



To every valued and treasured member of our Central Family,

We have tears in our eyes as we put 'pen-to-paper' and reach out to you today. And yet reach out we must. As Spiritual Leader and President of The Central Synagogue, we must painfully inform you that our Board of Management held an emergency teleconference last night. This resulted in the decision to close our doors for the foreseeable future due to the threat of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. This decision has been taken with heavy hearts and yet, the gift of our religion from G-d above, teaches us about *Pikuach Nefesh*, the need to prioritise Life (with a capital 'L') above all else. Our government has been very clear that this is a national and global health emergency. This we take very seriously. Your health, your welfare, your world matters to us in ways that are, in truth, hard to articulate.

Many variables in this constantly changing crisis are admittedly out of our control right now. We accept that and yet, what we can do and control, we must. It has been so distressing for our Board and there are so many factors involved, including spiritual and emotional health as well as the threat of very real physical risks. This action today, taken because of this global pandemic, has never occurred in the history of our spiritual home. Yet we must pause and work through this *Be'Yachad* – together.

Our Central team is working around the clock right now. Our mission: to set up a proactive Chessed committee charged with the task of reaching out to those who are most vulnerable in our community. Members are ready-to-go and will call you, shop for you, deliver to you, speak with you and help you through this. If this applies to you or someone in your world, please call us if you need assistance.

Only HaShem knows the duration of this closure but we do know one thing: This Is Temporary. Connection to our *kehillah* is what we are all about. So much of our world revolves around our close *keshet* with each other as Jews, davening with a *minyan* – all of it. We love and cherish that. For now, we must keep in mind that another channel is eternally open and available to each one of us - we have a personal connection with G-d. We must tap into that direct spiritual line and reach out now more than ever.

On a practical level, if you would like to pick up personal belongings, contact our shule administration staff (our office is open Mon-Thu 9am-5pm & Fri 9am-3pm). We will be liaising with families who have scheduled upcoming *smachot* and more. Please know that we will communicate with you and share all information as we receive it. We are, first and foremost, *mishpochah*, our communication is two-way. Below is a list of all relevant e-mail addresses. Reach out, contact us if you need - we are here, day and night.

We must remember that suspension of shule life as we know it is happening to protect all, especially our elderly congregants. We will do whatever it takes to look after them.

You might have heard a sermon or two along the way about the spiritual significance of Darkness and Light. Today the lights go out in our main sanctuary. But the day will come when we flick that switch back on and it shines bright once more.

And then:

Our *Chazzanim* and choirs will sing

Our Rabbis will inspire

Our *Kinderlach* will play in our new Youth Campus

Our families will *fress* together

We are taking these proactive steps effective immediately. May G-d bless and protect you and your families and keep you safe.

We can't wait to *daven* and dance with you once again. As your rabbi, as your president and as your friends, we are here.

Rabbi Levi Wolff and Danny Taibel

Please note: Rabbi Wolff will continue to be constantly contactable using all technological means available. However, given that he will be physically away for a handful of days for Mushka's wedding, followed by a fortnight of self-quarantine, please know there are many on the ground to help should it be required. You can call Rabbi David Freedman on +61 414 948 882 or our Central office on 02 9355 4000. Please see other relevant contacts below as well.

The Central Synagogue

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