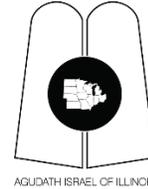


March 19, 2020

10:00 AM



Dear Chicago Jewish Community,

As our community deals with the developing COVID-19 situation, we must adjust to this new reality, and prepare to live our lives following essential guidelines. There are many confirmed cases in every neighborhood of our community. People's lives are in danger, and each of us is halachically obligated to protect ourselves, our family, and our community.

We will work to provide clear guidance for many of the halachic issues that Jews around the world are facing. At this time, please be aware of the following updates:

FEELING SYMPTOMS

Halacha dictates that anyone with the symptoms associated with COVID-19, must seek medical attention and follow their doctor's advice. If one is only mildly ill, one should speak with a doctor, and if directed to be examined by a doctor, make sure to let the doctor's office in know advance that they are coming.

LEAVING HOME

- Social distancing is a difficult but crucial part of keeping safe during this crisis.
- One may only leave their home if absolutely necessary, and even then, for the shortest time possible.
- When outside of the home, one must diligently maintain a distance of 6-15 feet from others. It is impossible to know who may be silently carrying the virus, with the potential to infect others.
- When doing necessary shopping only one family member should go.

PRIVATE MINYANIM

At this time it is against halacha to form a private minyan, whether it be in a shul, a home, outdoors or any other location.

YAHRTZEIT AND KADDISH

Individuals that need to recite kaddish or have a yahrtzeit should learn Mishnayos as a merit for the deceased.

VISTING ELDERLY

Grandchildren may not visit grandparents over the age of 70. Outside guests and help should only enter the home when essential, and in such cases, gloves should be worn in addition to maintaining distance. We understand and are pained to isolate the elderly, but this is what must be done for their safety. Families should overcompensate in other ways to maintain a connection to their grandparents during this time.

VISITORS

- Visitors should only be allowed into homes for essential needs.
- Family and friends should not be invited or visit for Shabbos or Yom Tov.

GATHERING OF FRIENDS

Children living in different households should not play at each other's homes or even outside together.

GUIDELINES FOR RELIGIOUS EVENTS

- Any important religious event should only be attended by an absolute minimum of people, all of whom must be in good health and maintain appropriate distancing.
- **Wedding-** Weddings should be attended by only a minyan of men, including the mesader kiddushin and eidim (witnesses) and the mothers and siblings of the bride and groom. There should be no dancing, and there is no need for sheva brachos, at the wedding, or at subsequent meals.
- **Bris-** A bris milah does not require a minyan, it should be done in the home, and only the mohel and the baalei simcha and the members of that household should be present.
- **Levaya-** Only the immediate family should attend a funeral, and enough men for a minyan to recite kaddish.

TEVILLAS KEILIM

- Tevillas Keilim should be done with extreme care. While all mikvaos should generally be closed, keilim mikvehs will be chlorinated, gloves (provided at the mikveh) should be worn, and hands should be washed with soap before and after using the keilim mikveh.
- Only one person at a time should be in the keilim mikveh, as others wait their turn in their cars. If you are not feeling well, you should not be going, and if these recommendations are too difficult, you should consult your Rav for how to proceed.

PESACH

We understand that there will be many shailos about mechiras chametz and the upcoming Yom Tov of Pesach, especially from those that will be home for the first time. We will start addressing these shailos next week and there will also be virtual shiurim made available on the topic.

Since the situation has been unfortunately worsening, it is possible that some of these regulations will need to be tightened more in the future.

How we each conduct ourselves now has the potential to save lives. We are adjusting to working and living in the confines of our homes, as we look forward to Shabbos and prepare for Pesach. We must commit ourselves to do all that we can to protect ourselves and those around us, and with Hashem's help and our histadlus, our efforts will make a difference and protect lives.

May all those afflicted be zoche to a refuah shleimah, and may we be all zoche soon to see the end of this terrible threat and share בשורות טובות in the near future.

The Rabbanim of the City of Chicago