

Hoikhe Kedushah on Yamim Noraim

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Please note that this is not an official responsum of the CJLS.

The exigent circumstances of the Covid pandemic challenge Masorti communities on how to manage *tefillot* this Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. The CJLS has offered several optional formats for truncating and streamlining services.

Some of this guidance on abbreviated services applies year-round. Others pose questions specific to the High Holidays. The following paragraphs address one aspect of the choices facing synagogues on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. My conclusions here differ in some details from elements in the earlier versions (including one item cited in my name). See the CJLS guidance on [Abbreviating Prayer Services for the High Holidays of 5781/2020](#), under the heading of Amidah Repetition/Hoikhe Kedushah.

Some communities will judge that over electronic platforms it is simply impossible to have a full silent Amidah followed by a full repetition, as would certainly be optimal. Many will resort to using the abbreviated Amidah known in Yiddish as the *הויכע קדושה* (which, notwithstanding that cognomen, was widely practiced in *Sefarad* and among the *Edot HaMizrah* as well). There are multiple variations on how to apply this method. All versions omit the full silent prayer and begin with the leader reciting the Amidah's first three blessings aloud. In the method I favor, [endorsed by the CJLS in 2017](#), worshipers recite each word of those blessings in unison with the prayer leader, participate in the antiphonal call-and-response lines of the *Kedushah*, from Isaiah, Ezekiel and Psalms, then recite the conclusion of the third blessing (לדור ודור וכו' בא"י האל הקדוש) after which worshipers continue through the prayer. In the other widely practiced version, worshipers listen attentively until the *Kedushah*, participate in the call-and-response, listen attentively to the conclusion of the third blessing, recite amen, then return to the beginning to commence their own private Amidah in full.

But on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur the Amidah's third blessing differs from the year-round version in length and format. What exactly should be recited aloud? When should worshipers begin their own silent prayers apart from the public recitation?

On the High Holidays, after the usual antiphonal portion of the *Kedushah*, the liturgy continues with לדור ודור ("from one generation to another...") but the signature concluding blessing (בא"י המלך הקדוש) does not follow immediately. Instead, this third blessing of the Amidah contains an additional five paragraphs (ובכן...ובכן...) before the signature blessing. In addition, the line from Psalms 146 (ו'מלך ה'), which was already said in the call-and-response portion, is repeated here among those added paragraphs. This element makes it unambiguously clear that we are dealing with an expanded *Kedushah*, with an extended round of antiphonal recitation, not a new liturgical unit.

So, when should the prayer leader stop the loud recitation and the worshipers continue silently (or return to the beginning)? Let me rephrase the question to clarify exactly what is at issue: is the הויכע קדושה a method for reciting the first three blessings of the Amidah, in which case the leader and worshipers should remain together all the way through the signature blessing? Or is it a method for bringing the worshiper through the antiphonal portion of the *Kedushah*, in which case, worshipers might continue on their own after ודור ודור, without reaching the final blessing? Some evidence might be adduced for this latter position. Reciting the antiphonal lines from Isaiah and Ezekiel is called עיקר קדושה for several purposes, such as when one is reciting *Shema* and must pause to hear the congregation's *Kedushah* (MB 66 n.17). Similarly, during the full repetition of the Amidah on a normal High Holidays, one can sit after ודור ודור, without waiting for the concluding blessing.

However, the first position seems more correct. R. Yosef Karo (OH 232.1) and R. Moshe Isserles (OH 124.2) both describe the abbreviated Amidah practice as continuing "until after הא"ל הקדוש." Based on this description, I would conclude that the abbreviated Amidah should cover the full first three blessings in the Amidah, not merely reach the antiphonal *Kedushah*. I consider it optimal for the prayer leader to continue aloud through the ובכן paragraphs – with the worshipers reciting along, or alternatively, listening attentively – until concluding the Amidah's third blessing, המלך הקדוש, such as on p. 88 in *Mahzor Lev Shalem* for Rosh HaShanah morning. This differs from the Rabbinical Assembly's suggestion in Sample Outline #4, which would have the silent recitation begin after לדור ודור with the ובכן sections.

Practically, there is an additional complication for reciting the הויכע קדושה on the High Holidays. For Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur additional liturgical poems are often interpolated in those first three blessings. See, for example, on p. 85 of *Mahzor Lev Shalem*, for the Rosh HaShanah morning service, or on p. 143 for Musaf, both woven into the third blessing as an introduction to *Kedushah*. How could

one omit such essential elements of the High Holiday prayer book? It is just not the *Yamim Noraim* unless “on Rosh HaShanah it is written and on the Fast of Atonement it is sealed.” But how does a private worshiper, who may not be such a fluent davvener, negotiate such passages, some of which are dense with difficult Hebrew, during the recitation of the first three blessings?

It seems unwieldy or excessive to expect worshipers to recite these additional poems along with the prayer leaders while davvening their own Amidah. Therefore, if communities want to use the הויכע קדושה model on the High Holidays, I recommend beginning as if davvening the typical silent Amidah, with the prayer leader and the accompanying community reciting the base text without the poetic additions. I recommend adding those beautiful and special poems as free-standing additions or integrating them elsewhere in the liturgy. Many of the poems can be – and have been, in different rites – applied in other locations than their original homes. This conforms to the Rabbinical Assembly’s guidance on [Abbreviating Prayer Services for the High Holidays of 5781/2020](#), under the heading of Amidah Repetition/Hoikhe Kedushah.