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An open letter from the Chief Rabbis of the world

3 APRILE 2020

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*Nissan 5780 April 2020*

This Shabbat – the Shabbat before Pesach – is called Shabbat HaGadol, the Great Shabbat.

It was first celebrated at the birth of the Jewish people, moments before the dawn of our deliverance from Egyptian slavery.

Every Jewish family, alone in their homes in Egypt, sat fervently anticipating the united dream of deliverance and nationhood.

3332 years later, this Shabbat HaGadol, we too sit, isolated in our own homes, once again united in our fervent prayer for relief from the global pandemic that has shaken our world to its core.

We call on Jews around the world to adhere – with total commitment – to the health and safety protocols as set out by their country.

We call on Jews around the world to make this Shabbat HaGadol a Shabbat of kindness, a Shabbat of prayer and a Shabbat of connection to the Divine – tapping into the transformative power of Shabbat.

We call on Jews in every corner of the globe to do these three things:

### **Call or message each other with words of support before Shabbat**

In our heroic global quest to protect each other, we find ourselves physically cut off from one another. So many of us are completely alone. Call or message someone you know who is alone or struggling, wish them Shabbat Shalom and offer them words of support and encouragement. There is so much we cannot do at this time – but let's not underestimate the power we have to uplift, encourage and support one another.

### **Pray for each other just before candle-lighting**

As the devastation of COVID-19 sweeps across the world, so many people need our prayers. Let us pray to our Father in Heaven together – for each other and all humankind.

### **Keep this Shabbat together**

Let us bring this Shabbat into our homes together and harness its immeasurable invigorating power. Let us connect to light and love and disconnect from the relentless news cycle for a precious 25 hours. Let us fill our homes with the radiant light of Shabbat candles together. Let us proclaim G-d Almighty's sovereignty over the world, and feel his loving embrace, as we recite Kiddush together. Let's cook before Shabbat, put away our car keys, dress up, switch off all electronics, eat, sing, pray, hope and dream together.

This is a time for us to rally together in unity. This is a time for us to be together – to welcome Shabbat in together – as one people with one heart.

May we all find comfort and strength in Shabbat and each other.

May it be a Shabbat HaGadol – a Great Shabbat – in the fullest sense of the words.

And may G-d bring health and healing to His world,

**Rabbi David Lau**  
Chief Rabbi of Israel

**Rabbi Yizchak Yosef**  
Chief Rabbi of Israel

**Rabbi Berel Lazar**  
Chief Rabbi of Russia

**Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt**  
Chief Rabbi of Moscow  
President of the Conference  
of European Rabbis

**Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein**  
Chief Rabbi of South Africa

**Rabbi Haïm Korsia**  
Chief Rabbi of France

**Rabbi Gabriel Davidovich**  
Chief Rabbi of Argentina

**Rabbi Yosef Chehebar**  
Chief Rabbi of Argentina

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Chief Rabbi of Rome

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