

# **Worship and corona hygiene, Concept Proposal for the Oranienburger Strasse Synagogue in Berlin**

## **A) Preliminary remarks**

- 1) Violations of the rules:** If we see at the first meetings that there are problems with rule violations, we have to evaluate it again, but first we assume that at least in the Great Hall it works - we can't control what the people will do outside the sanctuary. We don't come running with the tape measure.
  - If we have the feeling that someone is getting too close to someone else against their will, we may have to intervene.
  - We have to look and coordinate spontaneously because of the different roles - who is more likely to appeal to families, where is the rabbi needed, etc.
  - Professional security in or near the sanctuary does not feel good.

## **B) How do we want to communicate?**

### **Sound/Tenor:**

It is important to us that services can take place, but at the same time we do not think it makes sense to hold large events. There should be a minyan and not much more - especially for the regulars and those who have a special reason/occasion like saying Kaddish.

We have to see how many people actually come in.

- 1)** Do not sound exclusive and do not hurt anyone
- 2)** No one should have guilt feelings because they do not support the minyan or do not come to say Kaddish in person.
- 3)** One can also commission Kaddish or Mischeberach, this should be encouraged.
- 4)** Nobody should have to explain why they don't come. (Be it personal risk, close relatives, colleagues, contact with sick people, not feeling completely healthy) this is not the congregation's business.

### **Specifically:**

- 5)** The rabbi talks personally to BM families and other smachot/special occasions.
- 6)** No hugging, no shaking hands, no kissing, neither persons nor mesusot.
- 7)** Out of solidarity the wearing of oronasal masks is obligatory.
- 8)** If possible bring your own kippot/ tallitot/siddurim/chumashim. Even those who normally leave them in the synagogue should take them home on the first Shabbat. If you have halachic problems with carrying on Shabbat, please contact us, and we will find an individual solution.
- 9)** No Kiddushim.
- 10)** Wash your hands thoroughly upon arrival.

### **C) Who should come?**

- 1) Only those who do not have cold symptoms. People who are sure that their sniffing/coughing is just the usual allergy can come.
- 2) Of course people who are in quarantine are not allowed to come.
- 3) Those who belong to "risk groups" have to decide on a daily basis anyways, what they do and what not → "act on your own responsibility with regard to the community".
- 4) Children: Only babies who are not yet mobile can come, and children from about 10 years of age who are sensible and follow the rules. The children must also wear masks.

### **D) Registration**

- 1) To be able to trace possible chains of infection, lists of participants must be kept. These lists can be created in advance at the office and will be completed at the entrance by the security.
- 2) Since the keeping of these lists is about "Pikuach Nefesh", it supersedes Shabbat observance, but should nevertheless be as minimal as possible. Therefore no personal signature is necessary. However, the security will "tick off" all those who come on the list and write down names and addresses of people who did not register beforehand.
- 3) At the entrance, make sure that the appropriate distance is maintained. Here we need to discuss with security whether it is possible to move the checking of names/ adding to the list can take place after the security gate, so that people do not have to stand outside for a long time.
- 4) Registration until noon on Friday will give priority to access if space is limited. Whether you can "permanently register" depends on how many places we will have. Currently - at a distance of 2 m - there is room for about 24 households including Rabbi, Chasan\*it, etc., with usually 1-3 persons per household.
- 5) If there is not enough space,
  - We need to consider carefully who has priority (Kaddish, special occasion, taking turns ...)
  - as a general rule, limiting external guests, since this extends the network of possible infection chains

### **E) Erev Shabbat and Chag**

- 1) We will continue to hold the Friday evening and possibly Erev Chag online until further notice. We have some members who will not be able to come for health reasons, and we do not want to exclude them.
- 2) Kabbalat Shabbat remains in its present participatory format.
- 3) We still have to think about Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

### **The situation in the Great Hall/preparation**

#### **Key question: Do only we use the Great Hall?**

- The Great Hall is set up, marked and photographed.
- There are duct tape lines for where the Olim should stand during Berachot and during the reading, and where the Gabbaim stand. There are reserved seats for those having an active role in the service.
- No velvet cover on the Bima.
- Disinfectant gel for the hands, and masks are available at the entrance.
- Extra cleaning needs to be arranged.

## **F)The Procedures of services**

### **1) At arrival**

- No wardrobe, keep your jackets with you
- Wash your hands thoroughly on arrival.

### **2) In General**

- Chasan\*it and Rabbi can do without masks. However, singing must then be directed to Aron Hakodesh, not in the direction of the congregation.
- Siddurim and Chumaschim are laid out beforehand so that you don't have to touch several of them. Those who put the books out beforehand and put them away afterwards must wash their hands, not touch their face, wash their hands again. Table in the Great Hall
- There is an extra table where books that have been used should be put.
- Tallitot are not provided, if you don't have one, you don't have one (even with an aliya). Kippot can be borrowed if necessary. (You can't sneeze at the back of your own head and you usually touch it less frequently).
- Kiddush also on Shabbat morning is done from the Bima, Rabbi gets cup and wine herself (and rinses and clears up ☺)
- No congregational singing - just hum along, congregational responses and "Amen".
- Pesukei de Simra is done by the rabbi in order to limit the number of "exhalers". Pick melodies that are more quiet, do not invite/require responsive singing...

### **3) Reflections on the length of the service - not yet completed**

- Limit the number of active participants. Only one Shaliach Tzibur, only one Baal\*at Kriah, if possible should also do the Haftarah. MISheberachs (and other prayers) not done by the Gabbaim but by the Rabbi
- Does shortening the service lower the risk of infection? Probably yes, but on the other hand it only makes the people who are there unhappy, because different people would cut differently.
- With longer services there are more people coming in and out.

### **4) Reading from the Torah**

#### **Preparation:**

- Preparatory Zoom on Friday in order to prepare the Torah readers and as many others as possible.<sup>1</sup>
- Torah readers must wash/disinfect their hands before and after handling the Torah.

#### **Specifically**

- Assign different spots for the Rabbi and Cantor and Baal\*at Kria to stand on/sing or talk from.

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<sup>1</sup> This was very, very successful and the one step that made the first time service under these circumstances much less awkward. We should have repeated it for the new Torah readers two or three weeks later, also explaining the changes we made along the way.

- The Cantor who has done Shacharit opens the Parochet (since she has been breathing towards it for a long time.
- If possible, assign a household member of the Baal\*at Kria as Gabbai Sheni/Peticha and Golel. If not, the Baal'at Kria does all of this just by him/herself. (in the following (\*\*)) is marked when a household member can do it)
- The Baal\*at Kria does Eyn Kamocha etc. and (\*\*)) opens the doors of the Aron Hakodesh and (\*\*)) takes out the Torah.
- If the Baal\*at Kria cannot sing well enough, the Cantor sings from a distance, but only the Baal\*at Kria (and \*\*) handle the Torah.
- Baal\* Kria must bring their own Siddur to the Bima for the Chatzi Kaddish
- The parochet remains open during the reading, only the doors are closed, this can be done while holding the Torah.
- The Torah is carried only once around the Bima, not through the congregation
- At the Bima there is always only one person (household member as Gabbai Sheni can stand close)
- Metaken\*et and Gabbai\*t Rishon\*a are standing at tables two meters apart (is marked)
- Between the aliyot the Baal\*at Kria steps to the side, showing the place of the reading with the yad.
- The Olae brings their own Siddur to the Bima for the berachot, stands (at a distance), says the berachot without touching the Torah, steps back on the rear marker. Same at the end, immediately going back to the seat, then the next Olae is called
- Baal\*at Kria (\*\*)) does Hagbaa/Gelila, if by themselves by placing the Torah back on the Bima and then dressing it.

Mail to the Congregation:

Dear Chevreh,

We are very happy that we can hold services in the synagogue again on this Shabbat - but under very special circumstances and with very clear rules.

We are also very happy that we will continue to conduct the Erev Shabbat services in online form, as we have done so far. We look forward to continuing to welcome all those who do not yet want to or cannot physically come to the synagogue!

Here is the link, it is the same for each week:

xxxx

**Zoom as preparation** for the services in the synagogue:

On Friday xxxxx we offer a zoom at 13 o'clock for all those who are actively involved in the service, especially in reading from the Torah, to discuss the details and the new choreography. Further interested people are also welcome. Please let us know if you have a task assigned by cannot attend.

Here is the Link: xxx

**We look forward to seeing you, but...**

- Stay at home if you have a cold or other symptoms.
- Stay at home if there are cases of illness or suspected cases in your surroundings.
- Unfortunately, only those children can come who are old enough to wear a mask and keep to the distance rules - we recommend from 10 years on, and of course babies that are still being carried.
- Don't feel guilty that you don't support the minyan or that you can't say Kaddish yourself if you cannot or do not want to come.  
Feel free to send us an email, which names should be mentioned before Kaddish and which names we should put in the misheberach for the sick.
- Those who belong to risk groups: Please decide well, on your own responsibility.

**Registration**

- We must keep lists of participants so that we can trace possible chains of infection. Please register until Friday, 12 o'clock at xxx with your address, phone number and email. The list at the security will then only say "Address known".
- Since the keeping of these lists is about "Pikuach Nefesch", it supercedes Shabbat observance, but nevertheless we want to do it in the best observant way possible. Therefore, there is no need for your own signature. However, the security will "tick off" all those who come on the list.
- Whoever is registered has priority. If we see that more people register than there is room, we will reconsider and establish guidelines.
- Those who are not registered must give the security address etc..
- Please be careful to keep you distance already at the entrance.

**Please bring with you:**

- **Masks are compulsory**, please bring your own masks that cover mouth and nose.
- Please bring your own **Kippot/Tallitot/Siddurim/Chumashim** if possible. Even those who normally leave them in the synagogue should take them home on the first Shabbat. If you have halachic problems carrying them on Shabbat, please contact us, and we will find an individual solution.

**Upon arrival:**

- Wearing a face mask that covers mouth and nose is compulsory, out of solidarity with one another. The only exceptions are the rabbi during the Dvar Torah, the cantor while leading services, and the readers of Torah and Haftara.
- Wash your hands with soap.
- Take your coats, bags etc. to the place, do not use the cloakroom.
- No hugging, no shaking hands, no kissing, neither persons nor mesusot.

**During services:**

- We are praying in the Great Hall. Members of one household may sit together, apart from that the chairs may not be moved. (When in doubt, talk to the Gabbait)
- Singing is beautiful, but it also spreads the virus in an intense way. Therefore: No singing for the congregation - you are invited to hum along and to answer Amen.
- We will shorten the service a bit and include less melodies that are actually for singing along.
- Leading the prayers and reading from the Torah will take place facing to the Aron Hakodesh, not to the congregation.
- There is no congregational Kiddush, even on Shabbat morning the Rabbi does Kiddush from the Bima.
- If you are called to the Torah, step to the Bima, keeping the distance (watch the line), say the berachot, without touching the Torah, and then step back and keep your distance from the reader. Afterwards please go directly back to your seat and do not stay for the next Aliya. No Yasher koach handshakes!
- For taking out/taking in of the Torah, Hagbaa and Gelila there are more precise rules, but that would lead too far here.

Please contact us with questions and suggestions. Together we can do it.  
Take care of yourselves and stay healthy,