

Travel FAQs

Mid-Winter - 5783-2023

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PRAYER FOR TRAVEL TEFILLAT HADERECH

WHO SAYS TEFILLAT HADERECH?

Anyone traveling more than seventy-two minutes out of the city limits recites tefillat haderech. Each person, man or woman, traveling should say this prayer, or if one cannot, he can hear it from someone else.

WHEN SHOULD I SAY TEFILLAT HADERECH?

When driving, one should say tefillat haderech at the beginning of the journey, as soon as he leaves the city limits. If one is in the middle of his ride and then remembers, he can still recite the prayer if he will still be traveling for seventy-two minutes out of city limits. When flying, if on the way to the airport one will be traveling out of the city limits he recites tefillat haderech at the beginning of the trip. If not, one should say tefillat haderech before takeoff as the airplane is on the runway.

IF I AM TAKING A CONNECTING FLIGHT DO I REPEAT TEFILLAT HADERECH?

If the connecting flight is that same day, one

does not recite tefillat haderech a second time. If one stayed overnight, and then resumed his journey the next morning he should say tefillat haderech again.

ARE THERE ANY SEGULOT FOR A SAFE TRIP?

Giving tzedaka is a misvah that provides protection. It is also customary to give money to someone traveling to deliver tzedaka at his destination. This makes the traveler a messenger en route to perform a mitsvah, thereby gaining protection throughout his travel and return. Escorting someone who is going to travel is also beneficial for his protection.

WHICH FLIGHTS REQUIRE HAGOMEL?

After traveling on a flight that takeoff to landing is longer than 72 minutes (excluding taxiing), one is required to recite birkat hagomel.

WHEN SHOULD I SAY BIRKAT HAGOMEL?

Birkat hagomel should be recited at the earliest time the Sefer Torah is read, after your arrival. Birkat hagomel should be recited again when you return home. If you don't have the opportunity to say hagomel when away, only say it once when you return.

Preferably one should say hagomel soon after the trip, within three days. However, if one was unable, or forgot, it can still be said later.

תפילת הדרך

יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו. שתוליכנו לשלום. ותציעדנו לשלום. ותדריךנו לשלום. ותגיענו למחוז קפצנו. לשלום (for one returning that same day add:) ותחזירנו לשלום) ותצילנו מכף כל אויב ואורב בדרך, ותגנו, לחן ולחסד ולרחמים בעיניך ובעיני כל רואינו. כי אתה שומע תפלת עמך ישראל ברחמים: ברוך אתה (if more than 72 minutes: ??) שומע תפילה.

May it be Your will, G-d, our G-d and the G-d of our fathers, that You should lead us in peace, direct our steps in peace, guide us in peace, and allow us to reach our destination in peace (If one intends to return the same day, add: and allow us to return in peace). Save us from any enemy and ambush on the road, grant us grace, kindness, and mercy in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see us, for You hearken to the voice of the prayer of Your nation Yisrael with mercy. Blessed are You G-d, Who hearkens to prayer.

ואומר ג' פעמים: ויעקב הלך לדרך ויפגעו בו מלאכי אלוהים: ויאמר יעקב כפאשר ראם מחנה אלוהים זה ויקרא שם המקום שהוא מחנים ויסעו ויהי חתת אלוהים על הערים אשר סביבותיהם ולא רדפו אחרי בני יעקוב: לישועתך קויתי יי (3x)

יברכה יי וישמרה: יאר יי פניו אליך ויחנה: ישא יי פניו אליך וישם לך שלום (3x) הנה אנכי שלח מלאך לפניך לשמרה בדרך ולהביאך אל המקום אשר הכינתי: (3x) המלאך הגואל אותי מכל רע, יברך את הנערים, ויקרא בהם שמי ושם אבותי אברהם ויצחק ויזגו לרוב בקרב הארץ: (3x)

PRAYING

MUST I PRAY WITH A MINYAN?

If one is driving and can find a minyan within eighteen minutes of his location, then one should take the time and do so, even if it is out of the way. If by continuing along their route there will be a minyan within the next seventy-two minutes then one should not pray on the road, but rather continue to meet up with the minyan. GoDaven.com has a database for worldwide minyanim. When praying without a minyan, one should try to pray at the same time as a local minyan is praying.

CAN I PRAY WHILE SITTING?

While traveling, one may pray sitting if he will have more concentration this way. When doing so keep your feet together while sitting. One should bow at the proper times, by either bending forward in his seat or if possible, by standing and bowing. If one is a passenger in a car, he should preferably stop the car while praying the Amidah; however, if he cannot then he can pray while the car is in motion. However, the one driving cannot pray while driving, even if he will miss the time for prayer.

WHICH DIRECTION SHOULD I FACE?

Ideally, one should ascertain his direction and face towards Israel, and if one is in Israel face towards Yerushalayim. If one cannot determine the direction or feels he will have more concentration facing another direction, he should in his heart direct his prayer toward Yerushalayim.

WHEN FLYING, HOW DO I KNOW WHEN IT IS TIME TO PRAY?

The proper time to pray or recite Shema is determined by standing at sea level under the location of where your plane is at that moment. Just looking out the window may be

off by up to a half hour, and especially with new technology many airplane windows will mislead you as they are darkened during daylight. On myzmanim.com you can enter the times and locations of your departure and arrival, and it will calculate your route and tell you all of your halachic times throughout your flight.

WHAT IF THE “FASTEN SEATBELT” SIGN GOES ON WHILE I AM STANDING DURING THE AMIDAH?

On an airplane, if passengers or staff are going to be disturbed by congregating, it is better not to make a minyan and pray individually.

If one was able to find a spot to stand and pray and the ‘fasten seatbelt’ sign went on, one should sit down without saying a word or making any gestures and resume his prayer. Even if there is no danger involved it is proper to be courteous to the staff who request that you remain seated.

MAY ONE PRAY IN A NON-DENOMINATIONAL CHAPEL?

Many airports or hospitals have rooms designated for prayer. As we know, one may not enter a church even just to sightsee. Such a room, designated for people of all faiths to use for prayer, should not be used for prayer.

I AM IN THE AIRPORT WITH MY TEFILLIN BAG IN HAND, MAY I ENTER THE BATHROOM?

Although anything holy must be covered twice before being exposed, Tefillin is an exception. Even in its regular tefillin/tallet bag, it may be brought into a bathroom if it cannot be properly guarded otherwise. If there is a siddur or ketoret in the bag, then it will require one additional covering. However, do not place the bag with the tefillin in it, on the floor.

CAN I RECITE A BERACHA OR PRAY IF I AM NOT PROPERLY CLOTHED?

When praying one should be dressed as if he were having an important meeting. However, in a pressing situation one can pray as long as something covers his chest and lower body with a separation between the two. As for a beracha, as long as one is wearing something, e.g. a bathing suit, and one’s head is covered, he can recite a beracha. One may not cover one’s head with his own hand, however, someone else’s hand would work.

CAN I RECITE A BERACHA OR PRAY IF OTHERS ARE NOT PROPERLY CLOTHED?

One may not recite a beracha or pray facing any woman over the age of seven who is not properly dressed. Ideally, one should turn around to recite a beracha; otherwise, if not possible, it is sufficient to close one’s eyes. When praying one should find a secluded spot where he can concentrate and not be exposed even to a screen showing anything inappropriate.

EATING

When one is in the comfort of his home, kosher food is much more available, and keeping kosher is significantly easier. Being away can present unique challenges and therefore the answers below are specifically for when one is away, and should not necessarily be applied when at home.

WHAT ITEMS NEVER NEED KOSHER CERTIFICATION?

Items that currently do not require kosher certification include: bottled water; flour; unflavored seltzer; unflavored beer from major breweries; common soda flavors in America such as Coke and Sprite from the tap; raw nuts; dried fruits with no oil; salt; unflavored

teas and coffee; granulated sugar; all dried legumes; frozen vegetables containing no oils or additives other than sugar; popcorn kernels and other similar basic items.

VEGETABLES:

When eating salads or vegetables one should be aware that infestation of bugs in other countries may be perhaps less or worse than in the U.S.

One can buy cut fruit or vegetables such as cantaloupe or watermelon from a supermarket without being kosher certified.

We can assume that they would make the effort to use a clean knife so as not to ruin the taste of the fruit. Even if the knife had something non-kosher on its surface, the knife was cleaned off by the first few pieces cut which are then nullified with the remaining pieces. In smaller shops, it is more of a concern and one should verify that a perfectly clean knife is used. However, fruits or vegetables from Israel are subject to the laws of shemittah and additionally may require terumot and ma'asrot to be taken.

COFFEE:

Unflavored brewed or instant coffee may be purchased anywhere; however, once any flavors are added it will need to be certified kosher as flavors can come from non-kosher sources.



MILK:

Buying milk outside of the US without kosher certification is not the same as buying it within the US. Although in some places in the world it may be ok for those that rely on government supervision to not require Halav Yisrael milk, one must be more cautious in countries where regulations and standards are different. In



some Arab countries such as UAE, camel milk (and ice cream), is available for purchase in supermarkets, therefore any milk would require proper supervision.

EGGS:

Eggs, as long as they have the familiar oval shape, may be purchased anywhere in the world, and are assumed to come from a chicken.



PURCHASING RAW FISH:

One can only recognize a fish as being of a kosher species if a portion of the skin is still intact and you see the scales attached to the fish. Running your fingernail over the skin will easier pull up the scales. One cannot determine whether a fish is kosher based on its name or what it looks like.

When purchasing cut fish it is imperative the cutting is done with a clean knife and cutting board. One should bring his own knife, and watch at all times to ensure that the one cutting is using that knife, as it is to his advantage to use his knives which are more professionally suited for the job. The cutting board should also be wrapped with paper and take caution that a piece of non-kosher fish does not mistakenly make its way into your fish order.

VINEGAR:

In etymology, the word vinegar is derived from the word wine. Both wine and balsamic vinegar are very kosher sensitive and should not be used without a recognized Kosher symbol, as wine may even be a partial base component.

ORDERING A KOSHER MEAL

One should order a Glatt kosher meal even when traveling on El Al. It is recommended to order your kosher meal at least 24 hours in advance. On weekend flights, more than a twenty-four-hour notice may be required.

Make sure the double wrappings are intact on meat products and the like. Anything unwrapped is not considered supervised even if the stewardess tells you otherwise (unless she's a religious Jew). Fresh-cut cold fruit served on the airline's china dishes with metal forks is permissible.

CAN I EAT IT IF IT LOOKS LIKE THE HEBREW WORDS SAY "KOSHER"?

In Israel fruits and vegetables also need to be certified kosher to ensure that there is no shemittah concern or that teruma and maaser were properly separated.

There are various levels of certification and accordingly one should know the difference between different organizations. Rabbanut Mehadrin, Rav Landau, Badatz Edah Charedit, Harav Shlomo Mahfud, as well as others are well known for their reliability. There is meat on the black market that is not kosher, and that does not even meet any government standards, that is sold to unreliable Jewish vendors.

I FOUND THE SAME EXACT PRODUCT I NORMALLY USE WITHOUT CERTIFICATION?

Although the product may be kosher, being that is produced in a different factory, perhaps even under different license owners, it may contain different ingredients and should not be consumed without further verification.

The availability of many ingredients for food products can vary from region to region. For example, in many South American countries, meat oil is cheaper than vegetable oil; therefore, bread and standard products are often not kosher. Chile is a major wine exporter and therefore Hellman's mayonnaise, which is usually kosher, often contains unkosher wine vinegar there.

CAN I WASH MY HANDS IN THE BATHROOM?



One can use the airplane bathroom to wash their hands for bread or the morning netilat yadayim.

One need not wash when walking into an airplane bathroom without using the facilities. However, in regards to a regular bathroom, it is preferable to wash one's hands after entering or at least to dry one's hands outside of the bathroom.

WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE A CUP TO WASH MY HANDS?

If there is no cup to wash one's hands, one may turn on the sink and wash with the first flow at each part of the washing. Therefore, one would place their hand under the spout and turn on the water then shut the water, turn it on, then shut, three times on each hand. For washing in the morning, one would begin by placing his right hand under the faucet and then turning it on, shutting the water, placing his left hand and turning it on, repeating this three times alternately.

If there is a lake or a pond, one may dip his hands into it, and then recite the beracha of "al netilat yadayim."

WHAT IF I HAVE NO WATER WITH WHAT TO WASH?

If one has no water, one may use other drinks to wash one's hands. A minimum of three oz. should be used. When using liquids other than water, a beracha of "al netilat yadayim" should not be recited.

If one is traveling and does not anticipate having water within the next seventy-two minutes of their journey, and cannot get water without deviating eighteen minutes out of the way, then one may wrap their hands (not the

food) in a cloth or bag and eat, without touching the bread. So too, if one cannot get up without waking up his fellow passenger, then they can wipe their hands very well on a cloth.

IN THE HOTEL

MAY I EAT THE BREAKFAST OFFERED BY THE HOTEL?

Bread, bagels, muffins, and individual cereal packets require proper kosher certification. Fresh fruit, apples, oranges, and bananas do not need to be certified outside of Israel as discussed.

Even if no other ingredients are added to scrambled or hard-boiled eggs, if prepared by a non-Jew it is bishul akum and may not be eaten. The pan or pot used is also forbidden from the absorption of bishul akum, as well as assumed to be not kosher from other ingredients.

Juice that is 100% pure is fine (unless it is grape juice). Once any flavors are added, its production is kosher sensitive, and it will require certification. To have 100% juice from a fountain machine that serves non-kosher drinks such as non-certified fruit punch, or pink lemonade, let its spout run a minute before taking some of the kosher drink. If the juice is in the hotel pitcher, look for the original container.

The following guide is for cooking apparatus inside one's hotel or private suite. However, anything from inside the hotel kitchen is extremely problematic.

CAN I USE THE OVEN IN MY ROOM?

If you want to cook food open in the oven, kosher the oven by either A) wiping down the oven and then putting on a self-clean cycle, or B) cleaning thoroughly any residue and grease, and then turning the oven to the

highest temperature for forty-five minutes. If the oven wasn't self-cleaned food may not be placed directly on the oven racks.

STOVETOP?

One can turn up the stove to the highest setting for half an hour.

DISHES AND SILVERWARE?

One may eat cold foods, e.g. cereal, on their dishes after making sure the plate, bowl, or silverware is perfectly clean. Glassware may be used even for hot foods, however, dishes and cutlery of other materials may not be used for hot food unless koshered by placing in a clean pot of boiling water.

IF THEY HAVE POTS?

Pots and cooking utensils are usually possible to kosher, and one can get guidance on their specific instructions.

MICROWAVE?

One can kosher after it is cleaned well. Place a bowl or a cup of water in the microwave to boil for fifteen minutes. A convection microwave cannot be koshered.

BARBECUE GRILL?

Since cooking on a grill is done by placing non-kosher food directly on the grates, the koshering required is more intense. Additionally, when koshering one must ensure that no actual residue is on or around the BBQ. If thoroughly



cleaned until there is no residue at all, and burnt out on highest for an hour or so, one may buy separate grates and use them on the grill. Alternatively, after cleaning and burning, one can buy a grill mat to place on top of the regular grates.

WHAT IF WE COOKED OUR FOOD USING THE NON-KOSHER POTS OR UTENSILS?

If one knowingly cooks with a non-kosher pot, the food is forbidden. If, however, one accidentally cooked in a non-kosher pot, the food could still be permitted in some situations. One should ensure to bring their own pots and pans or use disposable tins to cook.

WHAT CAN I ORDER AT THE BAR?

A list of kosher alcohols and drink mixes can be found on the **cRc Liquor List** or **Star-K Liquor List**. One cannot sit and drink by a non-Jewish bar, even though the drink itself is definitely kosher. This is one of the safeguards our Sages placed to 'bar' intermarriage. Non-mevushal wine at a non-Jewish bar is definitely forbidden, even if the wine was kosher. One can check for the designation on the bottle. Asking the bartender would not suffice! Drink responsibly!



SHABBAT

When one is in the comfort of his home, there are many conveniences to enhance keeping Shabbat. Being away can present challenges, and therefore the following answers are specifically for when one is away, and not to be applied to when one is at home.

WHAT SHOULD I REMEMBER TO PACK?

Candles; wine or grape juice for Kiddush and Havdalah; hallah for all the Shabbat meals; a pizmon book with Kiddush; besamim for Havdalah.

HOW SHOULD I LIGHT THE SHABBAT CANDLES?

Ideally, one should bring small candles or tea lights and light in his room. Lighting in the dining area can be done with a beracha if you are the first to light in that area or table. If this presents a hazard or is not allowed by the hotel, one may use electric lights without reciting a beracha.

HOW DO I GET IN AND OUT OF MY ROOM?

Hotel keys that work electronically may not be used on Shabbat. One can tape down the lock to keep the door unlocked, enabling one to enter or exit without using the electronic lock, while keeping valuables in the safe. Some electronic doors have the option to be opened manually with a conventional key. If one is stuck out of his room, then one may ask the hotel staff to open their door.

CAN I WALK THROUGH AUTOMATIC DOORS?

If there is no manual door available, then one can walk behind a non-Jew who walks through. Asking a non-Jew to open the door for you is

not permitted. Even if the non-Jew realizes on his own and opens the door for you, it is also problematic, unless the non-Jew is walking through the door for himself. However, the doorman (if not Jewish) may remotely unlock the doors or open them for you. Be careful to move through quickly so as not to cause the door to stay open any longer by triggering the sensor. If one mistakenly stepped on the pad that automatically opens the door he may not enter.

MAY I ENTER A ROOM OR EXIT TO THE BALCONY WITH SENSOR-CONTROLLED LIGHTS OR TEMPERATURE?

One should plan their stay in a place they will least encounter challenges to Shabbat. Try to arrange with the hotel to pause the sensor-controlled system to obviate such obstacles. However, if not possible, such a question shall be presented on a case-by-case basis to one's Rabbi.

CAN I DRINK TEA OR COFFEE IN THE HOTEL LOBBY THAT WAS BREWED ON SHABBAT?

If the majority of the guests in the hotel are Jews, one would not be allowed to drink the coffee. If the majority of the guests in the hotel are non-Jews, then one can rely on the lenient opinions if necessary. Be cautious that if the system is attached to an automatic water

feeder that brings in cold water, then one may not take any hot water. If a non-Jew is preparing coffee for individual guests upon request, one is forbidden from ordering.

RESTROOM FACILITIES THAT ARE CONTROLLED BY AN ELECTRONIC EYE?

Of course, one should try their best to avoid using them, however, if caught in a situation where there is no other option, one may use these facilities.

WHAT SHOULD I DO ON SHABBAT AFTERNOON?

Try to preserve the special sanctity of Shabbat by conducting a full seudat Shabbat with family and friends. Balance out the remainder of the day resting and learning Torah.

CAN I REST IN A HAMMOCK ON SHABBAT?

If the hammock is roped around the tree, then one may not use it on Shabbat. However, if the hammock is hooked onto a hook coming out of the tree, one may rest on it on Shabbat. One may swing a swing back and forth even in an area where one may not carry.

MAY I CARRY WITHIN THE PREMISES OF THE HOTEL?

Carrying on hotel premises is permitted if the area is fenced in on four sides and does not have openings of more than fifteen feet wide. If one is staying in a Condo or apartment building



it will require eruv haserot. One may not carry from one hotel to another hotel property without eruv haserot set in place before Shabbat, even if both areas are gated and opened directly to each other.

May I apply suntan lotion on Shabbat?
Spraying on oneself can be done without smearing it. For a cream or lotion to be used, it should be addressed by one's Rabbi.

CAN I BUY THINGS AND HAVE THEM BILLED TO MY ROOM?

If one does not mention anything about money, and just gives his name, that is permitted. If the bartender has to make a drink specifically for you that entails using a blender or anything that violates Shabbat, that drink may not be ordered.

DO WE RECITE THE PRAYER MAGEN AVOT ON FRIDAY NIGHT?

On Friday night, Magen Avot is not recited when praying in a room that does not normally function as a shul, i.e. a temporary minyan in one's home. In a hotel or on a ship, where a room is designated for praying but serves other

purposes as well, Magen Avot would not be said. If a specific room is dedicated as a shul for the duration of the trip and a Sefer Torah is kept in that room, then it is recited.

CAN WE SAIL?

The Mishna states that most sea-faring men are righteous because they depend upon the hand of Hashem out at sea. Being on board a cruise ship often presents a challenge to keeping our level of holiness, which is just as important as all the laws of kosher. However, one can stay fixated on the wonders of Hashem out at sea thereby enhancing their righteousness.

If one knows from experience that he does not get seasick at all when taking a cruise, he may even leave on Friday if the boat departs before Shabbat. If one may become seasick or have difficulty adjusting to the cruise, he should depart no later than Wednesday. If the ship is operated or maintained by Jews, then one cannot travel on Shabbat.

Bon Voyage!



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