

רב בצלאל יהודה רוזינסקי

רב דקהל אהבת יצחק

Dear Mispalalim שיחיו

Let me start by saying I miss each and every one of you dearly, and can't wait to see all of you b'ezras Hashem, in good health, and join you in our Shul davening and learning together as in the "good old days" bimhera biyomeinu.

Although BH it seems that the pandemic in New York State and in our county has been declining, I feel things are still quite precarious and I'm going to be very cautious before considering opening the doors to our Shul, even in a modified way, until things are much more stable. Sadly, the shul will have to remain shut for the foreseeable future.

For Klal yisroel, tefillah b'tzibbur is of the most essential parts of our life - even more so in a עת צרה - in fact, many Rishonim are of the opinion that the actual obligation of tefilah d'oreisah is specifically in a time of tzar and danger. It was therefore a very difficult decision to shut our shul. Given the dangers of the virus and how contagious it is, the decision was clear that we must give up on the great protection of tefilah b'tzibur in order to avoid the direct danger of people getting together and Chas v'shalom spreading the already very aggressive virus even more.

At the time I was asked and pressured by many "can we make small outdoor minyanim, very spread out?" Sadly, I couldn't take that responsibility of bringing people together and creating a social environment that would be very hard to control.

I reassured the tzibur that:

- A. By staying home they were doing the great unparalleled mitzva of לנפשותיכם
- B. After consulting with Maran Rav Chaim Kanievsky שליט"א as well as with the consultation of several doctors, I attempted, when possible, to gather with my children and a few more, and daven for the entire tzibur. This process has an origin in chazal; when the tzibur are unable to attend davening, they can be yotzai with ten people that are davening for all of them. Currently, when we are Halachicly unable to get together, we can benefit from such an arrangement.

I succeeded to do this, whenever possible, during this period of containment.

As we BH begin to cautiously restart our lives outside our homes, I feel that we must reevaluate our ruchnius reopening as well.

As such, we convened a meeting this week (via Zoom) which included several Rabbonim, town officials, and law enforcement, to see if there's both a safe and legal way to have very small outdoor Minyanim.

The conclusion was that there was, with precautions in place, an acceptable way to allow very small outdoor Minyanim. As frum Jews, we must be even more stringent than the guidelines set by government, for we are guided by the principle of, "v'nishmartem me'od l'nafshoseichem" which regards every moment of life of each and every Jew as priceless.

My preference is that when possible each family should stay on its own property but under NO CIRCUMSTANCES should you have over 10 people coming onto one property. Having over 10 people congregating on one property even at 100 feet apart is in violation of government standards as well.

I'm also recommending that if there's more than one family (to make up the 10) on a property there should be a 20-30 foot distance between families.

I am confident that our membership is sensitive and will abide by the guidelines set forth below on their own.

The Rabbonim have collectively decided to send out the following conditions to the entire community:

- 1) All Minyanim will follow the laws & CDC guidelines regarding social distancing and social gatherings.*
- 2) All Minyanim must be under the direct guidance and approval of a local Rav.*
- 3) All other Religious Gatherings including weddings and Funerals must follow the CDC guidelines.*
- 4) All at risk individuals, and those showing signs of coronavirus may not join these Minyanim and are halachically obligated to daven b'yichidus.*

We would like to share that the above is only a broad description. The conference we had with the local officials and law enforcement regarding this issue lasted well over an hour. The permission is very nuanced, and the application may vary depending on circumstances, and may differ from community to community and from block to block. The Rabbanim will provide specific guidelines pertaining to the prevalent conditions.

In all cases, their decisions will be informed by an understanding of the law, and based on the primary objective to ensure that the Minyanim are safe, legal and a Kiddush Hashem. Please be in touch with your local Rov regarding the specific guidelines.

I also feel that if you are venturing onto someone else's property you should wear a mask.

May HaShem bring a complete yeshua to klal yisroel and the entire world quickly.

Beahava ubeyididus U'bebirchas Brius v'arichas yomim veshonim tovim.

Betzalel Rudinsky