

# Creating a *Mikdash Me'at* / A Sacred Space in Your Home

With the current health pandemic, and restrictions on group gatherings, our kitchens have become our classroom, our basements are our yoga studios, and the dining room has become our office. Where then, is our synagogue?

The rabbis asked this same question right after the destruction of the Temple. Without a localized place of worship, how could we pray together? We are the inheritors of their answer: our home would become our “mikdash m’at,” a miniature sanctuary, a sacred place. Our current challenge is to create a sacred space at home while we are in front of our computers, on Zoom or live-streaming CRC services. What can help us create both that spiritual mindset and that spiritual refuge? We are not able to gather in large groups in our CRC building for the High Holidays. We will all certainly miss being in person together, with the coming together of large crowds standing close, singing in harmony all our familiar and moving tunes. But we will be “together” safely – in our own homes or wherever we choose to observe the High Holy Days. This year, we have a unique opportunity to create a sacred space in our home– a mikdash m’at–for the High Holidays and beyond.

These ten suggestions are meant to help you enhance your High Holy Day experience at home, while creating a communal atmosphere for us all.

1. Choose your prayer space carefully in advance by spending a few moments of individual contemplation/household discussion. Don't wait until the last minute!
2. Once you have chosen your space, take a moment for a blessing or kavannah (“intention”) over it to mark it as your mikdash m’at. Suggestions of verses and blessings are below.
3. What chair will you sit on? Put a cushion or festive pillow on it, or drape it with a tallit, special piece of fabric, or scarf. Make it feel comfortable and festive.
4. Change where you put your computer from a work space to a contemplative space by covering the desk or table with a white tablecloth, white runner, or white placemat, and a vase of flowers or plants.
5. Find meaningful objects to grace your space. On Rosh Hashanah include holiday objects such as candlesticks and kiddish cup, apples and honey, a shofar. On Yom Kippur you can place cherished mementos, family heirlooms, and photos of loved ones to surround you.
6. If possible, move the computer space back so that you are “viewing” the screen more than “manipulating” it. Consider connecting your computer to a TV screen so it feels less like a work device.
7. Try to limit or disconnect auditory distractions. You can turn off your email and text message ping sounds, and/or close your email programme and other apps so you can be fully present during the service.
8. Wear clothing that makes you feel as if you are entering a spiritual space. A kippah and/or a tallit are welcome if they help you express a meaningful connection to this special worship.
9. If you choose, you can look at our website for a copy of the High Holy Day prayerbook/machzor, and even print it out if it feels good to hold it in your hands. The prayers will also be visible on the screen as we make our way through the service.

We all appreciate the time and effort it takes to make your mikdash m’at a holy space. May it add joy and meaning to your holiday, and wishing you a very warm and healthy 5781.



