

A Note from Rabbi Baum:

I want to thank the hosts and participants of the KT sanctioned minyanim. A special note of gratitude to the CSS volunteers. Above all, I express my friendship to the many people who are not yet participating in the minyanim and, with their broad understanding of what is at stake, continue to be gracious and grateful for where we are in the current crisis and what we can offer. Many of you sent us beautiful notes after watching the zoom meetings and understanding that these minyanim are not yet what you can participate in. **As you know this first cycle will run until Sunday, June 21. Assuming that the status quo holds, and with prayers for even more improvement, I hope to expand the number of slots available at each minyan, as of Monday June 22. We also hope to be able to offer Shabbat & Sunday only minyanim, both outside the shul and a few homes, beginning Friday night, June 26.** This timetable is subject to change but is a framework for now. More information and any changes to the guidelines will be forthcoming. This will allow even more people to participate as we slowly and deliberately take more steps in this new reality. I again express my deep appreciation to our membership and leadership for your understanding and support. I am well aware that many of you are facing a very challenging summer with much uncertainty and confusion.

The very first teaching in Pirkei Avot is to be deliberate in judgment. Many commentaries (e.g. Tiferet Yisroel) see this as affecting not only how courts adjudicate cases, but whether we have the difficult but achievable resilience to be patient in the face of ongoing uncertainty. For more than three months our patience has been tested, we have all faced losses to family members or to community friends. One of my relatives lost his brother, mother and an in-law during these three months. Each of them, including my cousin, a Holocaust survivor who passed away this week, had no more than 10 people at their funerals. There are too many other similar stories. Yet in the face of this, we show deliberation and discipline and we are hopefully less judgmental of others. The Chatam Sofer and Rav Pam on this same Mishna say that the way we expand our student base, healthy family lifestyles and communal stability is with hesitation to judge others, and that during this waiting time we should learn what is right about the same people we often attack. What a healthier lifestyle for all. In the incredible interview earlier this week, Reverend Marilyn Harris inspired all of us by not only appreciating the friendship that we showed her but by modelling for us an attitude of grace, graciousness and gratitude. That is how our world can heal. As we read through Parshat Behaalotcha and the ongoing strife between what the Ramban understands is a small group of malcontents against Moshe & Aharon, we celebrate that we live in a community where the standard is to embrace each other, even in the face of human insecurities and imperfections. We all have the ability to be even greater than we ever imagined.