

ADDITIONAL HALACHIC GUIDELINES FOR PESACH 5780 WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS

By Rabbi Yaakov Feitman, Kehillas Bais Yehudah Tzvi

Dear friends " :

As you know this has been an extremely challenging year in which to prepare and make Pesach. Please remember that like many aspects of life, this is a *nisayon* – a test from Hashem – and quite a difficult one. Not being able to be with family and loved ones for the Seder and Yom Tov, the uncertainty brought by every new day and the restrictions placed upon us have made many people on edge and full of anxiety. One of the tests is to see if we can be *mesameach* ourselves and others during this special Pesach of 5780, 3,332 years after Yetzias Mitzrayim. It is not easy, but no true test ever is. I hope that some of the following guidelines and *kulos* – leniencies for this year – will be helpful. Let us try to remember that the Torah teaches safety and self-preservation above all, so even if we don't have everyone we would like at our Seder or we can't daven with a Minyan, the most important mitzvah is to be as safe and protected as we can possibly be. Please don't fall into the trap of thinking "I will frummer – more religious – than those who are davening at home. It has been the unanimous Halachic guideline from virtually all rabbonim, Gedolim and Poskim **not** to hold any Minyains, even outdoors, during this Yom Tov. In our community we have boruch Hashem been somewhat spared the tragedies of other communities because we closed Shuls and schools fairly early in the epidemic. This is not to minimize the losses and mitzvah to daven for those who are still in need a Refuah Sheleimah.

Please note that with these Additional Guidelines, we are also forwarding a letter from the overwhelming majority of Rabbonim in the community regarding having guests for Yom Tov. It was written with the medical advice of Dr. Akiva Bergman, who together with Rabbi Dr. Aaron Glatt, has been working closely with the Rabbonim and Roshei Yeshivos of the Five Towns and Far Rockaway. The conclusions of this letter are very severe but they follow the Halacha that avoiding pikuach nefesh – danger to life – overrides all other concerns. May we be zocheh to be back together again very soon for wonderful Minyanim, lively and joyous simchos and many happy times with our families and friends.

With continued tefilos and best wishes for a Chag Kasher Vesameach to all,

B'ahavah uviyedidus,

Rabbi and Rebbetzin Yaakov Feitman

HALACHIC GUIDE TO DAVENING WITHOUT A MINYAN AND OTHER CORONAVIRUS ISSUES

1. Try to establish a makom kavua – a regular place to daven – even at home. This should not be near an open bathroom door or close to a bathroom where there is a bad odor.
2. Do not face a mirror or a picture, especially for Shemoneh Esray
3. It is permissible to say Yizkor without a Minyan, including Keil Molei Rachamim. Yizkor is recited on the last day of Pesach, which is on Thursday, April the 16th. Obviously, no Kaddish, Borchu or Kedushah is recited when davening without a Minyan.

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4. We stop saying Mashiv Haruach.... in Musaf of the first day of Pesach. Unlike Shemini Atzeres when there is an announcement to begin saying Mashiv Haruach, there is no announcement to *stop* even when we are in Shul as usual. Therefore, everyone should just cease saying Mashiv Haruach in Musaf. It is still recited during Shacharis. Please note that this Halacha is different if someone is davening Shacharis at home and the Shul has already recited Tal. Then, the person davening by himself would *not* say Mashiv Haruach even in Shacharis. However, now that unfortunately no Shuls are functioning, we *do* say Mashiv Haruach in Shacharis but not in Musaf..
5. Please remember to count the Omer at Maariv Thursday night or during the Second Seder. If you forgot you can count on Friday *without* a Bracha and continue counting *with* a bracha on Friday.
6. When davening this Shabbos and every other Friday night, we do not say Mogein Avos since we are not in Shul or in a regular Minyan. If possible, Vayechulu should still be recited by two people together, even if they are 6 feet apart because of social distancing. If this is not possible, one may say Vayechulu anyway.
7. Regarding making “early Shabbos,” one should start Mincha at least ten minutes before Plag Hamincha. Those Shuls which do not do so rely upon a *kulah* (leniency) which is limited to tefilah b’tzibur which we sadly do not have at the moment.
8. We have discussed the concept recently of selling “chometz gomur” or not. Some people have the chumra (stringency) of not selling bread products or other basic chometz. This year, because it may be extremely difficult to obtain chometz right after Yom Tov, and there could be a “run” on chometz products, the majority of Rabbonim have decided to allow the sale of chometz gomur. Even those who do not usually do so may sell it without being *matir neder*, since this is a temporary decision, not to be used b’ezras Hashem, in the future.
9. For some reason, even during regular years, women sometimes forget to light candles at the second Seder. Please remember to light. If forgotten, no extra candles need to be lit.
10. Don’t forget to make an Eiruv Tavshilin on Wednesday Erev Pesach with a Matzah and kosher for Pesach piece of meat etc.
11. If you are a Bechor, please watch for our Zoom Siyum for Erev Pesach. You can be yotzei with this or even if you just hear the Siyum by phone but you must eat something at breakfast in honor of the Siyum. Do not eat Matzah at all on Erev Pesach. You may eat chometz until 10:14 A.M. Please remember to flush the remaining chometz crumbs from the Ten Pieces by 11:35 A.M. Remember to say Kol Chamira (the daytime version).

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12. On Motzoi Shabbos Chol Hamoed April 11, we make Havdalah with candle and spices. Some people have the minhag not to use spices but this seems to come from the fact that people did not always have Kosher for Pesach besamim. Therefore, if you do, please use the spices.
13. Regarding Tevilas Keilim, immersing new dishes: I want to reiterate that at least three mikvaos for keilim are using chlorine which we are reassured by the experts in the field disinfect the water. You should still wash your hands with soap and water before going there, don't touch any surfaces, wear gloves and wash again at home with soap and water. Please wait for the area to be empty and toivel your dishes, leaving room for proper social distancing. The beach at Far Rockaway is still open for tevilas keilim (apparently the beaches in Long Beach and Atlantic Beach are not). In a worst case scenario, please call me by Tuesday night April 7th to arrange to have your dishes sold to a gentile. Then you will borrow them back and then purchase them back permanently after Yom Tov.