

Coronavirus and Jewish Life FAQs – Part 2

Update as of 5 April 2020/11 Nissan 5780

The following FAQs have been discussed and drafted by a number of US Rabbanim and approved by Dayan Gelley and Dayan Simons, should they be of use to you and/or your communities in the current challenging situation.

We hope will provide practical guidance at this challenging time, assist us in helping each other and feeling as great a sense of community as we can. We thank those Rabbanim who assisted for their input. If you have any further questions, please consult your local community rabbi if at all possible. Asking for rabbinic advice directly, rather than via the Internet is much more preferable, since you and your rabbi can discuss the factors in your question.

Our local communities and the US centrally are here to assist as best we can. May God bless us and protect us and all humanity. We wish you all well. Shabbat Shalom, Chag Kasher veSameach.

(To read Part 1, issued on 20 March 2020, please [click here](#).)

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1. Can I use hand-sanitizer on Shabbat and Yom Tov?

Yes

2. Can I eat matza or egg matza in the run up to Pesach even if I usually wouldn't do and this year cannot get out to buy bread due to isolation?

Yes, but do avoid matza on Erev Pesach itself.

3. If I am ill and find normal matza hard to eat, can I eat egg matza on Pesach this year, even though I would not need to eat egg matza in Pesach in normal circumstances?

Yes, but you should eat shemura matzah, or at least regular matza, for the mitzvot of matza at the Seder. Egg matza may not be used for the mitzvot of the Seder.

4. What are people who are confined to bed or in hospital required to do for the Seder?

They should read the Haggadah if they can and observe as much of the Seder ritual as possible. They should prioritise eating matza at the first point in the seder where matza is eaten. They should do this even in the absence of a Seder plate.

As a rule of thumb for somebody unable to attend a regular seder, the minimum recitations and eating for the Seder are as follows, for one who is able to do so: Kiddush, recite 'Avadim Hayinu' followed by 'Rabban Gamliel haya omer...' until the end of that section, drink the second cup, eat matza, then maror, then the afikoman (if eating a meal, have the afikoman after the meal), grace after meals, drink the third cup, recite as much of Hallel as possible, drink the fourth cup.

If it is not possible to drink wine or grace juice, cups of tea may be drunk instead. Matza may be soaked in water if this makes the matza easier to eat for somebody who is unwell. One may also eat ground matza for the seder, but the grinding must be done before Yom Tov.

In ideal circumstances, the time for fulfilling the mitzvah of eating matza is after nightfall, this year on Pesach from 8.36pm in London. If this is not possible, matza may be consumed, preceded by the bracha of 'hamotzi' but not the bracha of 'al achilat matza' from sunset at 7.49pm.

5. What, if any, guidelines for food and drink are necessary for people in hospital over Pesach, especially if they are in isolation and cannot get KLP food?

Try and avoid foods that contain chametz ie wheat, rye, barley, spelt, or oats. If one cannot sustain oneself without chametz, i.e. without eating chametz, then chametz may be eaten since all mitzvot are suspended in order to save life. If at all possible, Rabbinic advice and guidance should be sought about particular foods or medicines that are not kosher for Pesach and which a patient might be required to eat.

6. What should I do if sadly I suffer a bereavement on Shabbat or Yom Tov?

Rabbis are receiving specific advice from the London Beth Din as to current United Synagogue Burial Society policy which, sadly, has to change frequently at the moment, and will be updated as soon as possible.

7. Can I use any disposable utensils this year for Pesach?

Yes, you can.

8. When should we stop saying *mashiv haruach umorid hagashem* given we will not be in a tzibbur? Before Musaf or after Musaf.

Say mashiv haruach umorid hagashem in Shacharit on the first day of Pesach.

Before you daven Musaf on the first day of Pesach, you might consider reciting Tefillat Tal (the prayer for dew usually said during the chazzan's repetition). You should then omit mashiv haruach umorid hagashem in your own Musaf Amida.

In the Koren Sacks Minhag Anglia Pesach machzor, start at the top of page 649 and continue until the middle of page 651, omitting the section on page 651 which in public prayer is said exclusively by the Chazan. The corresponding section in the Artscroll Pesach Machzor is on page 418.

An alternative is to recite mashiv haruach umorid hagashem during Musaf without having recited Tefillat Tal. In this case, you would then omit mashiv haruach umorid hagashem at Mincha and onwards.

9. Can 'Mincha and Maariv' both be prayed between plag hamincha and sunset over Zoom especially at this time of the year as the days get longer? Can this happen in the absence of a physical tzibur? For online shiva prayers, what is the best practice?

In these circumstances, it is preferable practice that mincha and maariv should not be prayed together between plag and sunset. If feasible, we suggest either setting up separate times for Mincha and Maariv, or scheduling Mincha and Maariv either around the time of sunset or around the time of plag hamincha otherwise.

If shiva prayers are taking place on Zoom or similar platforms between plag and sunset and it is not feasible to schedule these prayers as outlined in the previous paragraph, the best practice is to only daven mincha at that time.

- *The US Coronavirus hotline is on 0208 343 5696 (available during working hours).*

יהי רצון שישמר עלינו ועל כל יושבי תבל - May God guard over us and all humanity