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נג אדר תש"פ

You may be aware that in accordance with government advisory measures, and in consultation with doctors, the Beis Din has reached the conclusion that shuls, yeshivas and schools must close down until further notice. (It goes without saying that Minyonim should not take place in private houses either.) This is necessary to ensure that every member of our kehilla is afforded the maximum protection.

This takes precedence over all other mitzvos. The most fundamental obligation upon all of us at this moment is to be stringent in the halachos of Pikuach Nefesh, and not to allow for the slightest possibility of endangering others with a life-threatening situation.

It is a Halachic obligation to follow all government and medical advice in regards to guarding our health, including social distancing as defined by the health authorities, and frequent hand washing with soap.

R' Akiva Eiger (Nedarim, 39) advised during a time of an epidemic to dress suitably, eat healthy foods in moderation, and to exercise daily.

Above all, he writes, one must not be overly worried, sad or downhearted.

Although these are extremely difficult times, we must be reminded that panic, hysteria and despair are not appropriate reactions to a crisis from a Torah Jew. As well as doing nothing to improve the situation, they are emotionally unhealthy and actually have the effect of suppressing the immune system.

Torah learning is of course primary, and the Gemora teaches us that it protects one from danger and suffering. Certainly one should say Tehillim, as well as to be stringent in saying 100 Brochos every day (including Shemone Esrei) with kavonoh, which Chazal teach us can avert an epidemic. Particular attention should be made to the Asher Yotzar brochah.

It has also been suggested to recite Parshas Hatamid with Parshas Haketores, and to say Avinu Malkeinu twice a day, and one should increase one's mitzvos bein adam lechaveiro and strengthen one's observance of shemiras haloshon.

If the Ribbono Shel Olam is not allowing us to daven together, it would seem that the particular avodah required at this time is for each individual to reconnect personally with Hashem. Each of



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us must strengthen our bitachon, the personal conviction that everything is in the Hands of the Ribbono Shel Olom. The actualisation of this bitachon is in davening on a personal and individual level to Hashem that He remove the scourge of this terrible virus and return all of Klal Yisroel to good health. Pray too for the wellbeing of all the citizens of this country, "Seek the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you, and pray for it to Hashem, for through its peace you will have peace" (Yirmiyoh, 29:7).

Signed,

**Rabbi SF Zimmerman** (Rov and Av Beis Din)

**Dayan YY Lichtenstein** (Rosh Beis Din)

**Dayan MD Elzas**

**Dayan YD Hool**

**Dayan YY Posen**

