

Laws & Customs: Month of Tishrei during the Corona period

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For those in quarantine, davening by themselves or in outside Minyanim

Approved by various Rabbi's worldwide including Rabbi Yossi Chazan, Rabbi Shmuel Lesches,

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Layout based on Rabbi Shmuel Lesches's Halacha sheets

Compiled by Yossi Fraenkel in memory of his grandparents

ר' ראובן בן הרב משה אליעזר הלוי ע"ה ויהיה ברכה בת ר' נפתלי משה ע"ה רבינוביץ

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INTRODUCTION

At this time, it is somewhat of an unknown, what this Rosh Hashanah davening will look like in Jerusalem, or across the world.

Numerous members of different communities around the world are looking at the prospect of davening at home over the forthcoming Chagim – probably for their first time.

The emotional upheaval of this change needs to be addressed. But my purpose here, is to compile the practicalities: which aspects of our davening can be pursued unchanged, and which will be effectively different to usual.

As a general note: whenever we are unable to daven with a tzibur (congregation) in the literal sense, we are advised that it is auspicious to daven at the same time as the congregation.

HATARAT NEDARIM - ANNULMENT OF VOWS

It is customary from Erev Rosh Hashanah until Erev Yom Kippur to stand before a court of three men (some prefer that the court should consist of ten men), and request annulment of vows made in the past. The question is whether this can be done remotely?

There is a debate whether it can be performed via a Shliach, letter, phone call or Zoom. It is better to send a Shliach to address the court than via phone or video connection, but via phone or video may be relied upon only when there is no other choice.

Nevertheless, even according to the lenient opinion, this is valid only when the three men serving as Dayanim are physically present in one location, and cannot 'convene' by means of an electronic forum.

So, if your local Shul has Hatarat Nedarim on Erev Rosh Hashanah, you can ask one of the shul-goers to put you on speaker phone so that the court should be able to hear your request, and then annul your vows.

In some communities, Hatarat Nedarim is recited by several men together, and the Dayanim will annul their vows collectively. In such a setting, the above solution may not suffice, since you may not be heard at all by the court - unless they are apprised in advance to listen out for your voice.

The Dayanim used for the purpose of Annulment of Vows may be relatives. So, if your family unit includes another three men, you could perform Hatarat Nedarim at home.

PIYUTIM (POEMS) ON ROSH HASHANAH AND YOM KIPPUR

For someone who davens without a minyan, there is no obligation to say Piyutim, but it is certainly appropriate to do so. Most Piyutim are said in entirety by both the Chazzan and congregation, and that is how the individual would recite them as well. [Although parts of Piyutim are often marked as "Chazzan" and "Kahal" in the Machzor, this is only in order to highlight which parts the Chazzan says aloud.]

Exceptions: A non-Chazan does not say the paragraph of Misod that appears at the beginning of the Chazan's repetition, and in Shacharit he also does not say the paragraph that follows Misod.

When saying them alone, the piyutim should not be recited within the Amidah. Reading them after Shacharit and Musaf respectively, is fine. You may also repeat Aleinu as part of your personal reliving the Repetition of Musaf.

The paragraphs of Hayom Harat Olam may also be said alone, followed by the appropriate passage beginning Areshet Sefateinu. But don't recite the above paragraphs during the first series of Shofar blowing (of 30 sounds; aka Tekiot deMeyushav).

(In many communities, Hayom Harat Olam is always included in the Silent Amidah, even on Shabbat. It follows that when praying alone it should be recited as usual).

KRIAT HATORAH - READING OF THE TORAH

When one davens alone, it is appropriate to read Kriat Hatorah and Haftorah in private between Shacharit and Musaf.

SHOFAR

The Shofar is sounded before Musaf and during Musaf (in some communities, during the Silent Amidah as well as during the Repetition).

When davening in an outdoor minyan, due to the many outdoor Minyanim, one should make sure that the time that their Minyan blows Shofar, there should not be any other blasts being blown within earshot. Therefore, one should try to make a time

that does not interfere with the other Minyanim in the area.

When davening alone, the Shofar should be blown only before Musaf, but not during the Amidah, and the person blowing should consider the other Minyanim outdoors in earshot.

You may need for someone else to blow Shofar for you. Where possible, this should be done after the first quarter of the day (after Sof Zman Kriat Shma) has passed.

Some have the custom not to eat or drink before Shofar blowing. However, if the Shofar blower cannot come until late in the day, those who do not eat prior to Shofar may eat, especially since we do not blow Shofar on the first day which is Shabbat. Thus, the Shofar blowing is merely a Rabbinic mitzvah. Additionally, many communities have a Kiddush right before Shofar blowing.

There is an ancient custom to hear a total of one hundred blasts of the Shofar on the day of Rosh Hashanah. This may be done without a minyan too.

One can not blow Shofar while wearing a mask.

One may put a mask over the end of the Shofar, as long as it does not change the tone of the blast in any way.

🌀 TASHLICH

Some go to the waterfront on the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Hashanah (or on the second day, when the first day is Shabbat).

If one is in quarantine, as it is only a Minhag, they do not go to Tashlich, however, once they come out of quarantine they can go to wherever they would usually do Tashlich, only up until Hoshanah Rabbah. However as it is only a Minhag, and if someone really feels that they need to do Tashlich on Rosh Hashana, they can open the tap at their sink and say Tashlich.

🌀 HAND SANITIZER ON SHABBAT AND YOM KIPPUR

Although it is generally forbidden to wash, bathe and apply ointments, there is an exception for sanitary and medical purposes. Therefore, one may use hand sanitizer, but only if the situation warrants it. (E.g. After touching high-contact surfaces shared with others, or one regularly uses hand sanitizer in such situations for health protection.)

🌀 KOL NIDREI

At first glance this is simply another procedure for annulling vows, which cannot be done without three

adult men to form a Beit Din. However, some give it the status of a Tefillah, which allows for recital even while alone.

🌀 VIDUY (CONFESSION) OF REPETITION

The confession (Ashamnu, Al Cheit etc.) is included in the Silent Amidah at Maariv, Shacharit, Musaf and Minchah of Yom Kippur. Neilah also includes a confession, albeit using a different text than Al Cheit.

In Shul, the Confession is repeated after Maariv and during the Repetition of each of the other prayers. So in all, we recite the Confession ten times during Yom Kippur.

One davening alone is advised to repeat the Confession at each point, as if he was in shul.

🌀 YIZKOR

The Yizkor prayer does not need to be said with a minyan or with a Sefer Torah, and can therefore be recited at home too.

🌀 BIRCHAT KOHANIM – PRIESTLY BLESSING

Birchat Kohanim is usually only given in the presence of a minyan. However, the Talmud clearly states that the people out in the fields, who are unable to attend Shul, are included in these special blessings. And the same surely applies to those isolating at home.

🌀 SHOFAR AT END OF NEILAH

If you have a Shofar, you can blow it at the right time, once Yom Kippur is over. But there is no need to arrange for someone to come and blow Shofar for the housebound at the end of the fast.

🌀 LULAV AND ETROG IN QUARANTINE

If one is in quarantine, they should try to have their own Lulav and Etrog, as the disinfecting could ruin and passul the Lulav and Etrog. It is better to have a separate set of Lulav and Etrog for family members not in quarantine.

One may not use gloves while using the Lulav and Etrog.

🌀 SUKKAH DURING QUARANTINE

As it is a Mitzvah on the first night, to eat a minimum of a K'beitzah (Chaim Naeh is 55cc, Chazon Ish is 100cc) in the Sukkah, if one does not have a separate balcony to erect a Sukkah, the person in quarantine should wait until everyone has left the Sukkah and only after, should they go in, to eat a K'beitzah and then finish the rest of their meal indoors, the same as some do when it rains.