

Aventura Turnberry Jewish Center

June 2020
Sivan 5780

Dear ATJC Family,

The Bible teaches, “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1). With no clear end to this pandemic in sight, it is hard to imagine these challenging days as a “season” and even harder to discern any “purpose” for them. **We know this has been tough on you, as the virus has tested all of humanity.** We have heard your voice your pain and loss. We have listened to your feelings of loneliness and sadness. We have seen your faces on our screens struggling to smile while trying to count your blessings or find some silver lining.

After two months of connecting with you by any means possible—through phone calls, Facetime, texting, Zoom and live streaming—we want you to know one thing:

We miss you.

As much as *we miss you*, we know you miss one another. We all miss *kibbutzing* at *kiddush*, shaking hands, sharing *l'chayims* and exchanging warm hugs. We miss the feeling of being “at home” the moment we enter the *shul*. For decades, ATJC has blessed us with a sense of familiarity, stability and constancy. We yearn so desperately to return to the world we once knew—a world we, at times, took for granted—and to the synagogue that always welcomed us with open arms.

Adversity is never the teacher we want, yet we learn so much from it. **What we have learned is that we need each other more than ever.** The fact that we are unable to gather physically makes our need to connect personally, spiritually, and emotionally all the more urgent. **After all, the synagogue was never intended to be a building—it was always the people inside it that mattered most.**

Despite our struggles, we are profoundly grateful to remain intimately and meaningfully connected with you despite our physical distance. We are grateful to be taken into your confidence and to be able to share our vulnerabilities together. **Thank you for opening your hearts to let us know how you are holding up, how you are balancing your lives, and how you are holding it together.** We have heard you say: “Where there is a will, there is a way!” and “If survived the Holocaust, I can survive this!” and “Rabbi, how can I complain?”

Your resilience has inspired us. Your strength has uplifted us. You have risen to face an uncertain future with courage and creativity. Our special congregation is indeed blessed. Our cup runneth over.

While so much of our world has changed, this truth remains: we will always be here for each other even when we cannot be with each other. Our congregation is strong, stronger than even our proudest and longest-standing leaders thought we were. We have also learned over the course of this pandemic that we can accomplish anything if we work together towards a common goal. There is no mountain we cannot climb and no obstacle we cannot overcome if we collectively commit to our mission: to care for one another and the world on our Jewish journey filled with learning, spirituality, values and deep belonging to a sacred community.

In the coming days, you will be invited to support the mission of ATJC as you have in years past during this season of membership renewal. But this year is unlike any other. The obstacles are ominous, and the mountain is high. If you are able to support our collective mission, either at your previous level or below, please know that your contribution is needed, that it matters, and that the congregation thanks you. **If you are not in a position to do so, *al tifros min hatzibur*, please “do not separate yourself from the community” (Pirkei Avot 4: 5). No one should ever feel that ATJC is not his or her family’s home for financial reasons.** If you feel at home at ATJC, then ATJC will remain your home for as long as you want it to be. We will never allow anyone to be left behind or left alone.

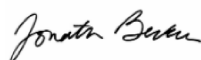
However, if you are blessed to be able to be generous, please consider increasing your donation in honor of all those who are unable to contribute this year. So many families are counting on us this year more than ever. That is why this year, we are counting on our generous donors more than ever.

Pandemic or not, together we will explore new and creative ways to foster our collective mission—to care for the needy, uphold our Jewish traditions, nurture our souls, expand our minds and support the State of Israel. As the first Chief Rabbi of Israel Rav Abraham Isaac Kook taught a century ago: “The old will become new, and the new will become holy.”


This year, our congregation is counting on our holy work more than ever. If you need any kind of help or support whatsoever, please reach out to us personally. If you can offer help, please also reach out to us personally. We love you all and we love this congregation. **Thank you so much for the holy blessing and sacred privilege of being your rabbis.**

May we all be blessed to be together again soon.

Warmly,



Rabbi Jonathan Berkun



Rabbi Guido Cohen