

THE HIGH HOLIDAYS IN THE AGE OF CORONA

Including Guidance for Those Not Attending Shul

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Selichot

- Especially when davening alone, *selichot* should be recited after halachic midnight (~12:50am), or one should arise a bit earlier than usual to recite them in the morning.
- In the absence of a minyan, the 13 attributes of divine mercy should be recited with the *trop* or omitted. One should also not recite the parts of the *selichot* that are in Aramaic.
- The *selichot* may be abridged as necessary for safety and to improve *kavvanah*. One should recite at least the introductory section, 1 *piyyut*, 1 *viduy*, and *tachanun*.

Friday, Erev Rosh Hashanah

- There is an optional custom to fast half the day on Erev Rosh Hashanah (this year, from 5:07am until 1:19pm—those who are not attending shul should daven *Mincha* promptly at 1:19pm and then eat). Those who have reason to be concerned about their health need not fast this year even if they have done so in previous years.
- *Hatarat Nedarim* may be done via Zoom (all three members of the *beit din*, however, must be physically together).
- Men customarily go to the *mikvah* on Erev Rosh Hashanah. Since this immersion is only customary (and not an absolute *halacha*), it can be replaced if necessary by immersion in a swimming pool (even with clothing), or standing with one's whole body under the stream of a shower for a few minutes.
- Those who are not attending shul should daven *Mincha* after 1:19pm, preferably by 5:40pm, and certainly before 6:58pm. They may light candles, daven *Maariv*, and make *Kiddush* as early as 6:00pm.
- Remember to prepare a large candle to provide an existing flame on Saturday night and Sunday.
- Candles should be lit by 6:40pm. Since these are also Shabbat candles, they should be lit before the blessing (for women who normally do so on a regular Friday). The blessing is להדליק נר של שבת ושל יום טוב. Immediately afterwards, many women customarily recite *shehecheyanu*. It should be noted that recitation of *shehecheyanu* constitutes an absolute and irrevocable acceptance of the holiday. Women who are reciting *Kiddush* themselves should **not** recite *shehecheyanu* at candle lighting. If they accidentally did so, they may not recite it during *Kiddush*.
- Remember insertions for Shabbat during the prayers and during *Kiddush*.
- Repeat the *Shema* after 7:30pm. Those who have not begun the meal before that time must recite the *Shema* before doing so.
- It is customary to dip the bread in honey at the Rosh Hashanah meals.
- It is customary to eat, or at least look at, various symbolic foods on the first night of Rosh Hashanah (some do so on the second night as well). The prayer that accompanies each one may be recited with Hashem's name.

Shabbat, 1st Day Rosh Hashanah

- One should arise considerably earlier than usual on Rosh Hashanah morning.

- Those who are davening alone are strongly encouraged to daven *ke-vatikin*, timing the *Amidah* to begin at sunrise (6:40am). At the very least, one should finish *Shacharit* by the latest time for the *Shema* (9:30am).
- Without a minyan, all *piyyutim* are omitted. One may recite any and all *piyyutim* (including mentioning Hashem's name) after davening.
- Since Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat, there is a requirement of *shalosh se'udot*. Thus, the morning meal should commence before midday (12:48pm).
- Common custom is not to do *Tashlich* on Shabbat. The minority who have the custom to do it on Shabbat must take care not to carry outside a kosher *eiruv*.
- It is customary to wait until after midday to take a nap, but those who are weak may be lenient.
- *Se'udah shlishit* should be eaten after 1:19pm, and preferably before 3:50pm. Those who are not attending shul should daven Mincha before eating.

Saturday Night, 2nd Night Rosh Hashanah

- Shabbat ends at 7:37pm. No preparation for the second night of Rosh Hashanah may be done until this time. Maariv should be davened after this time with ותודיענו. Those who are not davening Maariv should recite ברוך המבדיל בין קודש לקודש.
- Candles of the second night of Yom Tov should be lit from an existing flame any time between 7:37pm and the beginning of the nighttime meal. Both men and women make the blessing before lighting the candles. The candles should preferably be lit in a dark area, and one should make use of their light and then move them into the dining room. Many women customarily recite *shehecheyanu* after lighting the candles. See above regarding a woman who is reciting Kiddush herself.
- The procedure of יקנה"ז is followed during Kiddush. One recites the blessing over wine and the blessing of Kiddush, followed by the blessing over the candle (the Yom Tov candles are acceptable for this purpose), the special Havdalah blessing for when Yom Tov falls on Saturday night, and finally *shehecheyanu*.
- It is customary to have in mind a new fruit or a new garment when reciting the *shehecheyanu* on the second night of Rosh Hashanah. However, if one has no new fruit or garment, one recites *shehecheyanu* anyway.

Sunday, 2nd Day Rosh Hashanah

- The first three bullet points from the 1st day apply on the 2nd as well.
- If one is hearing the Shofar without a minyan, one blows or hears just 30 blasts, preferably just before davening Musaf. One does not blow during the *Amidah*. If even 30 blasts is impossible, one should blow one set (either שברים-תרועה, שברים, or תרועה three times, each one preceded and followed by a תקיעה).
- Those who are blowing for others and have already heard should preferably not make the *beracha* themselves—rather, the person who is hearing the Shofar should do it. If the blower is a man and the listener is a woman, he may not make the *beracha* for her in any case.
- All agree that one makes *shehecheyanu* after the *beracha* on the Shofar on the 2nd day of Rosh Hashana this year.
- One may eat the festive meal at any point during the day. If one is not planning to daven in shul, one should daven Mincha before beginning the meal if it is after 1:19.
- One should daven Mincha before 6:55.
- *Tashlich* may be done at any point during the day.

- Yom Tov ends at 7:36pm. One should daven Maariv after this time.
- One does not use spices or a candle during Havdalah.

Tzom Gedaliah and the 10 Days of Repentance

- *Tzom Gedaliah* is observed on Monday, September 20 from 5:10am to 7:26pm. Those who are feeling well and in good health should fast as usual.
- Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, it is customary to ensure that all the baked goods that one eats be *pat yisrael*. If difficult, this *minhag* may be temporarily suspended this year.
- It is our *minhag* to allow and encourage reciting *Kiddush Levana* before Yom Kippur.

Sunday, Erev Yom Kippur

- Those who ordinarily perform *Kapparot* with chickens may use money this year.
- Men should make an effort to immerse in a *mikvah* in a safe manner (this is more important than on Erev Rosh Hashanah). If this is not feasible, one should follow the alternative procedures outlined under Erev Rosh Hashanah.
- One should daven Mincha (with *viduy*) as early as possible, after 1:16pm.
- Those who are concerned about illness should contact me regarding fasting on Yom Kippur.
- *Kol Nidrei* (**without** the *beracha* of *shehecheyanu*) may be conducted via Zoom at some point during the afternoon for those who will not attend shul. Otherwise, *Kol Nidrei* may be recited privately, using the future tense “all vows and oaths...that we will vow...between this Yom Kippur and the next.”
- Candles may be lit as early as 5:45pm, e.g. for those planning to come to shul after lighting. Note that **reciting the *beracha* of *shehecheyanu* constitutes an absolute and irrevocable acceptance of Yom Kippur**. Those who wish to travel to shul, eat, drink, or do anything else forbidden on Yom Kippur after lighting candles must have in mind not to accept Yom Kippur and not recite *shehecheyanu*.
- Candle lighting is at 6:25pm. Both men and women who will not be attending shul and wish to accept Yom Kippur should recite *shehecheyanu* immediately after lighting candles. Those not attending shul should certainly recite *shehecheyanu* before 6:40pm.
- Remember to light a large candle that will remain burning until the following night.
- One should begin davening Maariv after 7:20pm.
- In the absence of a minyan, the 13 attributes of divine mercy should be recited with the *trop* or omitted. One should also not recite the parts of the *selichot* that are in Aramaic.

Monday, Yom Kippur

- Those who are davening alone are strongly encouraged to daven *ke-vatikin*, timing the *Amidah* to begin at sunrise (6:49am). At the very least, one should finish *Shacharit* by the latest time for the *Shema* (~9:30am).
- Without a minyan, all *piyyutim* are omitted. One may recite any and all *piyyutim* (including mentioning Hashem’s name) after davening. One should certainly recite or study the prayers describing the worship in the *Beit Hamikdash* on Yom Kippur.
- Musaf should be begun before 1:00pm.
- Daven Mincha after 1:16pm and before davening Neilah.
- Absent a minyan, one should time Neilah so as to finish the *Amidah* at approximately 6:55pm. Neilah may not be begun before 5:45pm.

- Blowing the Shofar after Neilah is not required when davening alone.
- Yom Kippur ends at 7:22pm. If one is feeling well, one should daven Maariv (with אהה חוננתנו) after that time and only afterwards make Havdalah and break one's fast. If one is feeling very weak, one may daven Maariv a few minutes earlier and then make Havdalah right at 7:22 (assuming one has very accurate clocks).
- Even after 7:22 and after Maariv, one may not eat or drink anything besides water before making Havdalah.
- Havdalah is recited without spices. One should light a Havdalah candle from the candle that was burning all of Yom Kippur and make the blessing בורא מאורי האש on both candles together. One should make every effort to obtain a fire that was burning over Yom Kippur, but if this is impossible, the blessing over fire is omitted during Havdalah.
- The post-Yom Kippur meal should be somewhat festive.
- It is commendable to work on constructing a *sukkah* or study the laws of *sukkah* on the night after Yom Kippur.
- One should daven *Shacharit* slightly earlier than usual on the day after Yom Kippur.