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# Chief Rabbis call on Jews to unite for a 'Shabbat of kindness'

Pray for humankind before lighting candles on Friday, 11 Chief Rabbis say



Calling for an 'unprecedented show of unity': Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein of South Africa





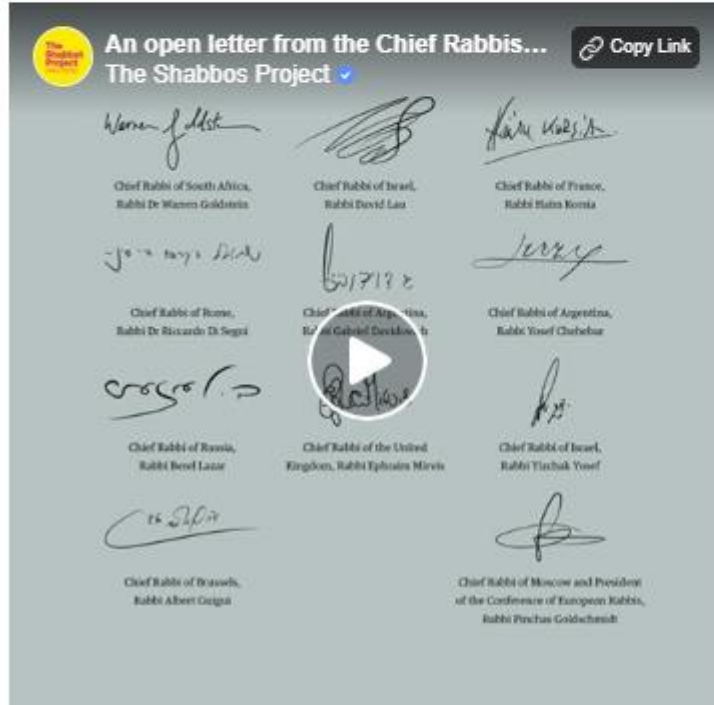
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Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis has joined 10 other Chief Rabbis in an appeal for Jews across the world to rally in unity for this coming Shabbat in the face of the coronavirus crisis.



Under the banner of “Keeping it together,” they are calling on to Jews to do three things: to ring someone before Shabbat to wish them ‘Shabbat Shalom’: to say a personal prayer for the wellbeing of all before lighting candles: and to make a special observe this Shabbat before Pesach, known as Shabbat Hagadol, the Great Sabbath.





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South Africa's Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein said: "The unprecedented nature of the crisis that Covid-19 has caused requires an unprecedented show of unity.

"This is the first-time that there has been a joint call of Chief Rabbis on this level, united in our message for world Jewry to come together in support of one another."

In a joint letter, they call on Jews to make this "a Shabbat of kindness, a Shabbat of prayer and a Shabbat of connection to the Divine — tapping into the transformative power of Shabbat".

Shabbat Hagadol takes its name after a verse in the haftarah from Malachi, who foresees the return of Elijah before the coming of the Messiah.

"So many people need our prayers," the Chief Rabbis said. "Let us pray to our Father in Heaven together — for each other and all humankind."

This Shabbat, they said, was first celebrated immediately before the Exodus "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."

As well as Rabbis Mirvis and Goldstein, the letter was signed by the two Chief Rabbis of Israel, the Chief Rabbis of France, Russia, Moscow, Brussels and







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Rome and Argentina's two Chief Rabbis.

Urging Jews to disconnect “from the relentless news cycle for a precious 25 hours,” they said, “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.”

<https://www.thejc.com/news/world/chief-rabbis-call-on-jews-to-unite-for-a-shabbat-of-kindness-1.498685>

