



Remembering October 7th

Dear Rabbanim and Shul Leaders:

We hope this note finds you well and managing these challenging times. As we approach the first anniversary of Hamas' horrific attack on Israel, a number of rabbanim, shuls, and communities have reached out to the OU as they consider their own plans for its commemoration.

What follows are some suggestions intended for those who may find them helpful. It is neither our role nor our goal to prescribe a uniform approach to how shuls and communities should mark this difficult milestone, but rather to share thoughts and ideas that you may find helpful and that we have discussed with senior רבנים וראשי ישיבה with whom we consult. The suggestions below are focused on סדר היום and do not include specific programs or initiatives that we expect will be forthcoming from many sources.

1. October 7 2024

Though the actual yahrzeit that we should commemorate is שמיני עצרת, given that the secular date will be noted and commemorated all around us we should also consider marking 10/7 in our shuls and communities. This commemoration may have both internal and external dimensions.

- As this year 10/7 is on Monday 4 Tishrei, during the ימי תשובה, it is a time when many community members will be very open to an event featuring תשובה תפילה וצדקה, whether held for individual shuls or several shuls joining together.
- Many Jewish community Federations will be hosting commemorations. Recognizing that each community has its own dynamics, consider reaching out to the organizers early on to engage in partnership and planning, ensuring as well that the program will be sensitive to all parts of the community. Though the Federation event may have a different tone than the one you make in your shul, Orthodox participation there would meaningfully demonstrate commitment to broader communal unity at this important time. Note as well that Federation is offering some microgrants for 10/7 commemorations.
- The 10/7 anniversary is an opportunity to invite your elected officials and other communal and faith leaders to go on the record in expressing their support for the Jewish community and commitment to stand up to antisemitism.

2. שמיני עצרת שמחת תורה

As the true Yahrzeit, these dates need to be marked in a manner that balances the need for serious זכרון with the mandate of שמחת יום טוב.

- Yizkor – it is most appropriate to address last year's events in the Rav's Yizkor drasha. A collective קל מלא can be said during Yizkor for עצרת תשפ"ד בשמיני שונאנו בידי שונאנו.
- הקפות: Consider setting aside one הקפה to be dominated by a kumtitz, gathering the community in a circle to sing songs of רגש with this anniversary in mind.
- Shuls commonly hold a kiddush or meal during שמחת תורה. Consider adding a siyum element to this event by organizing an Elul or Tishrei communal completion of תנ"ך and/or משניות in memory of all who have been killed or לזכר a particular קדוש, together with the usual חמשה חומשי תורה of Simchas Torah.

These are ideas for you to consider and that we hope you will find helpful as you make your plans under the guidance of the מרא דאתרא. We welcome hearing additional thoughts.

Best wishes for much strength to lead your communities forward.

תחל שנה וברכותיה

Rabbi Moshe Hauer

Rabbi Yaakov Glasser