

SATURDAY MORNING LIVE

The story is told of a sports fan who approaches the rabbi with a dilemma. “Rabbi, I feel terrible. The World Series – my team is playing – is on Kol Nidre Night. What can I do?”

“Not to worry,” says the rabbi. “That is why God created the VCR.”

A visceral release of tension and mild euphoria overcomes the sports fan. “Oh, rabbi, that is absolutely wonderful. I never realized you could record the Kol Nidre service.”

It turns out that in the decades since that story began making the rounds, live-streaming of High Holy Day and other key services has become popular and available all around the globe. For people who cannot attend a service due to illness, incarceration, distance or some other condition, this service has enabled the music and liturgy of the holy days to offer the comfort, challenge, support and inspiration we hope for in those services. While some of us in those circumstances would make do with a *mahzor* and private contemplation, there are those for

whom this window into the synagogue is like a God-send. Whether at synagogue or elsewhere, one hopes to have some sense of the presence of the Infinite.

That said, in my playbook, you can’t beat the live community. The music might be the same, but when you know the *shaliahei tsibur* (precentors) or Torah

readers personally, the liturgy has a fuller resonance. When the person sitting next to you is holding a newborn or crying at the loss of a loved one, there is a deeper sense of the mystery and fullness of the themes of the Holy Day. There’s just nothing like saying *ashamnu* – “we have sinned” – sitting next a traumatized victim or someone just out of prison.

And if you are that person holding a baby, crying for a lost loved one, feeling your trauma, or just out of prison, you need all the more to be with good people like yourself.

What holds for the [High Holy Days](#) and [Festivals](#) holds equally for [Shabbat](#) and for [daily services](#). Hope to see you there.

