



Rabbi Yaakov Hopfer  
President

5 Adar 5781  
February 17, 2021

To Our Beloved Community,

I want to begin by thanking the men, women, and children of our community for their efforts in helping to keep our greater *Kehilla Kedosha* safe as the pandemic continues. It is hard to believe that with the arrival of Purim we will mark a year since the pandemic changed every aspect of our lives. With incredible *Siyata D'Shmaya* we have access to vaccines, and we all hope that in the coming weeks and months they will be made more widely available. But we cannot let our guard down. We must continue to be vigilant for the safety of our community and as responsible citizens. Purim is a time of great *simcha*, and it is our sacred mission to feel this joy, albeit in a responsible fashion.

**Shuls:** We ask that our community Shuls remain committed to mandatory mask wearing and social distancing during *davening*, learning and *shuirim*. We understand the discomfort, but it is a small price to pay for safeguarding the health of your neighbor.

**Megillah:** When possible, Shuls should arrange for multiple *Megillah* readings so that all have the opportunity to fulfill this sacred *mitzvah*.

**Mesibos and Seudos:** Community Purim *seudos*, *mesibos* or other gatherings, even with appropriate precautions, should be avoided. Purim *seudos* must necessarily be limited due to social distancing requirements, avoidance of prolonged exposure, and singing and dancing in enclosed spaces. For those who have not achieved immunity, the *Purim Seudah* would best be conducted within the family "bubble."

**Mishloach Manos:** In fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *mishloach manos*, it would be prudent to minimize social interaction with the people to whom we give.

**Matanos L'evyonim/Tzedaka:** We must redouble our efforts this year to take care of those in need. There are so many who are suffering in silence and your generosity can infuse *simcha* and optimism on this special day. *Bochurim* should not go out in groups to collect money.

**Reaching Out:** There are still so many in our community who are alone and struggling. There are individuals and families who have become socially isolated as a result of this prolonged pandemic. While it is wonderful to give *Mishloach Manos* to your friends, it is even better to use this *mitzvah* as an opportunity to create new friendships. Think about the people in your Shul, on your block, and in your building, who can use a little extra love and attention and reach out.



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*President*

If you cannot think of anyone, please reach out to your Rav for some ideas. The true power of Purim lies in the *achdus* of *Klal Yisroel*. In a time of such fragmentation, let us each do our own small part in bringing our people closer together.

Each time, I write one of these letters, I *daven* that it will be the last. I fervently hope that *B'ezras Hashem*, the deliverance of Purim followed by the *geula* of Pesach will mark the end of this difficult chapter for us, and invoke a new chapter starting with "The Harbinger of Good Tidings" voicing his message of the coming of *Moshiach*, *bimhairah b'yamainu, Amin*.

Yaakov Hopper on behalf of the Vaad Harabanim of Baltimore