

## A Yom Kippur 5782 Corona Guide to Prayer and Ritual by Rabbi Aryeh Frimer

*Yom Kippur* is a period rich with custom and ritual, personal and communal; some find the rich details challenging. In addition, because of the Corona pandemic, many individuals have chosen to pray completely or partially *be-yehidut* (in the absence of a minyan). The following guide will hopefully assist congregants in navigating through the various issues. **All times below are for Rehovot Israel.** Paragraphs marked with a ♦ refer to davening *be-yehidut*. ♦As a basic rule, one praying *be-yehidut* skips all rituals requiring a minyan including *Kaddish*, *Kedusha*, *Barekhu*, *Hazarat haShatz*, *Torah* and *Haftara* reading with *aliyyot* and *berakhot*, and the recitation of the **י"ג מידות**. A community with a *minyan* but no *Sefer Torah* proceeds normally except that both *Keri'at haTorah* and *Haftara* with their benedictions are forbidden. (See, *inter alia*, *Resp. Rashba* 1:487; *Resp. Rivevot Efrayyim*, VI, sec. 153, no. 23; *Resp. Mayyim Hayyim*, O.H., sec. 79).

**Selihot** – *Selihot* are recited in the period of the *Asseret Yemei Teshuva*.

♦They may be said in private **with the exception of the י"ג מידות** whose recitation requires a *minyan*. Leading *poskim* (R. Yitschak Yosef,<sup>1</sup> R. Hershel Schachter<sup>2</sup> citing R. Chaim Kanievsky and R. Yechezkel Roth) have ruled, that if one is linked up in real time via Zoom to a *bona fide* minyan, the י"ג מידות may be recited as well. *Tahanun* without *nefillat apayyim* is said at home (unless a *Sefer Torah* is present). The Aramaic sections are not said when davening alone.

***Hatarat Nedarim*** (Release from Vows) – The custom is to nullify ones vows on *erev Rosh Hashana*, but if one did not do so at that time, it can be done prior to *Yom Kippur*. R. Hershel Schachter<sup>2</sup> has ruled that "*Hatarat Nedarim* may be done via Zoom, as long as the three members of the *Beit Din* [court] who are nullifying the vows are in the same location. The *Beit Din* members should be able to see who is requesting *hatara*, or at least be aware of how many people have approached them and are on Zoom requesting *hatara* before they begin." R. Yitschak Yosef maintains that one can link up with the court by phone as well.<sup>1</sup>

***Kapparot***: The custom of *kapparot* is best fulfilled with money, which is donated to charity.

***Mikva***: As a sign of purity and *teshuva*, there is a widespread *minhag* for men to immerse in a *mikva* on *erev Rosh HaShana* and/or *erev Yom Kippur*. Because of the crowding that results in public *mikva'ot*, there is concern for Corona contagion. Rabbi Hershel Schachter<sup>3</sup> has ruled that since this is merely a custom, one can rely on "*tisha kavim*" (a 4-5 minute shower). This leniency is of no value whatsoever for obligatory immersions.

***Minha Erev Yom Kippur***: *Minha* on *Erev Yom Kippur* should be said before the *seudat*

<sup>1</sup>. [https://www.yeshiva.org.il/general/pdfView.aspx?src=/midrash/pdf/pdf454/yosef\\_rosh81.pdf](https://www.yeshiva.org.il/general/pdfView.aspx?src=/midrash/pdf/pdf454/yosef_rosh81.pdf); קשו"ע ילקוט יוסף תקפ"א, מדיני הסליחות, הלכות ה-ו.

<sup>2</sup>. <https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/968541/rabbi-hershel-schachter/piskei-corona-50-inyanei-rosh-hashana-and-yom-kippur/>

<sup>3</sup>. See note 2

*mafseket*. The text, appearing in the *Yom Kippur Mahzor*, is essentially the *minha* prayer said during *Asseret Yemei Teshuva*, with the addition of *viduy*: “*Ashamnu, bagadnu...*” and the “*Al Het.*”

***Seudah Mafseket*** (Meal before the Fast): Tradition emphasizes the importance of eating a festive and nourishing “*Yom-Tovdik*” meal prior to the *Yom Kippur* fast. This meal is in lieu of the usual Holiday meal. Though Jewish law does not require *Lehem Mishneh*, many have the custom to use the double loaves as they would at all Holiday meals. Some place honey on the *Halla*.

***Birkat haBanim ve-haBanot***: There is a beautiful custom for parents to bless their children in honor of the New Year on *Erev Yom Kippur*, with a specially worded text. The text for sons or daughters is available online at: <https://www.artscroll.com/images/download/seifbirschabanim.pdf> The Torah Tidbits issue for *Shabbat Ha'azinu/Shuva* (available at <https://www.torahidbits.com/>) traditionally carries a pull-out section with this gender sensitive text.

**Preparations**: *Yizkor* is recited on *Yom Kippur*, and *Yahrzeit* candles should be lit before the *Yom Kippur* candles. In addition, *havdala* on *motsa'ei Yom Kippur* requires taking fire from a “*ner she-shavat*,” i.e., a flame that has been alight all *Yom Kippur*. A special *Yahrzeit* candle should be lit before the fast for this purpose. It is customary to wear white garments or a kittle, but not gold jewelry. Those that wear a *Talit Gadol* for *Ma'ariv* should put it on with a *berakha* before *sheki'a* (at 18:47 in Rehovot).

**Sanitizing on Yom Kippur**: While “washing” is forbidden on *Yom Kippur*, washing to remove dirt is permissible. Due to the fear of Corona contagion, washing to disinfect and sanitize is permitted and required as well. Thus, the use of Alco Gel and liquid soap to thoroughly sanitize ones entire hands [and other areas where needed] is perfectly permissible on *Yom Kippur*.

### **Eve of Yom Kippur, Wednesday Evening, Sept. 15th**

**Candle-lighting**: 18:26; ***Brakhot***: *le-Hadlik ner shel Yom haKippurim* and *Shehehiyyanu*. [Men who light candles generally do not have the custom of reciting *Shehehiyyanu* when lighting holiday candles. They will recite *Shehehiyyanu* on the holiday following *Kol Nidrei* – see *Mahzor Rinat Yisrael, Yom Kippur, Ashkenaz*, p. 41.]

**Commencement of the Fast**: Formally, the fast begins at *sheki'a* (sunset) which is at 18:47. Nevertheless, one is obligated to add “*mi-Hol al haKodesh*” – to accept the sanctity of the holiday ca. 3 minutes earlier by stopping to eat and work. Women who light candles, have the custom of accepting the Holiday (or Sabbath) from the moment of candle lighting; hence they should be wearing non-leather shoes when they light, and then refrain from any further eating or *melakha*. This is true unless a woman lit “*al tenai*,” (on condition) i.e., she explicitly said or thought that she was NOT accepting the Holiday until later. In the latter case she can continue eating, wearing leather shoes or doing work until a bit before sunset. We note, however, that a woman who wants to light candles “*al tenai*” must **refrain** from saying *Shehehiyyanu* when she lights, since reciting *Shehehiyyanu* is a clear declaration that she has accepted the sanctity of the Holiday. One who

refrained from saying *Shehehiyyanu* in Candle-lighting, recites it at the end of *Kol Nidrei* – see *Mahzor Rinat Yisrael, Yom Kippur, Ashkenaz*, p. 41.

**Ma'ariv:** Davening begins with *Kol Nidre*, followed by the recitation of *Shehehiyyanu* by the *Hazan* and the congregation. This *shehehiyyanu* is on the Holiday and is normally said on other holidays in Kiddush. However, there is no *Kiddush* on *Yom Kippur* – so tradition has dictated to say it after *Kol Nidrei* just before *Ma'ariv*. [Women who said *shehehiyyanu* at Candle lighting should **not** recite the benediction again now.] The service continues with *barechu*, *ma'ariv*, *selihot* and *Viduy*.

We note that ***Kol Nidrei*** is not a prayer. As the text itself indicates, it's purpose is two-fold: (1) to nullify vows from the previous year (hence: “*mi-Yom Kippurim she-avar ad Yom Kippurim zeh...*”) which requires a *Bet-Din* (Court) of three; and (2) to declare ones intention to pre-nullify unintentional vows in the coming year (hence: “*mi-Yom Kippurim zeh ad Yom Kippurim ha-ba...*”) – for which a court is preferable. It emphasizes the sanctity of words and the importance of the commitments we take upon ourselves. It alludes to the possibility of changing direction and starting afresh. Outdoor *minyanim* for *Kol Nidrei* (irrespective of whether they have *Sifrei Torah*) should have two males stand near the *Hazan* (socially distanced) to form a *Bet Din* for the *Hatarat Nedarim* of *Kol Nidrei*.

♦When davening *bi-yehidut*, a court of three is generally absent; hence, some authorities maintain that ***Kol Nidre*** is ineffective and should be omitted. Others suggest that *Kol Nidrei* may be recited using the future formulation [#2] to pre-nullify future unintentional vows – since some leading authorities (Ritva and others) maintain that this declaration is valid *bi-yehidut*.

♦As in shul, *Shehehiyyanu* should be recited before *ma'ariv* by all who have not yet said it. In the absence of a *minyan*, *barekhu* is skipped, and the service continues with *ma'ariv*, *selihot* (without the recitation of the ייג מידות) and *Viduy* (without the Aramaic sections).

Following *Viduy*, *Avinu Malkeinu*, *Le-David Mizmor*, *Aleinu* and *Le-David Hashem Ori* are said.

### **Yom Kippur Day, Thursday Sept. 16th**

***Shaharit*** for *Yom Kippur* is recited as it appears in the *Yom Kippur Mahzor*. *Minyanim* at Berman's may be starting from *Nishmat* and, therefore, *Birkot haShahar* and the first part of *psukei de-zimra* should be said individually prior to this. Once one starts to recite *Baruch sheAmar*, one should be careful not to interrupt with needless conversation (*hefsek*). Following *Barekhu* and the *berakha* of “*Yotser Or*”, *HaMeir la'Arets* is said. Davening continues through *Keri'at Shema*, *Yom Kippur Amida*, *Hazarat haShatz* and *Avinu Malkeinu*.

♦For those davening *be-yehidut*, *Kaddish*, *Barekhu* and *Hazarat haShatz* (the *Hazan's* repetition including *Kedusha*) are skipped for the lack of a *minyan*. *Piyyutim* from *Hazarat haShatz* normally recited by the congregation (rather than by the *Hazan*) like: אתה הוא א-לוהינו בשמים ובארץ or אלהינו בשר ודם can be recited privately, but this is totally optional. *Avinu Malkeinu* is then said.

After the *Torah* and *Haftara* reading, *Yizkor* and *Ashrei* are read, followed by the return of

the Torah to the Ark and *Hineni* – a private prayer by the *Hazan* in preparation for *Musaf*.

♦In the absence of a *minyan*, there is no formal *Torah* or *Haftara* reading (with *aliyyot* and benedictions), nor is a recitation of the surrounding verses and Psalms required. Reviewing the designated portions is optional Torah study and laudatory. A *minyan* is not required for the recitation of *Yizkor* or *Kel Malei Rahamim*. Hence, *Yizkor* can be said at home before *Ashrei* and *Musaf*. *Hineni* is omitted since it is the private prayer of the *Hazan*. We are now ready to commence with *Musaf*.

Following the *Musaf Amida*, the *Hazan* begins with *Hazarat haShatz* which contains four central elements: (1) Firstly, there is an elaboration on G-d sitting in Judgement of all mankind (including “*u-Netaneh Tokef*”). (2) Then, there is a description of the *Yom Kippur Musaf* sacrifice as recorded in the Torah. (3) This theme transitions, in turn, into the “*Avodat Kohen Gadol*” - a poetic reenactment of the day-long *Yom Kippur* service in the Temple as portrayed in the *Mishna* and *Talmud*. The community in the synagogue joins the High Priest as he confesses his sins, they fall prostrate when the *Kohen Gadol* mentions G-d’s ineffable name, and they count with him as he sprinkles the blood of the sacrifices. [As Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik has noted, Judaism doesn’t just remember its past; it relives it!]. (4) This description concludes by noting that the Temple was destroyed because of our sins, which transitions into *viduy* and a confession of sins. *Musaf* ends with the *kaddish* after *Hazarat haShatz*.

♦When davening *bi-yehidut*, *Hazarat haShatz* (the *Hazan*’s repetition including *Kedusha*) is skipped for the lack of a *minyan*. *Piyyutim* from the *Hazarat haShatz* recited by the congregation like: אמרו לאלוקים, ונתנה תוקף, and וכל מאמינים etc. may be said privately, but this is totally optional. Many authorities have emphasized the importance of reciting the “*Avodat Kohen Gadol*” and of even prostrating themselves as they would in synagogue.

**Minha** is recited as it appears in the *Yom Kippur Mahzor*. It should be said after 13.06 (*Minha Gedola*) in Rehovot but not later than sunset 18:46. The Torah reading is from *Vayikra* 18:1-28 and the *Haftara* is *Sefer Yona*. The *Minha Amida* includes *viduy*. *Avinu Malkeinu* is said.

♦When davening *bi-yehidut*, the *Torah* and *haftara* can be read but without *berakhot*. *Hazarat haShatz* is skipped.

**Neilah** is recited as it appears in the *Yom Kippur Mahzor*. It should be said after *Plag Minha* (17:29) but not later than sunset (18:46). Note the change in language from *katveinu/u-khetov* to *hatmeinu/va-hatom* in the *Amida* and *Avinu Malkeinu*. The **custom** is to stand when the Aron (Ark) is open (though the *halakha* only requires standing when the Torah is moving). Hence the custom is that people stand in *Neila* from the beginning of *Hazarat haShatz* when the ark is opened (and left open) until the *Kaddish* after *Neilah* when it is finally closed. Because standing is only a custom, one who feels weak during *Neila* should sit down (without guilt).

♦*Selichot* (without מידות), *piyyutim* and *viduy* from *Hazarat ha-Shatz* may be recited by one davening *bi-yehidut* after completing the silent *amida*. One davening at home, has neither

*Hazarat haShatz* nor an Ark to open - hence there is no custom/need to stand. The concluding *Shema Yisrael*, *Baruch Shem Kevod*, and *HaShem Hu ha-Elokim* may be recited even without a *minyan*. The same is true for the non-obligatory final *shofar* blast(s), which may be sounded after *Yom Kippur* is out.

**Motza'ei Yom Kippur:** 19:19. **Ma'ariv** incorporates *ve-Ata honantanu*. **Havdalah:** Light the *Havdala* candle from the *Ner she-Shavat* prepared on *Erev Yom Kippur* (see p. 2 above, "Preparations"). **Recite:** *Borei Pri haGafen*, *Borei Me'orei ha-Esh* and *Hamavdil*. [No introductory verses, No spices]. **Kiddush Levana** can be recited on *Motza'ei Yom Kippur*.