

# HALOCHOSCOPE

**This week's question:**

When a change is made in *shemone esrai*, it is customary for someone to bang right beforehand to announce it. For example, on *Rosh Chodesh*, *yaaleh veyavo* is announced. At *mincha*, this poses no problem. At *Shacharis*, this would interrupt between *geulah*, the *brocha* following *shema*, and *tefilah*, the beginning of *shemone esrai*. It is forbidden to interrupt at this point. At *maariv*, however, most poskim permit announcing it verbally.

Could the announcement be recorded on a cell phone, and be played? Is this permitted at *shacharis*, and is it preferable at *maariv*? Is playing the sound considered an interruption?

**The issues:**

- A) *Hachrazah*, announcement of important additions to *tefilah*
- B) *Semichas geulah litefilah*, juxtaposing *ga'al Yisrael* to *shemone esrai*
- C) What constitutes a verbal interruption?

## A) *Hachrazah*

Announcing upcoming changes in the *davening* is *lehasir michshol*, to remove a stumbling block. This concept is based on various *mitzvos*, most obviously, the prohibition against placing a stumbling block before the blind. This refers in general to misleading or misguiding others. In addition, there is a *mitzvah* to rebuke those who sin, and to stop them before they actually do so. Thus, one who is able to prevent a fellow Jew from making a mistake, must do so. On the more positive side, one must try to help others do *mitzvos*. Those who are *mezakei harabim*, help the public, are highly praised and richly rewarded. The best known instance is the announcement at the beginning of *Shabbos* or *Yomtov*, made by blowing a *shofar*. This helps to prevent *melacha*.

The *michshol* in this case is the rule that before *davening*, one must organize what he is about to say. This is called '*sidur*'. It applied mainly to the *shliach tzibur*, the leader. He would guide the congregation, and needed to practice, especially as it was all repeated from memory. Nowadays we use a written *sidur*. This might help when it comes to having to repeat *tefilos* from memory, but one must still organize the upcoming *tefilah*. The obligation is twofold. One must prepare what he is about to say, and he must also try to understand the meaning. Especially in the silent parts of *davening*, this responsibility now falls to the individual congregant. Thus, the announcement is a way to inform people of their responsibility to prepare what they are about to be saying in their *sidurim*. If one omits *yaaleh veyavo*, he usually must repeat *shemone esrai*.

In former times, when a change was called for, the congregation could simply follow the lead of the *shliach tzibur*. In the silent *shemone esrai*, this is not possible. Therefore, the changes are announced beforehand. In some cases, if the announcement is not made, the change is not applied. On *Shemini Atzeress*, there are varying *minhagim* with regard to changing to *mashiv haruach* in the silent *musaf* prayer. If it is announced, the

congregation changes. If it is not announced, the congregation omits it as they have done until this point. The *chazan* includes it, and this serves as the announcement. When a fast is recommended by the Rabbis, individuals need to adopt it beforehand. However, if it was announced by the *shliach tzibur*, individuals who were absent may assume the fast without having adopted it. Thus, the announcement can have *halachic* consequences.

*Rosh Chodesh* is special in this regard. It is not a *Yomtov*, and can easily be forgotten. *Yomim Tovim* are dependent on the day fixed as *Rosh Chodesh*. In former times, *Rosh Chodesh* was not necessarily known ahead of time. It had to be announced, either on the day, or soon afterwards. This way, people would be aware of when to observe the *Yomim Tovim*. Understandably, if one did not know whether it was *Rosh Chodesh*, he could not include the necessary changes to *davening*. The Talmud debates whether one could find a way to include them in certain instances, with a provision of sorts. After the adoption of the permanent calendar, anyone can be made aware of when *Rosh Chodesh* will be, ahead of time. In addition, fixing *Rosh Chodesh* is part of the authority of the Rabbis. There was resistance to Rabbinical authority, from deviant sects. Therefore, any public ceremony or institution that depended on Rabbinical authority was announced.

These are the bases for announcing *Rosh Chodesh* on the *Shabbos* before it will occur. At the same time, the congregation prays for a good month, known as *bircas ha-chodesh*. The beginning of a new month is also a propitious time for a fresh beginning. It is a day of atonement as well. The word '*chodesh*' is a reference to renewal. As a part of the institution to announce *Rosh Chodesh*, the *shliach tzibur* announces that the congregation should mention *Rosh Chodesh* in *shemone esrai* – *yaaleh veyavo*. The initial announcement is made at night, at *maariv* on the onset of *Rosh Chodesh*. This could be made before beginning *maariv*. However, the poskim seem to indicate that the time for the *hachrazah* is before *shemone esrai*.

In terms of the special *hachrazas Rosh Chodesh*, once this announcement is made at *maariv*, there is no real requirement to repeat it at later *tefilos*. Furthermore, making the announcement before *maariv* should be sufficient. However, in terms of *sidur tefilah*, this applies to every *shemone esrai* in which a change will occur. Therefore, it is customarily announced before all *tefilos* on *Rosh Chodesh*. The same rule is applied with regard to announcing other changes, such as those during the Ten Days of Repentance. In addition, to fully satisfy the *hachrazah* requirement, one must take into account those who did not come to *maariv*, or even to *shacharis* the next morning.

For most changes, once the initial announcements are made, it is customary to rely on the congregation from then on. We do assume that one will lapse into habit until he has practiced the change for thirty days. However, this idea is only invoked in cases of doubt, after having *davened* without thinking enough. The thinking person will need to be reminded at the onset of the change. From then on, he will watch himself while he learns the new habit. This is how one fulfills the requirement of *sidur*. The Talmud debates whether the obligation of *sidur* applies all the time or for the first thirty days of a change. The poskim debate whether this applies nowadays that we have printed *sidurim*. However, for *Rosh Chodesh*, which has the additional institution of announcing it in its own right, we announce it at every *tefilah*. Furthermore, it is only one or two days. Some-

one might not be in *shul* for an earlier *tefilah*. Furthermore, the institution applies to both days of *Rosh Chodesh*, especially since the calendar depends on this.

The poskim discuss who should make the announcements. Some say that this is the job of the *gabay*, the person charged with organizing events at *shul*. Others maintain that the *shliach tzibur* has this job, and the terminology of the Talmud implies this. Some connect the concept of announcing to the announcement made in the *Midbar*. When there were enough materials for construction of the *Mishkan*, the Torah says: *vayaviru kol bamachaneh*, they transmitted an announcement in the camp. [This is also a source for announcing the onset of *Shabbos*.] The term *vayaaviru* is related to the term *ovair lifnei hataivah*, used to denote the *shliach tzibur*. Some cite this as the source for announcing all changes. [See Brochos 30b 33a Shabbos 24a-b 114b Eruvin 39a Rosh Hashanah 33b-35a Sukah 53b-54a Taanis 2a-b etc., Poskim. Abu darham Hachrazas Rosh Chodesh. Tur, Sh Ar OC 100 114:2 226:2 417:MA1, commentaries. Shaarei Efrayim 10:35-41.]

### **B) Semichas geulah litefilah**

The *brocha* following *shema*, ending with *ga'al Yisroel*, is known as *geulah*, regarding the redemption. The Talmud says that this must be juxtaposed to *tefilah*, the *amidah* or *shemone esrai*. This is based, in part, on a similar juxtaposition in *Tehilim*. The reason is to praise Hashem and thank Him for past salvations before pleading for one's needs. The Talmud debates whether this rule applies at both *shacharis* and *maariv*, or only at *shacharis*. There are many explanations for this. The Talmud immediately cites a verse and a logical argument. The poskim add further explanations. The consensus is to follow the opinion that requires *semichas geulah litefilah* at *maaariv* as well.

The Talmud asks, how can we interrupt with the additional *brocha* at night, *hashkivainu*? The answer is that it is an extension of *geulah*. The poskim ask, how can we add a series of *pesukim* and *yiru ainainu* after this? There are various answers. Some say this is also an extension of *geulah*. Some say that this was instituted to delay the end of *maariv*, to allow latecomers to catch up. Thus, they will not be left alone at night in a *shul* that might be some distance from the nearby settlement. This could be interpreted to mean that this was a short version of *shemone esrai*. Some say that the people would repeat *shemone esrai* later, at home. Some say that in reality, we hold *tefilas arvis reshus*, the requirement to say *shemone esrai* at *maariv* is voluntary. Therefore, despite the opinion requiring juxtaposing of *geulah litefilah*, we may interrupt with these additions. In addition, we recite a *chatzi-kadish* before *shemone esrai* of *maariv*.

In practice, no interruptions are allowed at *shacharis*. There is a major debate about answering amen to the *ga'al Yisroel* of the *chazan*. The prevailing practice is to avoid this scenario. Either one begins *shemone esrai* slightly ahead of the *chazan*, making it totally forbidden to interrupt. Or one can time it such that he ends exactly together with the *chazan*. [There is also a controversial opinion suggesting that the *chazan* should tail off at the end of his *brocha*. Since nowadays people *daven* from a *sidur*, the argument is that the *chazan* is no longer really needed. Therefore, his obligation to begin and end *brochos* out loud may be compromised.]

At *maariv*, there is evidently no issue with any of this. Consequently, the poskim discuss the announcing of *yaaleh veyavo* at *maariv* on *Rosh Chodesh*. One opinion per-

mits it, based on *tefilas arvis reshut*. However, this involves a Talmudic debate. Though we follow the lenient view, the poskim say that it has been adopted as compulsory. Therefore, some say that one should not interrupt to make the announcement. Rather the announcer should *daven* quickly so that he reaches *yaaleh veyavo* first and he should raise his voice during the silent *shemone esrai*. Nonetheless, the consensus is to permit announcing it, due to an additional factor. It is considered a need for *tefilah*. Just as one may interrupt between washing hands and eating bread for the needs of the meal, so too, this interruption is allowed. The poskim further debate whether the same leniency applies to other changes. *Rosh Chodesh* is a Scriptural event, whereas mentioning rain and the like are Rabbinical concepts. Nowadays, it is customary in many *shuls* to bang and announce *yaaleh veyavo*. Some *shuls* refrain from announcing it. At *shacharis*, no interruptions are allowed (though there is some discussion on the *brochos* on *tefilin*). [See Brochos 4b 9a-b, Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 66:7-9 111:1 236:2, commentaries.]

### ***C) What constitutes an interruption?***

The aforementioned debate on announcing seems to choose between making an interruption and interrupting the silent *shemone esrai* that might distract others. There seems to be no question about the obligation to announce in some way. Yet at *shacharis*, there seems to be no requirement to announce. The practice of banging does not seem to have been suggested, even at *maariv*. At *shacharis*, raising one's voice at *yaaleh veyavo* is also not suggested. Nonetheless, both of these have become standard practice in many *shuls*. Our question is whether arranging a verbal announcement without actually saying it is better, or worse.

The concern with interrupting between *geulah* and *tefilah* applies to non-verbal interruptions as well. If one has no *tefilin*, and receives them between *geulah* and *tefilah*, he should put them on. They are connected closely to *tefilah*. However, for *talis*, one may not interrupt. Putting it on will inevitably lead to a silent break. However, this might apply to something that has less connection to the *tefilah*. Announcing *yaaleh veyavo* is connected to *tefilah*. Nonetheless, the poskim say that one should not interrupt even with a silent waiting period. Accordingly, while the banging has become accepted procedure in many *shuls*, one should not introduce a new innovation that is clearly an interruption of sorts. [See refs to section B, esp. OC 66:8, commentaries.]

In conclusion, one should not change the way *yaaleh veyavo* is announced.

***On the Parsha ... He whis afraid and fainthearted ... [20:8] Afraid due to his avairos [that would lead to his being less protected from the ravages of the battle] .. such as interrupting between tefilin shel yad and shel rosh [Sotah 44b]*** Why is this selected as the type of sin that one would be afraid of? This is a 'sin' in the middle of performing a *mitzvah*! Interruption shows that one is distracted. It means that one is unable to focus on the *mitzvah* at hand. It breaks the flow, and demonstrates that one does not put the *mitzvah* above his own needs. Even if one interrupts due to a second *mitzvah*, he has failed to perform this first *mitzvah* with the right focus.

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