

CAJ's Abbreviations Guideline for our High Holy Days 5781.

Clearly, we are guided (our CAJ Religious Committee and I) by the halachic status of different liturgical passages in making decisions about what to include and what to exclude. However, making decisions about liturgical abbreviation is challenging in part because so many of the most beloved parts of our liturgy, and the liturgy for the High Holy Days, do not have the status of halachic requirements (Unetaneh Tokef, Kol Nidrei, Eleh Ezkerah, Yizkor, and the final Shofar blast of Ne'ilah come to mind).

For many in our communities, these are crucial to the High Holy Day experience and to its theology and core message. Reciting only passages that have traditionally been considered halachically required would strip the High Holy Day experience of much of its power. However, there is no way to reduce the length of the service without removing passages and experiences with which some people have deep attachments.

The following are some guidelines for liturgical abbreviation.

Core Elements: Some segments of the liturgy, such as the Shema U-virchoteha and the Amidah, are halachically mandated from the earliest rabbinic sources and have always been considered the core of the Jewish worship experience.

BIRKOT HASHACHAR & PESUKEI DEZIMRA: we are going to be following the exact same practice as on our regular Shabbat services starting in our Machzor Lev Shalem at "HaMelech- **המלך**", on page 69, 2nd paragraph.

I would encourage everyone to recite the prayers on your own, starting from page 34 to page 68, before the Live Streaming service begins.

AMIDAH REPETITION / HOI'CHE KEDUSHAH: For many of the Amidot (Rosh HaShanah Shacharit, Rosh HaShanah Minchah, Yom Kippur Shacharit, Yom Kippur Minchah), a simple and halachically appropriate means of shortening the service would be to skip the silent Amidah and to do these Amidot in the 'Hoi'che Kedushah' format, while omitting the full repetition of the Amidah. Thereafter, I will be reciting selected piyyutim and other very traditional Amidah excerpts as "optional" pieces.

TORAH READING: As per the CJLS guideline, following Halachah, whereas a Physical Minyan is not present in our Sanctuary during our Live Streaming, the Torah cannot be read from and only 3 Aliyot with an abbreviated Haftarah will be chanted, during all of our services.

MUSAF FOR ROSH HASHANAH/ MUSAF FOR YOM KIPPUR: Such a Hoi'che Kedushah method similar as the Shacharit Amidah, will be adopted for Musaf of Rosh HaShanah (especially if the Shofar will not be blown during the Musaf Amidah because of danger), or Musaf for Yom Kippur. I am also recommending that Unetaneh Tokef (p. 143 and 315) still be included immediately before Kedushah. Unetaneh Tokef

was written as a Silluk, a piyyut for the specific purpose of transitioning into the Kedushah.

STATUS OF PIYYUTIM: Whereas piyyutim (liturgical poems) are very important to the flavor of the High Holy Days and are a primary vehicle for expressing its themes, they are optional and can be omitted in cases of need.

The piyyut “Eleh Ezkerah,” which many people refer to as “the martyrology,” technically also has an optional status; historically speaking, it is a piyyut of the *slifah* genre, rather than a “service” of its own, and there is no minimum portion of it that must be recited.

“Avodah,” or “Seder Kohen Gadol” (The Service of the Kohen Gadol), is a genre of Yom Kippur piyyut. Avodah piyyutim have been present in siddurim as far back as the first Siddur, *Seder Rav Amram*, and though in other circumstances we would not recommend its omission, a community is on firm halakhic ground in treating this passage flexibly given the health crisis.

SHOFAR: The Shofar service will be performed on Sunday afternoon just before Tashlich. Again, a minimalist approach to the Shofar blasts would simply include the two Shofar blessings, followed by 30 blasts of the Shofar.

All other elements presented in *Mahzor Lev Shalem* p. 248-251 are customs that can be dispensed with in this case of extreme need or because of a time limitation.

HAZKARAT NESHAMOT / YIZKOR: This unit, though so important to the Yom Kippur experience, is not a halachic requirement, we are still going to have an abbreviated version without recalling each and every deceased member as we have done in the past.

MINCHAH YOM KIPPUR: Abbreviated Torah reading of one Aliyah followed by a condensed version of the Book of Jonah followed by a Hoi’che Kedushah.

NEILAH / CONCLUSION OF YOM KIPPUR: Again, the Hoi’che Kedushah approach is the most straightforward way to shorten the Neilah service.

As the final shofar blast of Yom Kippur (unlike the Shofar blasts of Rosh HaShanah) is a later custom and not considered obligatory according to Jewish law, it can be set aside in cases of emergency. Even those who would not otherwise be comfortable with teki’at shofar done over the internet may appreciate hearing this final shofar blast of Yom Kippur over the internet as the widely recognized mark of the completion of Yom Kippur (as it is not for the fulfillment of a mitzvah, and takes place after the end of the holiday).

I hope this will help you navigate our services; I would also suggest that you get acquainted with the abbreviated versions prior to our Live Streaming services.