



שליט"א רבבונים

Yom Kippur Katan half day fast

In light of the current situation we would like to call on the entire community to undertake a half day fast on Wednesday, which is Yom Kippur Katan, and to do extra davening on the day (ש"ע או"ח תיז) (מ"ב סק"ד). One should accept this fast upon oneself at the preceding mincha, Tuesday afternoon, at the time of saying the Amidah (ש"ע או"ח תקסב:ו). If one did this, then one should add in "Aneinu" in mincha on Wednesday if said before breaking one's fast. One should also have in mind that one is not taking this on as an ongoing commitment, rather for this occasion only. May Hashem answer our prayers and move this pandemic from our community, our country and our world.

Minyanim

Attached please find a letter from Professor Barry Schoub and Dr Richard Friedland, whose expertise and credentials need not be repeated again. They are expressing real concern at the fact that there are certain shuls and private minyanim in homes which are continuing. In their expert medical opinion, the continuation of these shuls and minyanim is posing a direct risk to life. It is therefore a halachic imperative that all of these minyanim cease with immediate effect. In matters like this we need guidance from the medical experts to be able to make the proper halachic decisions (ש"ע או"ח תריח:ב). And our medical experts are of the firm view that continued minyanim are posing a risk to life for community members.

This includes minyanim in private homes, for prayers in a shiva house, and even for a barmitzvah boy's leining. This includes group shiurim, which should all continue on electronic platforms, such as Zoom. In the attached letter you will see the seriousness of the medical situation. We are calling on all Rabbis and members of the community to abide by this instruction to close all minyanim to help ensure that we can keep our community safe. There are a number of detailed halochos with regards to davening on one's own. Please find attached Beth Din guidelines with regard to this.

Simchas

Please note the attached letter from our medical experts, who express extreme concern with regard to simchas. Based on their direction, weddings must only take place with a minyan of men, and their respective spouses, and no-one else. It is also very important that no dancing or touching take place at these weddings and that proper social distancing be maintained at all time, which according to their expert guidance is two metres. It is important to encourage couples not to postpone weddings.

In accordance with the medical assessment of the situation, it is imperative furthermore that no communal gatherings take place at all, including a sheva brochas or a shalom zachor. Even a bris, should only be attended by the mohel and the parents of the child. If a baby girl is born, she may be called by her Hebrew name immediately, and a formal naming should take place as soon as our shuls re-open and we can read from the Torah again.

Restaurants

See the attached letter from Professor Schoub and Dr Friedland that it is important at this stage that restaurants do not provide sit down facilities and only do take-aways and deliveries. The Kashrut Department will be working together with the establishments to assist them by looking to waive certain administration fees on a temporary basis, as well as co-ordinating a marketing campaign for them to help promote their take-aways. The Kashrut Department will also be implementing medical recommendations with the restaurants and other kosher establishments to ensure proper safety regulations are implemented, such as that queuing taking place in a way that ensures social distancing at all times.

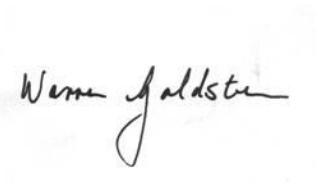
Mikvahs

Hygiene protocols for the women's mikvahs are being implemented and communicated to the mikva administrators. Attached please find Beth Din guidelines on this. Men's mikvahs must be closed until further notice. According to medical advice, the keilim mikvahs can remain open, but that only one person should be in the keilim mikvah at a time, to ensure required social distancing, as well as hand sanitisation before and after.

Conclusion

This is a time of threat to the health and lives of our fellow community members and countrymen. The instructions above are based on expert medical advice on how to save lives, and are consistent with what Jewish communities around the world are all doing. Those who do not implement the above are acting irresponsibly and endangering themselves and all of us.

May Hashem answer our prayers and bringing health and healing to our community, our country and our world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Warren Goldstein". The signature is written in a cursive style.

The Chief Rabbi

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which is highly stylized and appears to be "Rabbi".

For and on behalf of the Beth Din