Torah* including many *bochurim*. Their *Limud Hatorah* is the lifeblood of our community. When in public, we ask everyone including all guests to please adhere to our established community standards. When indoors, this includes mask wearing and social distancing. When outdoors, masks should be worn when social distancing is not possible. These standards must be adhered to during davening and especially during *Simchas Torah*.
3. We thank the men, women, and children of our community for your continued vigilance. Please do not let your guard down. With *Siyatta D'shmaya*, if each of us continues to wear a mask and social distance when warranted, our community can *B'ezras Hashem Yisborach* remain healthy.
4. For those who live alone, do not have a family to eat with, or do not have a *Succah*, please speak to your *Rav* and doctor to develop a safe plan to eat with others over *Yom Tov*.



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5. Adherence to Isolation and Quarantine: If you have a positive test result or have had an exposure to someone who has tested positive please adhere to proper isolation/quarantining guidelines. This includes refraining from coming to *Shul* and participation in *Minyanim*. We recognize and appreciate your selfless adherence to the necessary protocols. It is a *mesiras nefesh* that is precious in the eyes of the *Ribono Shel Olam* as we all work together to help safeguard the health of our community.

It is of utmost importance that our community remains healthy and our *Yeshivos* and *mosdos hakodesh* remain open. We must all take responsibility and do our part.

Every day that goes by, brings us one step closer to the end of this challenging situation. The time will come when we will look back on these days as a distant memory. We must continue to *daven* for the ongoing *shmira* and *hashgocha* of the *Ribono Shel Olam* and maintain our vigilance so that *B'ezras Hashem Yisborach*, He will keep us safe and healthy.

We thank you for your commitment and dedication. We wish all of you a *Gmar Chasima Tova* and a year filled with an abundance of *bracha*.

Respectfully,

Yaakov Hopfer on Behalf of the Vaad Harabanim of Baltimore