


HALOCHOSCOPE



This week's question:

If a listener sneezed or coughed during a *shofar* blast, has he fulfilled his obligation, or must he hear that blast or series again? If those standing nearby heard the *shofar*, but its sound was mixed with the sound of the sneeze, have they fulfilled their obligation?

The issues:

- A) The *mitzvah* to hear the *shofar*
- B) Interruptions in the sounding of the *shofar*
- C) Interference with the sounds

A) *Tekias Shofar*

On *Rosh Hashana* there is a Scriptural *mitzvah* to hear the sound of the *shofar*, a ram's horn. This is learned from the Torah's words: "*Yom teruah yihiyeh lachem.*" [Both *teruah* and *tekiah* are used in reference to the *mitzvos* of *shofar* on *Rosh Hashana* and other days.] *Tekia* means, literally, sounding the blasts. There is a view that the *mitzvah* is to blow, or to blow as well as to hear the blasts. Those listening fulfill their own *mitzvah* with the principle of *shomeia keoneh*, he who hears is considered doing it himself. However, most poskim consider the *mitzvah* to be listening to the sound. The person blowing must hear his own blasts. The main difference between these opinions is in the wording of the *brocha*. The first view maintains that the language should reflect the *mitzvah* to blow, *al tekias shofar*, or *litkoa*. The second, prevailing view uses the term *lish-moa kol shofar*. In the course of our discussion we will touch on the debate again.

Scripturally, the *kolos*, sounds of the *shofar* are meant to be heard in sets. Each set consists of a *tekia*, long blast, a *teruah*, a series of short blasts, and a final *tekia*. Three such sets are required, totaling nine *kolos*. In practice, the Talmud debates the nature of *teruah*. In one view it consists of three wails, called *shevarim*, or broken sounds. In the other view it is a series of nine sobs. A third possibility is that it consists of both, first the wails and then the sobs. To satisfy all possibilities, one must hear three sets of each. The total would be thirty sounds.

Based on various *pesukim*, the Rabbis instituted *kolos* to be blown during the *musaf* '*shemone esrai*'. When formal *tefilos* were instituted, the services for *musaf* on *Rosh Hashana* were made longer than the regular *Yomtov* service. The standard middle *brocha* of *kidush hayom* is expanded to include *malchiyos*, declaring Hashem King, and *brochos* are added for *zichronos*, bringing our 'memories/mention' before Hashem, and *shofaros*, a series of allusions to the significance of the *shofar*. After each of these, the *shofar* is sounded. Our practice is to sound one set of each of the variations. By the end of this, a second thirty *kolos* are sounded. The first thirty, sounded before *shemone esrai*, are called *tekios dimeyushav*, or sounds when seated. Since people are not standing *davening*

shemone esrai, theoretically, they could be seated for these. The second series is called *tekios dimeumad*, sounded when standing. In practice, unless one is incapacitated, one must stand for all of the *tekios* and the *brochos*, as for most other *mitzvos*.

The Talmud relates, a sage told his disciple to blow the *shofar* for him when he would signal that he had finished a *brocha*. Another sage pointed out that the *shofar* is only sounded at the conclusion of *brochos* in a *shemone esrai* recited with a *tzibur*, quorum of ten men. Does this mean that in a *tzibur* one should indeed hear the *kolos* after concluding the *brochos* in the quiet *shemone esrai*? Or did the first sage want to hear it during his quiet *shemone esrai* only because he had no *tzibur* and *chazaras hashatz*, repetition of the *chazan*? In a *tzibur*, he would have heard them sounded during *chazaras hashatz*. Reasons are given why the *tekios dimeumad* should or should not be sounded during the silent *shemone esrai*. Accordingly, there are two *minhagim*. Some sound them during the silent *shemone esrai*. They repeat this during the repetition, with an additional ten at the end of the repetition. Thus, a total of one hundred are sounded altogether. Others do not sound any during the silent *shemone esrai*. Rather, the main fulfillment of the Rabbis' institution is during the repetition. They add thirty more at the end of *davening* to total one hundred. [This number corresponds to the number of sounds made by the mother of *Sisera*, waiting for her son to come home from battle. It is from the terminology used by the *Navi* for this, that we derive the meaning of *yevava*, another term for *teruah*.]

The Rabbis need not have instituted extra *kolos*. They could have required the existing thirty to be blown during *shemone esrai*. Some maintain that this was the intent. They positioned the main *kolos* in *shemone esrai*. The earlier *kolos* are additional. In one view, they originally did not require the earlier *kolos*, but that they were added later.

According to some, the *brocha* we recite nowadays was not part of the original institution. The *shemone esrai* is considered a *brocha* on the *mitzvah*. Others maintain that the *brocha* was always included in the institution. If necessary, it could have been ordained to be recited right before, or even during *shemone esrai*. This way it would precede the *tekios dimeumad*, even though it would not be immediate. In practice, now that we sound the *tekios dimeyushav*, the *brocha* precedes them. In light of all this, the *tekios dimeumad* should really be considered the main *kolos*, since they fulfill both Scriptural and Rabbinical requirements. However, since one has already heard the *tekios dimeyushav*, he has satisfied the Scriptural obligation. The *brocha* before the first *tekios* is valid for both sets.

Sounding the *shofar* twice also confuse the *Satan*, prosecuting angel, catching him off guard. Some say the Talmud's reference of *tekios dimeyushav* actually refers to *tekios* blown during *chazaras hashatz*, when only the *shatz* is standing. The *tekios dimeumad* refer to thirty blown at the end of *davening*, to really confuse the *Satan*. [This is also a reason for the very long *tekia* at the end.] According to this view, the thirty sounded before *musaf* are a more recent institution, to reach the one hundred total. [See Rosh Hashana 16a-b 32a-b 33b-34a, Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 590-592 596, commentaries.]

B) Interruptions

One might interrupt with irrelevant distractions, such as idle chatter. One might break or pause at the wrong moment. One might blow the wrong type of blast, or make a mistake. These can affect the *brocha*, the continuity and the validity of individual *kolos*.

The *brocha* must connect to the performance of the *mitzvah*. One may not break between the *brocha* and the blowing. Since the *mitzvah* of blowing includes the entire series of thirty, plus the additional *tekios dimeumad*, one may not interrupt before finishing the performance of the *mitzvah*. This means remaining silent until all the blasts have been sounded. If one interrupted before beginning the performance of the *mitzvah*, he must repeat the *brocha*. If this is a listener, he should recite the *brocha* quickly and silently, but not while the *tekios* are sounding. If he has already begun the *mitzvah*, then interrupts, he may continue without a new *brocha*. Nowadays, it is customary to prompt the *tokaia*. The prompter, or *makreh*, says each *kol*, to prevent mistakes. During the *kolos*, this is not considered a *hefsek*. It is considered a need for the *mitzvah*, and therefore, relevant. The poskim debate whether this applies to the first *tekia*. One follows the local *minhag*.

The other issue applies to interrupting a blast. This could apply to a *tekia* or a version of *teruah*. In this case, if the interruption breaks the sound, one has not fulfilled that blast. In some cases, this means that the entire series has been disrupted. That series, or blast, must then be repeated without the interruption before continuing.

Not all interruptions break the blast totally. If certain mistakes are made in the middle of a set, the first *tekia* is still valid. In addition, if one blew two *shevarim* and began *teruos*, but stopped before he finished them, he may blow the third *shever*, according to most poskim. Then he may continue with the *teruos*. Since *teruah* is part of that series, a partial *teruah* does not count as a *hefsek*. However, in many instances, the *hefsek* invalidates that blast or set. The poskim debate whether a *hefsek* invalidates an extra long *kol*. Each *kol* must be of a minimum length. If the *hefsek* occurred after this was reached, some maintain that the *kol* is kosher. As we shall see, this can be questioned based on Talmudic discussion. Most poskim do not validate this *kol*. [See Rosh hashanah 27a, Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 585:4 587:3 588:1 2 590:6 7 8, commentaries.]

C) Interference

In our case, the *kol* was sounded correctly, but there was an intrusive competing sound at the same time. This sound did not continue through the whole *kol*, but interrupted its continuity. The Talmud mentions three types of interference. (i) Two people might blow a *shofar* at the same time. [One must hear the sound of a single *shofar*, unlike singing in *Bais Hamikdash*, which was by a group and instruments.] Is it possible to listen to two sounds at the same time. If it is not possible, one hears neither, and fails to fulfill his *mitzvah*. (ii) In the *Bais Hamikdash*, trumpets would sound together with the *shofar*. How could one hear the *shofar* by itself? (iii) If one blows into a space that allows an echo, like a pit, can the listener distinguish between the original sound and its echo?

The Talmud concludes that one who holds the sound dear, due to its *mitzvah* element, will be able to focus on the sound he needs to hear. This resolves the first and second instances. In the third instance, the Talmud says that if one hears the sound of the *shofar*, he fulfills his obligation. If he hears the echo, he does not fulfill it. However, those inside the enclosed space hear the sound of the *shofar*. Those outside hear its echo, depending on where they stand. The poskim debate the meaning of this passage. How does one know the difference between the sounds? Furthermore, why would one not hear both sounds? He could then focus on the endearing *mitzvah* sound! Accordingly, some

say that one must assume that he did not hear the original sound, if he is in a location where the echo can be heard. Others maintain that while one can hear both sounds, when they are produced by the same person it is impossible to separate them. Another matter debated is whether this passage refers to the blower as well as the listeners.

The Talmud cites a ruling that one who hears part of the *tekia* inside the pit and the rest outside fulfills his obligation. The part heard with no echo is sufficient. This implies that one need not hear the entire *tekia*. Why, then, does the original ruling make it dependent on which sound one hears? Before the echo, there is always a partial original *tekia*! The answer is that this opinion refers to the blower himself, who blew as he came out of the pit. If so, he never hears an echo to begin with. Inside the pit, he hears the original sound, and once he comes up, there is no echo. The ruling teaches us nothing new! In answer, the Talmud says that one might think that there is a moment in the middle while his ears are outside, but the *shofar* is still inside. The ruling teaches us that he still fulfills his obligation. The poskim debate the meaning of this. Some say that a small interruption in the middle does not spoil the *kol*. Others maintain that, either the interference is unlikely, or that the blower will take care to avoid it. If there was interference, it spoils the *tekia*.

The poskim also debate whether the conclusion is that one fulfills his obligation if he heard a long enough stretch before or after the interruption or interference. This affects our question. One must avoid clearing his throat during the *tekios*. The poskim suggest avoiding nuts and foods that cause phlegm. What if one did clear his throat in the middle. We will assume that the bystanders are able to focus on the *shofar* and block out the competing cough. What about the cougher? Assuming he cannot hear the entire sound, the only way he may consider himself having discharged his obligation is if he heard enough before or after his cough to satisfy his obligation. This would help according to one view. There is also the view that a small interruption by the person himself in the middle of *kol* does not invalidate the *kol*. This applies to both a blower who interfered in the middle of his blowing. If it also applies to a listener who interfered in his hearing, this view could also help the cougher. It seems that we do not rely on this view. Therefore, he should hear that set again, later, but should not recite a *brocha*. If he is in *shul* for the remainder of *davening*, he should have in mind to fulfill it with *tekios dimeumad* during *musaf*. [See Rosh Hashanah 27a-28a, Poskim. Tur sh Ar OC 587, commentaries.]

In conclusion, those nearby probably blocked out the cough. The cougher should hear that set of *kolos* again later, without a *brocha*, or rely on the *tekios dimeumad*.

On the Parsha ... *May the heavens listen .. and the earth should hear .. [32:1] as witnesses [Rashi]* Moshe spoke to Israel, and the heavens and earth listened in as witnesses. Why did he use different terms for these two witnesses? [See commentaries] Perhaps, since the earth is closer, it can simply hear. The heavens are more distant. They need to listen. In addition, perhaps there is an echo. They need to focus and listen, to block out other sounds!!

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yahrzeit is on the 5th of Tishrei. 💧 **כתיבה וחתימה טובה**

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