



בית כנסת מרכז קהילתי ע"ש גולדשטיין

McDonald International Shul

ORTHODOX ASHKENAZI COMMUNITY NETANYA

קהילה דתית לאומית אשכנזית נתניה

בס"ד

**CHAIRMAN'S CORONA UPDATE -
15th March 2021
ב' ניסן תשפ"א**

Dear Members and friends.

More than 4,250,000 Israeli citizens have been fully vaccinated as of today, with nearly 1,000,000 more who have had the 1st vaccination. Shops, shuls and wedding halls have opened up and B"H we should be able to spend Seder night with our close families.

Meanwhile our friends in Europe have temporarily "frozen" using the Astrazeneca vaccination. The news this evening is that Europe is going thru a 3rd wave, have closed down parts of Italy, hospitals in Paris are finding it difficult to function, and there is a massive increase of positive corona results in Germany and France.

I think here in Israel we are seeing a pure and simple miracle, and personally (as I have said before) I thank my dear parents z"l for having encouraged my family and siblings to come on Aliya many years ago. Much as I love to travel and visit London, New York, Paris,

Zurich , Milan and more, there is nothing like home , our own home here in Israel where we can be reliant only on ourselves to look after us, to care for us, get vaccinations for us, rely on our soldiers to guard us, and to rely on our politicians to drive us mad!

Things are not perfect here and much has to change, but we are the luckiest people in the world at the moment.

In last week's "Torah Tidbits" for Parshat Vayakhel-Pekudei, Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks z"l uses the word "CELEBRATE". He tells the story of a school in London which was being run into the ground, loosing students, bad examination results, on the brink of closing down. The headmistress had come to him to discuss the problems.

As Rav Sacks z"l mentioned "We talked on general themes, the school as community...Suddenly I realise that we were thinking along wrong lines, the problem she faced was practical, not philosophical. I said, I want you to live one word: CELEBRATE. Whatever happens in the school, how little it may be, celebrate". The story finishes that 8 years later, the headmistress wrote to Rav Sacks z"l to tell him how this one word had turned the school around.

Why do I mention this story? This last year has been very trying for us all and very tough on our Kehilla. We have unfortunately lost a number of members who have passed away, moved out of

Netanya to retirement homes, or elsewhere; we have not conducted regular services in the main shul and a very large number of our members are not able to attend; we have not been able to use our hall for semachot; had no visitors from overseas and more.

All this has affected the regular yearly income of the shul. We have seen a drop of 30% in revenue, which has now put us in a very difficult financial position. What do we do? Do we decide that we should close down, send our small team of employee's home? Or do we decide to "Celebrate" as Chief Rav Sacks z"l suggested?

This last week, 2 families in our Kehilla, realizing that we have not managed to raise enough funds to finish off the refurbishing of the social hall went out and bought, out of their own pockets, tiles for the social hall. Why did they do this? Because they felt that the best thing to help the shul would be to finish the hall so that when we finally get out of the current restrictions (which we are in) we can use it for semachot and functions and be able to "celebrate" in a beautiful hall and help bring in more income for the Kehilla by renting out.

Throughout this last trying year we managed together with our dear Rav, Laura, Moshe and small team of dedicated volunteers to keep our Kehilla alive, keep the building in order, keep the gardens looking good, conduct much needed maintenance and painting,

keep in contact with our members and keep them informed.

We were one of the few shuls in Netanya that managed to keep daily services running nearly every day throughout the year, even during lockdown we did not close down. We davened in capsules, we davened outside, we davened in the amphitheater and we davened in the yard, at times having as many as 5 minyanim running.

When needed for Levayot, even when only a small number could attend, our dear Rav was there, day or night, rain or sun.

We celebrated barmitzvot, in the shul, in the courtyard, in the amphitheater and much more.

I am appealing to all our members and friends both local and abroad to please help our Kehilla to get out of our current difficulties. We have worked too hard to keep the place running to fall apart now. As a Kehilla, we have such a great potential for the future, we cannot and will not fail.

Some can support more and some less, some have managed to save this year by not travelling regularly, not eating out all week and others have had to help their families.

Please act and support us now, before

**Pessach. Please call Laura in the office during office hours, send an email or donate via Paypal.
As Rav Sacks z"l said, let us CELEBRATE. As it changed a school in London over 20 years ago, it will change our Kehilla.**

פסח כשר ושמח

**Jeremy Rosenstein
Chairman.**