

**A Sukkot 5781 Corona Guide to
Public and Private Prayer and Ritual
by Rabbi Aryeh Frimer**

This year the first day of *Sukkot* falls on *Shabbat*, leading to several important ritual changes. In addition, because of Covid-19, many individuals have chosen to pray completely or partially *be-yehidut* (in the absence of a minyan). The following guide will hopefully assist the congregants through these issues. Paragraphs marked with a ♦ refer to davening *be-yehidut*. **All times below are for Rehovot, Israel.**

♦As a basic rule, one praying *be-yehidut* skips all rituals requiring a minyan including *Kaddish*, *Barekhu*, *Hazarat haShatz*, *Kedusha*, *Torah* and *Haftara* reading with *aliyyot* and *berakhot*, and the recitation of the **...ג' מידות (ה' ה' קל רחום וחנון)**. Reading/studying the *Torah* and/or *Haftara* portions without *berakhot* and *aliyyot* is optional Torah study and laudatory.

A community with a *minyan* but no *Sefer Torah* proceeds normally except that *Keri'at haTorah* and/or *Haftara* with their benedictions are forbidden.¹ A reading of the designated portions without *berakhot* and *aliyyot* is permissible.

Sukka Guidelines: On the first night of *Sukkot* there is an obligation on males to eat a *kezayit* of bread (volume of 27 ml) in the *sukkah*. [As a point of reference, a golf ball has a volume of 40 cc.] The Yom Tov day bread meal also needs to be eaten in the *Sukka*. On the rest of the holiday, males should not eat bread or *mezonomot* outside the *sukka*. Because of social distancing, it is particularly problematic to use another's *sukka* when those not of your nuclear family are there. This may well require one to minimize the duration of their *sukka* visit. One should recite *Kiddush*, eat a *kezayit* of bread, and bentch - leaving the rest of the meal (fish, meat, vegetables etc.) to be eaten inside the home (without bread).² If necessary, the guests could bring in *Shabbat/Chag* early and thus have an extra 40-50 minutes in *Sukka* without disrupting the schedule of the hosts.²

How should one who doesn't have safe access to a *Sukka* proceed regarding *Kiddush*, *haMotzee* and *Leishev baSukka*? The answer is that such an individual falls in the category of "Anus" - those with no real options; they will not fulfill the *mitzva* under duress, against their will. The Halakhic rule for such a situation is: "*Ones Rahmana patrei*" - one is free of guilt if he violates involuntarily. Thus, he/she should recite *va-Yekhulu*, *kiddush* for *Sukkot* [with additions for *Shabbat*] and *Shehehyanu* (but not *leishev baSukka*). Then, wash, eat *Lehem Mishneh* and proceed normally with your *Shabbat Yom Tov* meal.

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'anot* 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* by rabbinic decree [lest one carry them in a public domain] and they are hence *Muktsa* (OH 658:2). By the same token, the *Lulav* cannot be "set up" [such as preparing rings (*Keishelach*) for the *lulav* and tying them in place, or

¹. See, *inter alia*, *Resp. Rashba* I:487; *Resp. Rivevot Efrayyim*, VI:153, no. 23; *Resp. Mayyim Hayyim*, O.H., sec. 79.

². R. Hershel Schachter, *Piskei Corona*, 51, "*Inyanei Sukkot*." Preferably a *ke-beiza* (55 cc) of bread should be consumed.

filling the *sheitel* with *Hadassim* and *Aravot*] on Shabbat and this will have to be done before or after Shabbat.

To prevent Corona contagion, one must be particularly careful about touching the *Arba Minim* without hand disinfection before and after. The same 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.**³

First Night of Sukkot, Friday Evening, Oct. 2nd

Candle lighting: 6:02 pm; **Brakhot:** *le-Hadlik ner shel Shabbat ve-shel Yom Tov* and *Shehehiyanu*. [Men who light candles generally do not have the custom of reciting *Shehehiyanu* for the holiday until *Kiddush*.]

Ma'ariv: Following Nusakh Ashkenaz, there is no *Kabbalat Shabbat* and *Ma'ariv* begins with *Mizmor Shir leYom haShabbat*. After the *Amida* for *Sukkot*, *vaYechulu* and *Magen Avot* are said, followed by *Aleinu* and *Le-David Hashem Ori*.

◆When davening *bi-yehidut*, after the *Amida* for *Sukkot*, *vaYechulu* is said, but **not** *Magen Avot*. Then *Aleinu* and *Le-David Hashem Ori* is recited

There are various practices as to whether ***Shalom Aleikhem*** and ***Eshet Hayil*** are said. In the absence of a clear custom, the majority position is that they should be said.

Kiddush for *Shabbat Sukkot* begins with *VaYekhulu*. This is followed by the *Sukkot Kiddush* text [with additions for *Shabbat*; see *Mahzor*], followed by *Leishev baSukka* and ending with *Shehehiyanu* for the holiday. *Shulhan Arukh* rules that immediately following *Leishev baSukka* (before reciting *Shehehiyanu*) all should sit to indicate their intention to fulfill the *mitsva* of dwelling in a *sukka*. Then *Shehehiyanu* is recited on the new holiday and on the fulfillment of the new *mitsva* of *Sukkah*. [A woman who recites *Kiddush* for herself, can say *Shehehiyanu* - even if she already said it on the holiday at candle lighting, because – as just noted - at *Kiddush* the *Shehehiyanu* also refers to the *mitsva* of sitting in the *sukka*.⁴]

[**Note:** *Leishev baSukka* is not generally made on merely drinking wine. The practice to recite it in *Kiddush* stems from the fact that אין קידוש אלא במקום סעודה and the wine is preliminary to *bread* or *mezonot*, which will follow shortly and do require *Leishev baSukka*.]

Some have the custom of placing honey (in addition to salt) on the *Hallah* of *Lehem Mishneh* through *Hosha'ana Rabba*. Some say *Ushpizin* when entering the *Sukka* or at the beginning of the meal.

First Day Sukkot, Shabbat Oct. 3rd

Reminder: *Lulav* and *Etrog* are not used or carried on Shabbat.

Shaharit for *Shabbat Sukkot* is recited as it appears in the *Sukkot Mahzor*. Following the

³. Kuntress *Minhat Asher, Shu"t be-Inyanei Yerach ha-Eitanim be-Idan ha-Corona, Mahadura Tanyana*, sec. 15.

⁴. מועדים וזמנים ח"ז, סימן קי"ז. ועיין בהליכות ביתה, סימן טו, סעיף יט, הערה נ; שו"ת שבט הלוי חלק ג סימן סט.

berakha of “Yotser Or”, *HaKol Yodukha* is said because of Shabbat. This is followed by the *Shema*, *Amida*, *Hazarat haShatz*, *Hallel Shalem* and *Hosha’anut* for Shabbat - though the *bima* is not circled.

Kohelet is normally read before Torah reading – and, in Israel, if read in a *minyan* from a parchment, both *Al Mikra Megilla* and *Shehehyanu* are recited. [This year 5781, because of the fear of Corona contagion, the *Megilla* reading may well be delayed to *Minha* time to shorten the long morning service].

The *Torah* (7 *aliyyot*) and *Haftara* reading follow. On Shabbat, the *ג' מידות* are not said when opening the Ark. *Musaf* for *Shabbat Sukkot* and *Hazarat haShatz* are recited. Conclude with *Ein Kelokeinu* to end

◆**For those davening *be-yehidut***, *Hazarat haShatz* (the *Hazan's* repetition including *Kedusha*) is skipped for the lack of a *minyan*. *Hallel Shalem* and *Hosha’anut* for Shabbat are said. There is no formal *Torah* or *Haftara* reading (with *aliyyot* and *berakhot*), nor a recitation of the surrounding verses and Psalms. Like the *Torah* and *Haftara*, the reading of *Megillat Kohelet* is a communal – not a personal – obligation.⁵ Nevertheless, reading the designated portions is optional Torah study and laudatory. The first *Yekum Purkan* and *Ashrei* are said. Followed by *Musaf Amida*. *Hazarat haShatz* (the *Hazan's* repetition including *Kedusha*) is skipped for the lack of a *minyan*. Conclude with *Ein Kelokeinu* to the end.

Minha for *Shabbat Sukkot* is recited as it appears in the *Mahzor*.

◆Absent a *minyan* there is no **Torah reading** (for *Shabbat*) or *Hazarat haShatz*.

Motza’ei Shabbat Yom Tov: 18:59. ***Ma’ariv*** includes *ve-Ata honantanu* and *Ya’aleh ve-yavo*. ***Havdalah***: Same as for a regular *Motza’ei Shabbat*. [The acronym for the *berakhot* is **YaVNeH**: **Y**ayin (*Borei Pri ha-Gafen*), **V**esamim (*Borei minei Besamim*), **N**er (*Borei Me'orei ha-Esh*), **H**avdala (*HaMavdil bein kodesh le-hol...*)] Note that the *berakha* of *Leishev baSukka* is **not** made at *Havdala* unless a *mezonot* or bread are eaten at the same time.

Days 2-6 of Sukkot, Hol haMoed Oct. 4th-8th

Before waving the *Arba minim* for the first time (this year 5781 on Sunday of *Hol haMoed*), the blessings *Al netilat lulav* and *SheHehyanu* are recited. On subsequent days, only *Al netilat lulav* is recited. The practice throughout Israel is that *Tefillen* are not worn during *Hol haMoed*. Weekday *Shaharit* is said with *Ya’aleh ve-yavo* added. Following *Hazarat haShatz*, *Hallel Shalem* is recited as well as *Hosha’anut* (the *bima* bearing a *Sefer Torah* is circled once). Following the Torah reading (four *aliyyot*) recite *Musaf* with the sacrifice appropriate for that specific day of *Hol haMoed*_Sukkot. *Hazarat haShatz* is followed by *Aleinu*, *Yom*, *Le-David Hashem Ori* and *Ein Kelokeinu*.

◆Absent a *minyan*, there is no *Torah* reading or *Hazarat haShatz*. Regarding *Hosha’anut*, some authorities maintain that they should be said without any circling⁶, while others suggest circling a chair or table bearing a *Tanakh*.⁷

⁵. פעולת שכיר על המעשה רב (מהגר"א) סימן קע"ה.

⁶. *Eshel Avraham* (Butchach), OH, sec. 651.

⁷. *Ben Ish Hai*, Year 1, *Ha’azinu*, par. 15; *Kaf haHayyim*, OH, sec. 660, no, 2.

Day 7 of Sukkot, Hosha'ana Rabba, Friday Oct. 9th

Prayers as above, except that for *Hosha'anut*, the *bima* bearing a *Sefer Torah* is circled seven times and *Seder Hosha'anut* are recited. This is followed by *Ta'aneh emunim*, *Kaddish titkabel* and beating five willows on the ground five times - as a prayer for rain.

◆Even without a *minyán*, the *Seder Hosha'anut* and *Ta'aneh emunim* [complete or abridged] can be recited (with or without the 7 cycles; see at notes 6 and 7) and the willow branches are beaten.

Night of Shemini Atzeret/Simhat Torah, Friday Evening, Oct. 9th

Candle lighting: 5:54 pm; **Brakhot:** *le-Hadlik ner shel Shabbat ve-shel Yom Tov* and *Shehehyanu*. The latter is recited because *Shemini Atzeret* is deemed a holiday unto itself. [Men who light candles generally do not have the custom of reciting *Shehehyanu* for the holiday until *Kiddush*.]

Ma'ariv: Following the Ashkenazi Custom, there is no *Kabbalat Shabbat* and *Ma'ariv* begins with *Mizmor Shir leYom haShabbat*. After the *Amida* for *Shemini Atzeret*, *va-Yekhulu* and *Magen Avot* are said, followed by *Hakafot* (taking into consideration social distancing), *Keri'at haTorah* and *Aleinu*. [*Le-David Hashem Ori* is no longer said.]

◆When davening *bi-yehidut*, after the *Amida* for *Shemini Atzeret*, *va-Yekhulu* is said, but **not** *Magen Avot*. Absent a *minyán* and a *Sefer Torah*, there are no *Hakafot* or *keri'at haTorah*. If one has a *Sefer Torah*, then *Hakafot* are optional⁸ but *keri'at haTorah* with *berakhot* remains forbidden. Davening concludes with *Aleinu*. [*Le-David Hashem Ori* is no longer said.]

There are various practices as to whether ***Shalom Aleikhem*** and ***Eshet Hayil*** are said. In the absence of a clear custom, the majority position is that they should be said.

Kiddush for *Shemini Atzeret* begins with *Va-Yekhulu*. This is followed by the *Shemini Atzeret Kiddush* text [with additions for *Shabbat*; see *Mahzor*], followed by *Shehehyanu* for the holiday. [A woman who recites *Kiddush* for herself, should not say *Shehehyanu* on the holiday since she already recited it at candle lighting.]

Shemini Atzeret/Simhat Torah, Shabbat Day, Oct. 10th

Shaharit for *Shabbat Shemini Atzeret* is recited as it appears in the *Sukkot Mahzor*. Following the *berakha* of “*Yotser Or*”, *HaKol Yodukha* is said because of *Shabbat*. This is followed by the *Shema*, *Amida*, *Hazarat haShatz*, and *Hallel Shalem*.

Following *Hallel*, *Hakafot* begin. The *Torah* (multiple *aliyyot*, *Hatan Torah*, *Hatan Bereishit*, *Maftir*) and *Haftara* readings follow. On *Shabbat*, the ג' מִיְדוֹת are not said when opening the Ark. *Yizkor* and *Ashrei* are read, followed by return of the *Torah* to the Ark. Before *Musaf*, the *Hazan* recites *Birkat Geshem* (prayer for Rain). From that point on “*Mashiv ha-ruah u-morid ha-geshem*” is recited in the *Amida* instead of “*morid ha-tal*.” *Musaf* for *Shabbat Shemini Atzeret* and *Hazarat*

⁸. *Resp. be-Tsel ha-Hokhma*, IV, sec. 112, no. 5 also cited in *Piskei Teshuva*, VI, sec. 669, no. a.

haShatz are recited. Conclude with *Ein Kelokein* to end.

◆In the absence of a *minyan*, following *Hallel Shalem*, there are no *Hakafot* or formal *Torah* or *Haftara* reading (with *aliyyot* and benedictions), nor is a recitation of the surrounding readings 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 after the first *Yekum Purkan* and before *Ashrei* and *Musaf*.

◆Before *Musaf*, the recitation of *Birkat Geshem* (the prayer for Rain) is optional. Beginning with *Musaf* “*Mashiv ha-ruah u-morid ha-geshem*” is recited in the *Amida* instead of “*morid ha-tal*.” However, it is improper for the individual to begin reciting “*Mashiv ha-ruah u-morid ha-geshem*” until the *Tsibbur* (community) does so. We estimate this to be approximately 10:00 AM this year 5781 (2020). *Hazarat haShatz* (the *Hazan’s* repetition including *Kedusha*) is skipped for the lack of a *minyan*. Conclude with *Ein Kelokein* to the end.

Minha for *Shabbat Shemini Atzeret* is recited as it appears in the *Mahzor* and includes *keri’at haTorah* because of *Shabbat*.

◆Absent a *minyan*, there is no **Torah reading** (for *Shabbat*) or *Hazarat haShatz*. The *Minha amida* should be recited before sunset (6:14 PM).

Motza’ei Shabbat Yom Tov: 18:51. ***Ma’ariv*** includes *ve-Ata honantanu*. ***Havdalah***: Same as for a regular *Motza’ei Shabbat*. [The acronym for the *berakhot* is **YaVNeH** – see first day]