

Additional Coronavirus Guidance & Directions

Dear *Shluchim*,

May *Hashem* be with you and protect you and all of *Klal Yisrael*.

In addition to my previous letter written earlier this week, many new queries have arisen and due to the severity of the virus some other restrictions should be adhered to, as per *Pikuach Nefesh*.

It is important to reiterate that everyone is obligated to carefully follow the medical advice and recommendations of the doctors and the Department of Health, as clearly stated in letters written by R' Akiva Eiger during a Cholera Epidemic in 1831 (see *Iggeres Soforim*, letter 31).

In communities where *shuls* have been officially closed, **one should not try to circumvent the rules** and go to *shul*. There is a well-known letter from the *Shem MeShmuel* of *Sochochav* written to a sick person who was dejected because he was ordered by his doctor to eat on *Yom Kippur*. The *Shem MeShmuel* explained to the sick person that the same *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, Who commanded us to fast on *Yom Kippur* also commanded us to eat on *Yom Kippur* when medically warranted due to *Pikuach Nefesh*. Therefore, said the *Shem MeShmuel*, "You should eat with *Simchah*, knowing that you are fulfilling *Hashem's mitzvah*." Likewise, in our situation today, one should know that by forgoing a *minyan* and *kriyas haTorah*, he is thereby fulfilling a *Mitzva D'Oiraisa*, which is cause for joy and not sadness *chas v'Shalom*.

Tfilla:

1. In a place where the government permits *davening* in small groups outdoors, it is preferable to *daven* in a walled-in area, or at least between trees, rather than in an open field. If there are ten people *davening* in such an area who can see and hear each other, they can form a *minyan* (see *Teshuvos Minchas Yitzchak*, vol. 2 §44).
2. One should not join any type of *minyan* if he suspects that he might be sick, such as if he has a fever or cough, unless he ascertains that he does not have the virus.
3. Elderly people (i.e., above the age of 65), those with a compromised immune system, and people with other underlying health issues, such as lung or heart problems, or diabetes, are at much greater risk of getting seriously ill. Therefore, they should remain home and not go to *shul* even on *Shabbos*, and should preferably *daven* at the same time that the congregation *davens* in *shul* (*Orach Chaim* 90:9).
4. If one *davens* at home Friday night [even if with a *minyan*], one should say only the passage of ויכולו השמים after *shemoneh esrei*, but not the *beracha* מעין שבע that generally follows ויכולו.
5. There is a *halachic* issue of removing a *Sefer Torah* from a *shul* for temporary use. However, it is permitted to read the *Torah* in the courtyard of the *shul*. Alternatively, if the *Torah* must be taken to a private home for *kriyas haTorah*, the *Torah* should be taken to the house a day or two in advance of reading for a *minyan* (see *Beur Halachah* §135 אין ד"ה). People, however, must be careful to keep a proper distance

from one another during *kriyas haTorah*. Therefore, the *Baal Koreh* should move aside when the person who is called to the *Torah* comes forward to recite the *bracha* on the *Torah*. Then upon completing his *bracha*, that person should move back a few feet, allowing the *baal koreh* to step forward to read the *Torah*. In this situation, the one who recites the *bracha* on the *Torah* fulfills the *mitzvah* (of reading from the *Torah*) simply by listening to the *baal koreh* read on his behalf, even though he cannot read along quietly from the *Sefer Torah*, as one normally does when called to the *Torah*.

6. After reading from the *Torah* a single individual should be called to perform both *Hagbah* and *Glilah*, meaning, he should first lift the *Torah*, showing it to the congregation, and then place it down on the *bimah*, close it, tie it, and cover it with its mantle.
7. If there is no *minyan* for *kriyas haTorah*, one should read the *parsha* from a *chumash* (*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 25:14). One should also read the added *maftir*, such as *Parshas haChodesh* this week, as well as the *haftorah*.
8. If a congregation did not perform *kriyas haTorah* one *Shabbos*, they should continue on Monday and Thursday with the regular weekday *kriyah*, and they should make up the missed *parsha* on the following *Shabbos*, by beginning *kriyas haTorah* from the previous (missed) *parsha* and continuing with the new *parsha* from that week (see Rama, Orach Chaim 135:2 with *Mishnah Berurah* *ibid.* §8; see also following paragraph).
If only a minority of the congregation missed *kriyas haTorah* one *Shabbos*, there is no need to make up the missed *parshah* the following week (*Shaarei Ephraim* 7:10).

When reading a make up *parsha* from the previous week, the entire previous *parsha* plus (at least) 3 *pesukim* from the new *parsha* are read during the first *Aliyah* (*Kohen*), because each person called to the *Torah* that week must read from the *parsha* of the present week (*Sefer HaShomer Emes* 15:1; *Pesach HaDvir* §4; *Kaf HaChaim* §5).

There is a disagreement among the *Poskim* as to whether it is proper to read *parshiyos* from two different *Chamushim* on the same *Shabbos*. Thus, some say that if *Parshas Pekudei* (or *Vaykeil* and *Pekudei*) was missed, we cannot read *Pekudei* and *Vayikra* the following week since we do not read from two different *Chamushim* on the same *Shabbos*, while others say that even in such a case, the missed *parsha* (*Pekudei*) can be read the following week together with the new *parsha* (*Vayikra*). There is no clear-cut decision in the *poskim* as to which custom should be followed in this case (*Mishnah Berurah* 135:7).

Even if we say that we may read the missed *parsha* from the previous *Chumash* (such as, *Pekudei* and *Vayikra*), there is a disagreement among the *poskim* if it is possible to make up a missed double *parsha*, such as *Vayakeil* and *Pekudei*. Some rule that a congregation cannot make up more than one missed *parsha*, and thus if *Vaykeil* and *Pekudei* were missed, the congregation reads only *Vayikra* the following week, and they do not make up the missed double *parsha* (*Magen Avraham* *ibid.* in the name of *Maharam Mintz*; *Olas Shabbos* 282:4). Others, however, disagree and maintain that the congregation should read three *parshiyos* the following because they hold that it is possible to make up more than one missed *parsha* (*Elya Rabba* *ibid.* §2; see also *Mishnah Berurah* *ibid.* §7). According to this latter view, it is also possible to make up several missed *parshiyos* from several weeks (*Elya Rabba* *ibid.*; *Aruch HaShulchan* *ibid.* §6). *Teshuvos Maharam Schick*, *Orach Chaim* §335 writes: "I heard from my *Rebbi* (the *Chasam Sofer*) that *Hagaon HaChasid R' Nosson Adler* zt"l conducted himself *halachah l'maasah* according to this view and he once read many missed *parshiyos* on one *Shabbos*.

9. One may say *Birchas HaChodesh* (*bentch Rosh Chodesh*) without a *minyan*.
10. A person *Davening* in private without a *minyan* does not recite the second יקום פורקן passage and the *mi shebeirach* that follows.

11. For hygienic reasons, one should not spit during the *tfilla* of *עלינו לשבח* (when saying the verse *שהם* (משתחוים להבל וריק), as one might normally do.
12. One should refrain from directly kissing a *Sefer Torah*, *mezuzah*, or *sforim*. Rather, one should merely kiss them from afar. One should also not kiss the *Sefer Torah* when called to the *Torah* for an *Aliyah*.
13. **Mikveh for Men:** Men should entirely refrain from using the *mikveh* now. A man can fulfill the *mikveh* obligation through the pouring of nine *kabbim* of water over himself (*Teshuvos Shevet HaLevi* 1:24 and *Minchas Yitzchak* 4:21). Nine *kabbim* water is approximately 11 ½ liters, and others say it is 20 liters of water. This can be accomplished by taking a shower for approximately 3 minutes. Nine *kabbim* of water are a valid substitute for *mikveh* only when the water is poured over oneself, as in a shower, but not when he immerses himself, such as in a bath. However, if one sits in a bath with half his body above the water line and nine *kabbim* of water is then poured over his head, it is valid (*Mishnah Berurah* 88:4). When the nine *kabbim* water are poured over someone, the person should stand straight with his two hands (spread apart a bit) nears his heart, so that the water lands on his hands too (*Mishnah Berurah* 88:4, citing *Mateh Ephraim*).

When taking a shower for this purpose, one should first stand under the shower spout and then open the water, so that the water immediately goes over him as he opens the faucet.

Some say that Pouring 9 *kabbim* water is beneficial even for one who [did not experience *tumah*, but] wants to immerse himself in a *mikveh* for the sake of *תוספת טהרה*, *additional purity* (see *Tashbatz* §122, דיני ערב יהוי"כ, *Sefer Maavar Yabok* מאמר ה' *Imrei Noam* ch. 18). Alternatively, if one cannot immerse in a *mikveh*, he may instead learn some *Mishnayos* from *Seder Taharos*. It is particularly beneficial for one to learn *Mesechtas Mikvaos*, as the Rebbe zt"l writes in *Iggeres Kodesh* (9:153).

14. **Mikveh for Woman:** Women may go to the *mikveh*, unless she is quarantined when she may not go. It is advisable to shower after the *mikveh*. However, they should take a shower only after arriving back home, and not in the *mikveh* building (see *Rama*, *Yoreh Deah* 201:75, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 162:9 and *Taharas Yisrael* §161). [This is the opinion of *Shevet HaLevi*.]

If there is a woman who refuses to use the *mikveh* (out of fear of the virus), we may permit her to immerse herself in the sea (at the beach). However, another woman must accompany her there to ensure that her entire body with all her hair is properly immersed in the water. It is worthwhile for her to go into the water while wearing Crocs (which should be removed before she immerses) to avoid any *chatzitzah* adhering to her feet.

15. **Hygiene:** It is extremely important to wash your hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with water and soap. It is permitted to wash hands with liquid soap on *Shabbos*. If the soap is heavy, it should be diluted with some water before *Shabbos*.
16. **Shiva:** If a family is sitting *shiva* ר"ל, the *aveilim* should not sit close together, in a small room. One can fulfill the *mitzvah* of *nichum aveilim* even over the phone, hence this should be the suggested practice.

I conclude with the prayer *מנחלתך* *מנע מגיפה מנחלתך*, *Our father, our king, withhold a plague from your inheritance*. May we yet merit in this Month of Adar – whose acronym is *אני די רופאיך*, *I am Hashem, your healer* – *והסירותי מחלה מקרבך* – *I will remove sickness from your midst*, and we should emerge from darkness to great light with the coming of *Mashiach*. And we should merit to see the building of the *Bais Hamikdash* and be able to partake of the *korbonos* and the *korbon Pesach* speedily in our days *mamash*.

ע"פ אגרות אונקלוס