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## NEWS Coronavirus, Italian Rabbis invite to safeguard health and life

Publicato in [News](#) il 9 March 2020 - 5780 ב' אדר 13



By Pagina Ebraiche staff

“Until now we have refrained from giving general provisions because the situation was very different in the different regions of Italy and therefore each rabbi gave instructions to his community. Unfortunately, the situation is currently more homogeneous and we believe that some general recommendations can be made. Clearly these recommendations apply with the exception of the places where greater restrictions are imposed by the health authorities and may in any case vary with the variation of the situation.” This is part of a statement from the Italian Rabbinical Assembly, which issued some recommendations relating to the Coronavirus emergency and the observance of precepts and Jewish law.

The note mentioned some Halakhah norms which must be taken into consideration: “There is a duty for everyone to observe mitzvot even in difficult situations. There is also a duty to safeguard one’s life and one’s health and the life and health of others and therefore it is a halakhic duty to observe the health recommendations of the competent bodies. These two fundamental duties must be reconciled as far as possible, even if clearly safeguarding life and health takes precedence over everything.”

The invitation is also to pray “so that we can get out of this emergency and that G-d can save all of us and give prompt recovery to the sick”.

Regarding Shabbat, the statement read “the functions in the synagogues should be as fast as possible and the people inside should sit at a safe distance as required by the ministerial directives”. The number of participants, it is reported, should be limited.

“If this is not possible, more minianim should be planned with a limited number of people.” Anyone who has symptoms related to the virus (cough, breathing difficulties, fever) “is asked not to participate in the services”.

As for the Purim festival, the same rules apply, keeping also in mind that “there is a greater number of people going to synagogues and therefore it is necessary to think about doing more minianim”.

These are the dispositions given by the Italian rabbis: “It is recommended to organize private readings of Meghillà for those who cannot come to the Bet Hakkeneset. As for the other Purim mitzvot, mishlòach manòt and mattanòt laevionim, they must be made but with due care. For those who cannot leave the house (elderly or sick people), remember that these mitzvot can be done through a third person (shaliàch). As for the mishtè (banquet) it is recommended not to organize public events and to do it with family or friends. It is understood that all public events (parties, dinners and lunches) must be avoided especially for those who live in the yellow zone”.