

GOD IS CALLING YOU...BUT PROBABLY NOT ON YOUR "TSELULARER TELEFON"

*The Yiddish words for cell phone are "tselularar telefon"
The Yiddish word for "atonement" is "kaporeh"
A "fine/penalty" is "di geltshτροφ"

By



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It's Yom Kippur--the Day of Atonement...a day to take a break from your cellphone.

A few year ago, Lois K. Solomon wrote an article titled, "Yom Kippur: Take a tech break." She asked, "Can Jews turn off their cell phones for the High Holy Days? Will they hide their BlackBerry's under the prayer book ("der sider")?"

There was a national campaign which urged Jews to make Yom Kippur a "No-Device Day." And Rabbi Moshe Denburg of Chabad of Boca Raton, FL, said "You want to do things that enhance the day and being attached to a gadget violates the spirit."

Rabbi Paul Plotkin of Temple Beth Am of Margate, FL, said, "There are differences in etiquette ("etiket") from synagogue to synagogue. And there are people who have attitudes. They're rude ("grob") when you ask them to be respectful."

The "No-Device Day" campaign included an ad with a photo of Tiger Woods and this text:

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE JEWISH...TO ATONE FOR
YOUR TEXTS ON YOM KIPPUR."

(Source: The Post and Courier, Sept. 12, 2010)

Jews and non-Jews have to deal with the ringing of a cell phone during

services. In 2012, Charles Specht wrote, “I have had phones go off while I was preaching and I can say, without hesitation, that I’ve been distracted each and every time it happens. I have lost my place in my notes and it is confusing, as a preacher, when you’re trying to make a point and every head in the congregation turns their attention away from what you are saying to locate the criminal (“der farbrekher”) in the crowd. (Okay, maybe criminal is a bit much)

There’s even a funny (“komish”) video which suggests monetary fines for all phones ringing during services. Maybe synagogues across America should adopt a similar policy: :\$)

- \$18 fine if “tselularer telefon” rings during announcements. (We will be collecting food for Hatzilu, etc.)
- \$36 fine if “tselularer telefon” rings during Barchu or the Shema
- \$72 fine if “tselularer telefon” rings during Kol Nidrei, Shacharit, Musaf, Minchah, or Neilah
- \$108 fine if “tselularer telefon” rings during an Aliyah--the honor of being called up to recite the blessing over the reading of the Torah scroll
- \$360 fine if “tselularer telefon” rings during the blowing of the shofar--the ram’s horn
- \$378 fine if “tselularer telefon” rings during “teklah gedolah”--the protracted Shofar blown at the conclusion of the Day of Atonement
- \$396 fine if “tselularer telefon” rings during the Avinu Malkeino--the prayer beseeching our Father in Heaven to grant us our needs, recited during prayer services throughout the High Holidays
- \$414 fine if “tselularer telefon” rings during the Rabbi’s sermon
- \$3,600 fine if “tselularer telefon” rings during Yizkor--prayer for the souls of departed parents

Bart Jones [Newsday, “For Jews, the holiest day,” Oct. 2, 2014] reports that there’s “one growing modern challenge for Jews and rabbis during Yom Kippur...getting the congregation to “unplug” from electronic devices, which they are not supposed to use during the holy day--either at home or while at their synagogue or temple...”

Rabbi Michael White of Temple Sinai in Roslyn said, “I think it is harder for people to stay away from their iPhones than it is to stop eating.” And Rabbi Howard Buechler posted this sign as a reminder to his congregants:

SHANAH

TOVAH!
GOD is
CALLING YOU!
BUT PROBABLY NOT
ON YOUR CELL PHONE!

The sign shows a cellphone surrounded by a red circle, with a red line through the circle.

So, during the High Holidays, please refrain from using your ipads and other mobile devices to tweet, Facebook, instagram, etc. during the High Holy Days. "A dank." (Thank you.