

## A Rosh HaShana 5781 Corona Guide to Public and Private Prayer and Ritual by Rabbi Aryeh Frimer

This year the first day of *Rosh HaShana* falls on *Shabbat*, leading to several important ritual changes on both days. 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*, *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* I:487; *Resp. Rivevot Efrayyim*, VI, sec. 153, no. 23; *Resp. Mayyim Hayyim*, O.H., sec. 79).

♦**Selihot** – *Selihot* 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, however, 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). Aramaic sections are not said when davening alone.

**Hatarat Nedarim** (Release from Vows) – There is a custom to nullify ones vows on *Erev Rosh HaShana* [latest *Erev 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>

**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 *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 shower). This leniency is of no value whatsoever for obligatory immersions.

**Preparations** – The first night of *Rosh HaShana* is *Shabbat*, which means that the second night is *Motsaei Shabbat* (*motsa"sh*). On *motsa"sh* one will need fire to light *Yom Tov* candles, for *Havdallah* (recited as part of *Yakneha"z* in *Kiddush* – discussed below) and for cooking. However, **one is not allowed to create fire on Yom Tov – but may only transfer it**. Therefore, it is best to light a 48-hour candle on *Erev Shabbat*, as the source of fire for *motsa"sh*. In addition, a new fruit, melon or garment requiring a *Shehehiyanu* should be purchased for use on the second evening.

1. [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.

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

3. See note 2

### First Night of Rosh HaShana, Friday Evening, Sept. 18

**Candle lighting:** 6:21 pm; *Brachot: 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 the Ashkenazi Custom, there is no *Kabbalat Shabbat* and *Ma'ariv* begins with *Mizmor Shir leYom haShabbat*.

♦When davening *bi-yehidut*, after the *Amida* for *Rosh HaShana*, *vaYechulu* is said, but not *Magen Avot*. Then *Le-David Mizmor* is recited followed by *Aleinu* and *Le-David Hashem Ori*.

There are varying customs 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 Rosh HaShana* begins with *VaYekhulu*, followed by the *Kiddush* text [see *Mahzor*] and ends with *Shehehiyanu* for the holiday. [A woman who recites *Kiddush* for herself, should not say *Shehehiyanu* if she already said it in candle lighting.] It is a widespread custom to include at the beginning of each of the two evening *Rosh Hashana* meals “*Simanim*” – foods that are symbolic of a blessed, sweet and happy New Year. Honey is commonly placed on the *Hallah* in addition to salt.

### First Day Rosh HaShana, Shabbat Sept. 19

*Shaharit* for *Shabbat Rosh HaShana* is recited as it appears in the *Rosh HaShana Mahzor*. To save time, *minyanim* at Berman's will 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*).

♦For those davening *be-yehidut*, following the *berakha* of “*Yotser Or*”, *HaKol Yodukha* for *Shabbat* is said. *Hazarat haShatz* (the Hazan's repetition including *Kedusha*) is skipped for the lack of a minyan. *Piyyutim* from the *Hazarat haShatz* normally recited by the congregation (rather than by the Hazan) like: לא-ל עורך דין or אדירי אימה יאדירו בקול or אתה הוא א-לוהינו בשמים ובארץ can be said privately, but this is totally optional. *Avinu Malkeinu* is not said on *Shabbat*.

♦In the absence of a *minyan*, there is no formal *Torah* or *Haftara* reading (with *aliyyot* and *benedictions*), nor a recitation of the surrounding reading and *Psalms*. A reading of the designated portions is optional *Torah* study and *laudatory*. The first *Yekum Purkan* may be said followed by *Ashrei*, since there is no sounding of the *Shofar* on *Shabbat*. *Hineni* too is omitted since it is the private prayer of the Hazan. We are now ready to commence with *Musaf*.

♦The *Musaf Amida* deals with G-d judging the world, and it is risky for an individual to be judged alone, separate from the community. As a result, Jewish tradition dictates that one who is davening *be-yehidut* (absent a minyan) should time his **recitation of *Musaf* to commence** when most people are saying *Musaf*. This is estimated to be after 3 hours into the day (= *zeman keri'at shema*) or **after 9:30 AM** in Rehovot.<sup>4</sup> Since *Tekiat Shofar*, too, is part of this judgement process, the *shofar* should also not be sounded *be-yehidut* before this time either.<sup>5</sup> [Under pressing circumstances, both

<sup>4</sup> OH, sec. 591, no. 8 and MB, subsect. 14; sec. 589, MB subsect. 11. R. Abraham Yosef, Radio Kol Chai, Sept 11, 2020, cites the plethora of *keVatikin Minyanim* as grounds for general leniency.

<sup>5</sup> OH, sec. 588, MB subsect. 2; sec. 591, MB, subsect. 15.

Musaf and Shofar blowing can be fulfilled earlier.] As noted above though, there is no blowing of the Shofar on *Shabbat Rosh HaShana*.

♦Following the recitation of the *Musaf Amida*, *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: *וּנְתַנָּה תְּרוּקָה*, *מֶלֶךְ עֲלֵינוּ*, and *וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים* may be said privately, but this is totally optional. Conclude with *Ein Kelokeinu* to end.

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

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

Because of *Shabbat*, *Avinu Malkeinu* is not said and *Tashlikh* is deferred to the second day of *Rosh HaShana*.

**One may not perform any preparations for Yom Tov** (e.g., putting food on the *plata*, setting the table or cutting the salad) **until Shabbat is out** (after 19:18).

### Second Night of Rosh HaShana, Motsa"sh, Sept. 19

The second night of *Rosh HaShana* is also *motsa"sh*. This entails several rules and guidelines regarding preparations, candlelighting, *kiddush* and *havdala*, as detailed below:

**Candles:** Since one is not allowed to *create* fire on *Yom Tov* – but may only transfer it, all fire needed to light *Yom Tov* candles, for *Havdala* (recited as part of *Kiddush*), and for cooking must be transferred from the 48-hour candle lit on *Erev Shabbat*. **On *Motsa"sh*, the candles should not be "glued" into place by melting their bottoms.** One can prepare small pieces of aluminum foil to hold them in place. Alternatively, tealights can be used.

*Yom Tov* candles should preferably be lit before *Kiddush*. Candles cannot be lit (nor any preparations for *Yom Tov* performed) until Shabbat is out (after 19:18), **and** only after the person lighting has said "*va-Todi'enu*" in *Ma'ariv* (see below) or the words "*Barukh ha-mavdil bein kodesh le-kodesh*" [without G-d's name]. The *berakhot* over the *Yom Tov* candles are as usual: "*le-Hadlik ner shel Yom Tov*" and "*Shehehiyanu*." [As noted above, men who light candles generally do not have the custom of reciting *Shehehiyanu* for the holiday until *Kiddush*.] One reciting *Shehehiyanu* should have in mind the new garment or new fruit. If these were not prepared, *Shehehiyanu* may be said, nevertheless.

**Ma'ariv:** Because it is *Motsa"sh*, a special *havdala* text is added to the *Amida* for *Rosh HaShana* after "*Ata behartanu*" which begins "*va-Todi'enu*." Following the *Amida*, *Le-David Mizmor* is recited followed by *Aleinu* and *Le-David Hashem Ori*.

**Kiddush Yaknehaz** - A special *Kiddush* is recited which incorporates *havdala*. The acronym for the order of blessings is **YaKNeHaZ** – *Yayin* (*Borei Pri ha-Gafen*), *Kiddush* (usual *Rosh HaShana* *Kiddush*), *Ner* (*Borei Me'orei ha-Esh*), *Havdala* (text found in *mahzor* ending *ha-mavdil bein kodesh le-kodesh*) and *Zeman* (*Shehehiyanu*). [A woman who lit candles and recited *Shehehiyanu*, should not repeat *Shehehiyanu* if she recites *kiddush*]. Finishing the *Havdala berakha* with "*hamavdil bein kodesh le-kodesh*" is imperative, and one does **not** fulfill one's *havdala* obligation by saying "*hamavdil bein kodesh le-hof*" instead. One reciting *Shehehiyanu* should have in mind the new garment or new fruit. If these were not prepared, *Shehehiyanu* may be said, nevertheless. *Besamim* are not used, since the *Yom Tov* meal enhances our spirits like spices.

For *Havdala* candles, one can use two *Yom Tov* candles, a candle and a match, or specially lit *Hanukah* candles held together. When holding the 2 flames together for *Havdala*, one should be careful not to have the candles so close that they stick to each other. When finished, the candles may not be extinguished, but should be placed in a safe location (candelabra, coaster, Chanukiah etc) to burn out.

**Simanim:** It is a widespread custom to include at the beginning of each of the two evening Rosh Hashana meals “*Simanim*” – foods that are symbolic of a blessed, sweet and happy New Year. The new fruit or melon on which *shehehiyanu* was said is eaten as well.

### **Second Day of Rosh HaShana, Sunday Sept. 20**

**Shaharit** for *Rosh HaShana* is recited as it appears in the *Rosh HaShana Mahzor*. *Minyanim* at Berman’s will be starting from *Nishmat* and, therefore, *Birkot haShahar* and the first part of *psukei dezimra* 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 the *berakha* of “*Yotser Or*”, *HaMeir la’Aretz* is said.

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

♦In the absence of a *minyan*, there is no formal *Torah* or *Haftara* reading (with *aliyyot* and benedictions), nor a recitation of the surrounding reading and Psalms. A reading of the designated portions is optional Torah study and laudatory.

♦As mentioned above by the **Musaf** of the first day, Jewish tradition dictates that one who is davening *be-yehidut* (absent a minyan) should time his recitation of *Malkhiyyot*, *Zikhronot* and *Shofarot* on this Day of Judgement to commence when most people in the community are saying *Musaf*. This is estimated to be **after 9:30 AM** in Rehovot.<sup>6</sup> Since *Tekiat Shofar*, too, is part of this judgement process, the *shofar* should also not be sounded *be-yehidut* before this time.<sup>7</sup> [Under pressing circumstances, both *Musaf* and *Shofar* blowing can be fulfilled earlier.] One who is praying *be-yehidut* is only obligated to hear **30 kolot**: thrice *Teki'a*, *Shevarim*, *Terua*, *Teki'a* (3x4=12); thrice *Teki'a*, *Shevarim*, *Teki'a* (3x3=9); and thrice *Teki'a*, *Terua*, *Teki'a* (3x3=9). Even for one who is praying *be-yehidut*, it is preferable to hear the sounding of the *Shofar* before saying *Musaf*. *Shofar* can be sounded all day. Two *berakhot* are recited either by the *Ba'al Tokei'a* or the listener: *liShmo'a Kol Shofar* and *Shehehiyanu*. The recitation of the verses appearing in the *Mahzor* before and after the sounding of the *Shofar* are optional.

♦Prior to *Musaf*, *Ashrei* is said, but *Hineni* is omitted since it is the private prayer of the Hazan. We are now ready to commence with *Musaf*.

♦Following the recitation of the private *Musaf Amida*, *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: *ונתנה חוקיך*, *ולקל עורך דין*, and *וכל מאמינים* may be said privately, but this is totally optional. Conclude with *Ein Kelokeinu* to the end.

**Minha** for *Rosh HaShana* is recited as it appears in the *Rosh HaShana Mahzor*. *Avinu*

6. See note 4 above.

7. See note 5 above.

*Malkeinu* is said, as is *Tashlikh*.

*Motza'ei Yom Tov*: 19:16. *Ma'ariv* incorporates four additions for *asret yemei teshuva* and *ve-Ata honantanu*. *Havdalah*: *Borei Pri haGafen* and *Hamavdil*. (No spices or candle).