Dear friends,

The world is going through a time of uncertainty, unprecedented in modern times. Over the past few weeks, I have been working day and night to explain the severity of the Coronavirus epidemic through every possible means: on the radio, in newspapers, and through telephone calls. I have had conversations with rabbis, doctors, and public figures. It is not always easy to convince them that decisions made by public figures and rabbis are painful yet essential at this time. It is challenging to convince them that the Israeli healthcare system is working *for* our citizens, not against them. The regulations that have been put into effect (which, because they change daily, are difficult to adapt to) are for our own good, despite the fact that it is hard not to go to parks, the beach, the *beit midrash*, or the synagogue. Yet we must listen to these instructions and obey them. This is a time for *pikuach nefesh*, for protecting human life. Right now, the best way for us to save lives is to maintain physical distance from one another. At this time, respecting our parents means not visiting them in person, but rather calling them on the phone or chatting with them using Skype, Zoom or WhatsApp video calls. Every person who maintains physical distance from those not living in their house is fulfilling the commandment to “Love your neighbor as yourself”. We should not think that seeking out a *minyan* is heroic. Davening alone is heroic, because at this time everyone should strive to be especially focused and have great intention in their prayers.

*Magen Lacholeh* continues to provide assistance, by telephone, to all those seeking help. More people need help than ever before. At this time, I would like to offer my praise and thanks to the Department of Mental Health in the Israeli Ministry of Health, which supports those who may be experiencing mental distress due to the situation of being under lock-down in their homes.

With blessings for mercy and salvation from our Merciful Father in Heaven and prayers to the One who spoke and created the world. Wishing everyone a kosher and joyful Passover.

Your faithful servant,

Rabbi Binyamin Fisher

Over the past few weeks, the *Magen Lacholeh* office has been receiving hundreds of medical and halachic questions about day-to-day behavior during the Coronavirus epidemic. During this time, when everyone in the household is home all the time, there are many families and individuals in a state of crisis. The Department of Mental Health is working tirelessly to provide appropriate responses to all those who are struggling with mental health issues. This is particularly challenging, since everything must be done remotely, over the phone. This requires a great deal of resources and patience. Thank God, the Department of Mental Health is blessed with first-rate professionals who respond to each and every person in need.

In light of all this, we need to step up our activities so we can help all those seeking our help. This requires extra resources for Rabbi Fisher and *Magen Lacholeh*, resources we could not have anticipated that we would need. To address this, we have embarked on a fundraising campaign. Please join this national effort by contributing online to *Magen Lacholeh*, and help us stop the spread and mitigate the consequences of Coronavirus.