

Communal Issues and Guidelines for Shortening the Sukkot Davening 5781 (2020)

Prepared by The Halakha Committee of the Rabbi Jacob Berman Community Center – Tiferet Moshe Synagogue

As noted in previous "Guides", this year we will sadly be forced to **temporarily** make changes in the way Davening is run at "Berman's" in order to minimize the possibility of Corona contagion. Following the guidelines of the Ministry of Health, and to allow for social distancing, services has moved outside to the area of the amphitheater. Heat considerations and a desire to minimize the duration of physical contact, have generated a need to shorten the duration of the *Shemini Atzeret/Simhat Torah/Shabbat davening* – which is usually 4½-5 hrs in length. The Board has turned to the Halakha Committee of the Shul to suggest guidelines which might possibly facilitate this goal. We turn now to specific issues

Megillat Kohelet:

It is a long standing custom going back to *Masekhet Soferim*, that *Kohelet* is read on *Sukkot*, most commonly on *Shabbat Hol haMoed*. In Israel, if the megilla is read in a *minyán* from a parchment, both *Al Mikra Megilla* and *Shehehyanu* are recited. However, when the first day of *Sukkot* falls on *Shabbat*, as it does this year 5781, there is no *Shabbat Hol haMoed*. The *Megilla* is then read on the first day before the Torah reading. This reading substantially extends the duration of the already long morning service. Hence, we suggest delaying the reading to immediately following *Minha*.

Arba Minim:

One of the special rituals of *Sukkot* is the use of the *Arba Minim* (*Lulav, Etrog, Hadas* and *Arava*) for *Hallel* and *Hosha'anut* during the first seven days of *Sukkot*. This year, the first day of *Sukkot* is *Shabbat* and it is forbidden to use the *Arba Minim*.

To prevent Corona contagion on the remaining days of *Sukkot*, one must be particularly careful about touching the *Arba Minim* without hand disinfection before and after. This caveat certainly applies to passing the *Arba Minim* from hand to hand. Please note, however, that **one cannot fulfill the mitsva of *Netillat Lulav* wearing gloves.**¹

Hosha'anut:

Because the first day of *Sukkot* this year is *Shabbat*, there is no use of the *Arba Minim*, no cycling of the *Bima*, and no fear of violating social distancing, as a result. The text of the daily *Hosha'ana*, though composed of *piyyutim*, does not seem unduly long.

Regarding the second through the sixth day of *Sukkot*, a *Sefer Torah* is removed and held on the *Bima*, and one cycle of *Hosha'anut* carried out. In order to assure social distancing, the *gabbaim* should limit the number of congregants in the procession around

¹. *Kuntress Minhag Asher, Shu"t be-Inyanei Yerach ha-Eitanim be-Idan ha-Corona, Mahadura Tanyana*, sec. 15.

the *Bima* to 10 (or some other workable number).

On *Hosha'ana Rabba* a rotation can be employed so that everyone can be involved.

Hosha'ana Rabba:

The text of the *Hosha'anut* recited on *Hosha'ana Rabba* is extremely long and requires shortening. We note that it is composed of 15 *piyyutum*. The noted *Posek* Rav Hershel (Zvi) Schachter *shlit"א* in a *Teshuva* (published 20 Tammuz 5780) has approved the deletion of *piyyutim* in order to shorten the davening in times of Corona.

The *Hosha'anut* recited on *Hosha'ana Rabba* involves the 7 *Hosha'anut* recited during the 7 cycles [אדם ובהמה, אדם ובהמה, אדם ובהמה, אדם ובהמה, אדם ובהמה, אדם ובהמה, אדם ובהמה] and the concluding *piyyut* recited every day [כהושעת אלים בלוד]. These 8 are then followed by 7 additional *Piyyutim* - which are each followed by responsive sections for the *Hazan* and *kahal*. We recommend saying the first and last verse of each of the last 7 *piyyutim* and the responsive verses [much the same way as we said *selihot*]. Conclude with *Kaddish Titkabel* and beating of the *Aravot*.

Simhat Torah (Shemini Atseret/Shabbat) Evening

The major problem with *Hakafot* and dancing is that it readily leads to an absence of social distancing and physical contact. Furthermore, the *sifrei Torah* get passed from hand to hand challenging rules of hygiene. The loud singing and exertion creates airborne particles. We suggest that *Simhat Torah* night, one *Sefer Torah* be removed from the *Aron* and remain in the hands of the *Gabbai* or placed on the *Bima*. Each *hakafa* will be led by the selected *Hazan* (who will not hold the *Sefer Torah*). A limited number of people will follow the *Hazan* around in a circle (socially distanced) around the *bima* or *sefer Torah*, while the remaining congregants "dance in place" maintaining social distancing. *Hakafot* will be followed by *Keri'at haTorah* and three *aliyyot*.

Simhat Torah (Shemini Atseret/Shabbat) Morning

Hakafot Simhat Torah morning will be carried out as it was the previous night with one *Sefer Torah*.

The new challenge of *Simhat Torah* Day is the general custom that all males receive an *aliyya* - which also prolongs the *davening* substantially. In this regard, the *Mishna Berura* (OH, 669, no. 12) writes in the name of the *Pri Megadim* and other *aharonim*:

(יב) [ונהגו עוד] להרבות הקרואים - ... ונוהגין לקרות .. כהן עם כל הכהנים, ולוי עם כל הלויים ... ומ"מ נכון הדבר לכתחלה שאחד יברך והשאר יכוונו לצאת בברכתו... וה"ה כשקורין גדול עם כל הנערים, הגדול יברך והנערים ישמעו ויצאו בברכתו:

Thus, these noted scholars maintain that on *Simhat Torah*, one *Kohen* can be called up to represent all the *Kohanim* in *shul*: יעמוד פלוני בן אלמוני הכהן עם כל הכהנים. All the *Kohanim* rise and stand in their place, and the designated *Kohen* or the *gabbai* will announce that the

oleh is making the *birkot haTorah* for all the *Kohanim* - while they stand by silently. The same would be true for the *Leviyim*, *Yisraelim* and *kol haNeorim*.

Thus, we propose that in addition to the Torah removed for *hakafot*, two more *sifrei Torah* will be removed for *Keri'at haTorah*. This year *Shemini Atseret/Simhat Torah* falls on *Shabbat* and there will be seven *aliyyot*. **The first Torah** will be rolled to *veZot haBerakha* and 5 *aliyyot* will be read from it. The first will be a **Kohen** who will be making his berakhot for all the *Kohanim* in Shul. Then a **Levi** for all *Leviyim*, followed by a **Yisrael** for the *Yisraelim*. The Fourth *aliyya* will be for the adult chosen to go with **kol haNeorim**. The fifth goes as a **special kibbud**. The sixth is **Hatan Torah** who finishes the first Torah. **The second Torah** is for **Hatan Bereishit** and the **Third Torah** is for **Maftir**.

Yizkor

Following *Keri'at haTorah* is *Yizkor*. It is the custom at Berman's that prior to the personal *Yizkor*, three different *Kel Malei* prayers are recited for, קרבנות השואה, חללי צה"ל, קרבנות השואה, and חברי וחברות בית הכנסת specifying their names. To save time, we propose that during Corona we say one general *Kel malei* which would include קרבנות השואה, וחברי וחברות בית הכנסת without specifying names. A proposed text follows:

קל מלא רחמים כולל

(לחילי צה"ל, קרבנות השואה, ולחברי בית הכנסת שהלכו לעולמם)

קל מלא רחמים שוכן במרומים, המצא מנוחה נכונה על-כנפי השכינה במעלות קדושים וטהורים כזהר הרקיע מזהירים

לנשמות בניו ובנותיו הנאמנים והאמיצים, חילי צבא-ההגנה לישראל, וכל אלו שנפלו במערכות ישראל על קדושת השם העם והארץ;

ואת-נשמות ששת המליונים מאחינו, אנשים ונשים וטף, שנהרגו ושנטבחו ושנחנקו ושנקברו חיים בידי הצוררים בגלות אירופה;

ואת נשמות חברי וחברות מרכז הקהילתי על שם הרב יעקב ברמן ז"ל שהלכו לעולמם.

בעבור שאנו מתפללים לעילוי נשמותיהם, בגן עדן תהא מנוחתם. לכן בעל הרחמים יצור בצרור החיים את-נשמותיהם, ה' הוא נחלתם. וינוחו בשלום על-משכבותם. ונאמר:
אמן:

Tefillat Geshem

Tefillat Geshem is recited before Musaf, as usual.

We trust that we have supplied The Board with sufficient information to approach the issues raised wisely and effectively. We remain willing to assist the Board in its future deliberations.

Be-Khavod Rav,

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