



BETH MENACHEM
CHABAD *of* NEWTON

September 2020

Elul 5780

Dear Friends,

“I miss the Kibbitz”, “I miss the camaraderie”, “I would give my right arm for a nice Shabbos Kiddush”, “I haven’t had an Aliyah in seven months”, “I miss Rabbi Sholom Ber’s speeches and humor”, “I miss the singing on Shabbos”, “I have never missed going to shul for Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur”, “I miss Rabbi Chaim’s warm infectious laughter”, and “Pesach just wasn’t Pesach away from the shul”. These are just a sampling of what I hear from all of you when we talk and reminisce about our shul during the COVID pandemic. We did whatever we could to stay in touch with you, which was basically limited to “Zooming,” virtual prayers, lectures and classes. I don’t know about you, but I’m “Ois-ge-zoomed.” I want the real thing again -- I want our shul back the way it was.

When the Governor allowed us to partially reopen several months ago, we made a serious effort to implement every safety measure recommended by the CDC and the Massachusetts Public Health Department in an attempt to make our Jewish Center a safe environment that would once again service the Jewish needs of the community at large. This included the resumption of daily Minyans and a full Shabbos service in a sanctuary with 25% of the normal chair count and laid out to be more than 6’ apart. We did what was needed so that some of you have been able to come.

We aren’t in the restaurant business, a retail store or a commercial concern that can simply choose to send its employees home with laptops to conduct business as usual. We must have face-to-face interaction in order to function. Many establishments chose to close and shutter their doors. Their owners lamented, “We had to close after 5, 10, 20 years or even longer.” For us, we cannot and we will not close, as we’ve been in business since we received the Torah on Mount Sinai over 3332 years ago.

While we pray that, G-d willing, this pandemic will come to an end in the very near future, public health experts warn us that we should not expect to return to 100% normalcy until sometime in 2021- many months from now. I want to be honest with you and inform you we have seen a very severe decline in the generous contributions of our supporters. It seems the lack of attendance has resulted in many of our donors choosing to either forego their usual contributions or substantially cut back on their giving. The recent success of the Matching Campaign has helped us to survive the past few months and we have cut our expenses to a bare bones level. Having said that, we have a very large budget deficit which continues to worsen each month that we are not fully open and operating normally.

THE BOTTOM LINE: We urgently need your financial support in order to see us through these challenging times. We understand that some of you may also be suffering financially and we hope you can see your way through to helping us in any way you can. For those that are fortunate to be in a good financial position, please help to make up for those who are not as well off as you are. We have a goal and that is to come out of this pandemic in a stronger and better position than when we entered it, ready and able to once again serve our community in a manner you expect and deserve from Beth Menachem Chabad.

On a bright note, we are happy to inform you that our preschool began operation after Labor Day. Once again, it will conform to all the COVID rules and regulations set forth by the State. It will be wonderful to see all the beautiful “kinderlach” gracing the building, singing their songs and enjoying their time in school. The City of Newton has resumed their review of all permit applications and we believe we are close to receiving our final permit for the Preschool expansion.

HIGH HOLIDAY SERVICES

We have given much thought to the best way we can conduct High Holiday services in a manner which best serves our community in the safest and most enjoyable manner possible. While it is evident we can’t duplicate the beautiful services of our recent past due to COVID restrictions, we have decided to offer both indoor and outdoor programs. With social distancing restrictions, our indoor seating will be limited to approximately 70 chairs in total for both men & women. The outdoor service will be held in our outdoor patio area (where the Sukkah is built) under a canopy. While limited to 20-25 seats, it will be able to accommodate those who want to attend outdoor services. Both areas require reservations made in advance on a first come first serve basis. There will also be an outdoor separate Shofar service on the 2nd day of RH. Details on the aforementioned are available on our website and you will have also received an email with details and reservation instructions.

Once again, now more than ever before, our ability to support the needs of the Jewish community can only be facilitated by your individual contributions. We do not receive financial aid from outside organizations, and we must raise money to cover our annual operating budget. This is the time of year that we turn to YOU, whether you come every Shabbat or just for the High Holidays, and ask for your support so we can continue to offer a welcoming Jewish Center for every Jewish man, woman and child, regardless of background or affiliation. This is our commitment to you: we will be ready and able to provide all Jewish services to the community during and after the pandemic with the help of your financial contribution today.

The Board of Trustees has instituted a Supporting Membership at Beth Menachem Chabad in the amount of \$1500 per family or individual. If you have not been a Supporting Member, we ask you to do so more than ever this year. Many of you have given more than this in the past and we hope you will continue to do so by becoming a Benefactor with a \$2000 donation or a Guardian with a \$3600 donation. Enclosed please find a membership card which outlines the different donor designations. Your donation is 100% tax deductible and we truly appreciate your generosity.

Lastly, I could not be more excited and pleased to announce the birth of a baby daughter on August 27th to our beloved Rabbi Shalom Ber and Itty Prus. The baby was named “Baila” after the Rabbi’s grandmother of blessed memory. Rabbi Prus and Itty wish to express their gratitude and thanks to G-d for this special gift for which they have been waiting for some time.

In closing, I hope to greet you in person “nose to nose” very soon in our shul and we all here at BMC offer you our best wishes for a Happy, Healthy and “Zeesah” (Sweet) New Year. Shana Tovah U'metukah!

Fred Chanowski, President

Boris Belopolsky
Esther Dezube
Sid Lejfer
Lee Mondshein
Ben Saada

Dmitry Berdichevsky
Mark Friedman
Martin Levitan
Zev Monisov
Alex Smolyar

Bruce Dezube
Rami Hascal
Marty Lurie
Bob Reibstein