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Rosh Hashanah
Daf 33

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SHOFAR

➤ The Mishna states that one may not go beyond the techum boundary in order to hear the shofar. The Mishna lists other Rabbinical prohibitions that a person cannot violate in order to fulfill the mitzva of shofar. One is permitted to place water or wine into the shofar to improve the sound. The Mishna rules that we do not restrain the children from blowing the shofar and we can even instruct them how to blow the shofar. One who accidentally blew a shofar does not fulfill his obligation and one who hears the shofar from someone who blew accidentally does not fulfill his obligation.

The Gemora infers from the Mishna which rules that we do not restrain the children from blowing the shofar that we do restrain women from blowing the shofar. This is in contradiction to a braisa which states explicitly that we do restrain children and women from blowing the shofar. The Gemora answers that it is a Tannaic dispute. Rabbi Yehuda maintains that we restrain women from blowing the shofar and Rabbi Yosi and Rabbi Shimon permit her to. Rabbi Yosi and Rabbi Shimon hold that a woman who performs a mitzvah that she is not obligated in does not violate the prohibition of adding to a mitzvah and therefore she can blow the shofar if she so desires. Rabbi

Yehuda disagrees and thereby prohibits a woman from blowing the shofar.

These positions stem from the disagreement between these Tannaim on the issue of semichah - part of the sacrifice ceremony when the person bringing a korban in the Beis Hamikdash would put pressure on the animal's head before it was slaughtered and brought to the mizbeach. Rabbi Yosi and Rabbi Shimon rule that women can perform semichah even though they are not obligated in it, from which we conclude that they generally permit women to perform mitzvos on a voluntary basis, even when they are not obligated in them. Rabbi Yehuda forbids women from doing semichah. (This last paragraph is courtesy of the Aleph Society.) (32a)

CHILDREN BLOWING

➤ The Gemora cites the opinion of Rabbi Elozar that one can instruct children how to blow a shofar on Rosh Hashanah even if it is Shabbos. The Gemora states further that a child that has reached the age where he can be trained to do a mitzvah, we instruct him how to blow a shofar, however a child that has not reached that age, we do not instruct him but we do not restrain him from blowing himself. (33a – 33b)

SOUNDS OF THE SHOFAR

➤ The Mishna teaches the particulars of the shofar blowing. There should be three sets, consisting of three sounds each – tekiah, teruah, tekiah. The length of the tekiah should be equal to that of three teruos. The length of a teruah should be like three short sobs. If one blew a long tekiah for the duration of two regular tekios, he only receives credit for one. Someone who davened Mussaf without blowing and later found a shofar; he should blow a tekiah, teruah, tekiah three times.

The Gemora cites a braisa which conflicts with the opinion on the Mishna. The braisa states that the length of a teruah should be like three shevarim. Abaye explains the dispute as follows: It is written in the Torah 'yom teruah' and the Targum translates this to mean 'a day of yevava.' We know from a verse discussing the mother of Sisra crying that 'yevava' means crying. The braisa maintains that yevava means moaning, like a sick person where the cries last for some time, and thereby he expresses the teruos as shevarim. The Tanna of our Mishna holds that yevava means to sob, which is a group of very short cries, and therefore he expresses the teruos as short sobs. (33b)

The Gemora cites the Scriptural source showing that one must blow a tekiah, teruah, tekiah. The Gemora also provides the source that there should be three sets of these three sounds. (33b – 34a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

PERFORMING A MITZVAH

FROM WHICH ONE IS EXEMPT

QUESTIONS: The Gemara cites an opinion that

women may not blow the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah that coincides with Shabbos, even though children are permitted to blow the Shofar. The Gemara says that this is the opinion of Rabbi Yehudah who says in a Beraisa that "Ein Benos Yisrael Semichos" -- women may not perform Semichah on a Korban. **RASHI** (DH Ha Nashim) explains that the reason women are not permitted to blow the Shofar on Shabbos is because the act constitutes a transgression of Bal Tosif, adding to the Mitzvos, since women are exempt from the Mitzvah of Shofar.

Rashi's explanation is difficult to understand.

(a) Why does the performance of a Mitzvah which one is not obligated to perform constitute Bal Tosif? Bal Tosif applies only when one is obligated to perform a Mitzvah and he adds some detail to its performance which the Torah does not mandate. If the Mitzvah of Shofar does not apply to women at all, why does their act of blowing the Shofar constitute Bal Tosif? (**MAHARSHA**)

(b) If Bal Tosif is the reason why women may not blow the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah that coincides with Shabbos, then women should be prohibited from blowing the Shofar on *any* day on which Rosh Hashanah occurs, even on a weekday. The Gemara, however, refers specifically to blowing the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah that coincides with Shabbos. If women are prohibited from blowing the Shofar on Shabbos but not on weekdays, then the reason for the prohibition must not be because of Bal Tosif. Rather, the reason must be related to the prohibition against blowing the Shofar on Shabbos when it is not blown for the Mitzvah of Shofar (see 29b). Similarly, it is prohibited for women to perform Semichah on a

Korban because -- with no obligation to perform Semichah -- their act of leaning on a sanctified animal constitutes Avodah b'Kodshim, an unauthorized use of a sanctified animal. The reason is not because of Bal Tosif. (**TOSFOS**, Eruvin 96a; **TUREI EVEN**)

ANSWERS:

(a) It is clear from the words of **RASHI** in Eruvin (96a) that he does not mean literally that a woman who performs a Mitzvah from which she is exempt transgresses the prohibition of Bal Tosif. Rashi there says that "it appears like Bal Tosif." That is, the Rabanan decreed that a woman may not perform an act of a Mitzvah from which she is exempt because it *appears* as though she is adding a Mitzvah to the Torah. Rashi does not mean that one who performs a Mitzvah from which he is exempt transgresses the prohibition of Bal Tosif. (See Insights to Eruvin 96:1.)

(b) Perhaps Rashi infers from the Gemara in Eruvin that the reason why women may not blow the Shofar on Shabbos is *not* due to the prohibition against blowing a Shofar on Shabbos. The Gemara in Eruvin (96a) says that according to the opinion that women may not blow the Shofar on Shabbos and may not perform Semichah, women also may not perform the Mitzvah of Aliyah l'Regel (visiting the Beis ha'Mikdash during the festival). Why may a woman not perform the Mitzvah of Aliyah l'Regel? **TOSFOS** in Eruvin explains that the Gemara means that a woman may not perform Aliyah l'Regel *in order to offer a Korban Re'iyah*; since she is exempt from the obligation to offer a Korban Re'iyah, the animal she would bring into the Azarah would be considered an animal of Chulin (non-sanctified), and one may not bring such an animal into the Azarah.

Rashi may understand that the Gemara there means simply that a woman may not perform a Mitzvah which she is not obligated to do, such as Aliyah l'Regel, because of the Rabanan's decree which prohibits doing an act which has the appearance of Bal Tosif.

When the Gemara here says that women may not do Semichah, it does not limit this prohibition to the opinion which maintains that Semichah must be done with all of one's strength ("b'Kol Kocho"; see Chagigah 16b). Rashi may understand that even according to the opinion that Semichah does not need to be done with all of one's strength, women may not do Semichah. Consequently, the reason they are prohibited from doing Semichah cannot be because of Avodah b'Kodshim, since Semichah done without all of one's strength does not constitute a use of the animal (as one does not actually use the animal to support himself). It must be that the prohibition is due to another reason -- a decree of the Rabanan against performing an act that looks like Bal Tosif. (M. Kornfeld) (Courtesy of Kollel Iyun Hadaf)

A BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE TEKIOS

➤ One of the most important mitzvos of Rosh Hashanah(1) is the Biblical command to blow the shofar. Although the significance of this mitzvah has been expounded at length - Rav Saadiah Gaon enumerates ten different reasons for blowing shofar(2) - still many people are unfamiliar with the basic procedures involved: how many blasts are sounded, how long or short must they be, etc. While the tokea and the makri (the individual who instructs the tokea which blast to sound) must be thoroughly versed in these intricate laws(3) - since it is they who



determine if a particular blast was invalid and must be repeated - still it is important for the entire congregation to have some degree of familiarity with the general laws governing this mitzvah.

THE BASIC MITZVAH

The Biblical command is to blow three sets of blasts on Rosh Hashanah. A set of blasts means one *teruah* sound preceded and followed by a *tekiah* sound. Thus, the sum total of blasts which one is required to hear on Rosh Hashanah is nine - six *tekiah* sounds and three *teruah* sounds.

The *tekiah* sound was always well defined and agreed upon by all authorities - a long, straight (without a break or pause) blast. The *teruah* sound, however, was not well defined and the Rabbis were unsure of how, exactly, it was supposed to sound(4). The Talmud(5) describes three possibilities:

Three short, straight blasts - what we commonly refer to as *shevarim*; Nine(6) very short, staccato blasts - what we commonly refer to as *teruah*; A combination of both of the above sounds - a *shevarim-teruah* compound.

To satisfy all of the above opinions, the Rabbis established that the three sets of *tekios* be blown in three different ways, alternating the *teruah* sound in each set. Thus we blow *tekiah shevarim-teruah tekiah* (TaSHRaT) three times; *tekiah shevarim tekiah* (TaRaT) three times; *tekiah teruah tekiah* (TaSHaT) three times. All together that adds up to thirty different blasts - eighteen *tekios*, three *shevarim-teruahs*, three *shevarim* and three *teruahs*. This is the minimum number of blasts that every adult male(7)

is required to hear on Rosh Hashanah. These are called *tekios d'myushav*, since the congregation is permitted to sit while they are being blown. In practice, however, it is universally accepted to stand during these *tekios*(8).

[A person who is in dire circumstances (a patient in the hospital, for example) and is unable to hear (or blow) thirty blasts, should try to hear (or blow) 10 sounds, one TaSHRaT, one TaRaT and one TaSHaT(9). No blessing, however, is recited over these blasts.]

In addition to these Biblically required blasts, we blow sixty more. Thirty more are blown during *Musaf*, ten each after the *malchiyos*, *zichronos* and *shofaros* divisions of *Shemoneh Esrei*. Every adult male is Rabbinically obligated to blow or hear these blasts in their designated places in the *Musaf* service. They are called *tekios d'meumad*, since one is required to stand while they are being blown(10).

In addition, it is customary to blow forty more blasts for a sum total of one hundred blasts. While this custom is based on several early sources(11) and has been almost universally adopted, there are various practices regarding when, exactly, they are blown. Generally, these blasts are blown towards the end of and after the *Musaf* service, and one must refrain from speaking(12) until after all one hundred sounds have been blown.

HOW LONG SHOULD EACH BLAST BE?

The length of a *tekiah*, both before and after the *teruah*, must be at least as long as the *teruah* which it accompanies(13). Thus, since it takes about 2-3 seconds to blow a *shevarim* or a *teruah*, the *tekiah*



before and after must be at least 2-3 seconds long. Since it takes longer than that to blow the combination shevarim-teruah sound, the tekiah which precedes and follows these sounds must be longer as well. Most congregations allot about 4-5 seconds for each of these tekios. The makri is responsible to keep time.

[It is important to remember that each tekiah must be heard in its entirety no matter how long it takes. If, for example, a tekiah is blown for 7 seconds, which is much longer than required, the entire 7 seconds' worth must be heard by the congregation. Care must be taken not to begin reciting the yehi ratzon until after the blast is concluded(14).]

A teruah is at least nine short blasts (beeps), although in practice, many more beeps are sounded when the teruah is blown. No breath may taken between the short beeps; they must be blown consecutively.

Each shever should be about three teruah-beeps long. B'dieved the shever is valid even if it is only two beeps long, provided that all three shevarim are of that length(15). No breath may be taken between each shever; they must be blown consecutively(16).

SHEVARIM TERUAH - HOW IS IT BLOWN?

There are two basic views of how to blow the shevarim-terurah combination. Some opinions hold that no breath may be taken between them and even b'dieved, a breath between them invalidates the blast. Others hold that a breath may be taken as long as it takes no longer than the split second that it takes

to draw a breath. The custom in most congregations is to do it both ways; the tekios before Musaf are blown with no breath being taken between the shevarim-teruah, while the tekios during and after Musaf are blown with a break for drawing a breath between the shevarim-teruah(17).

MISTAKES WHILE BLOWING

There are basically two types of mistakes that the tokea can make while blowing shofar. The most common is that the tokea tries but fails to produce the proper sound. The general rule is that the tokea ignores the failed try, takes a breath, and tries again(18).

The other type of mistake is that the tokea blows the blast properly, but loses track and blows the wrong blast, e.g., instead of shevarim he thinks that a tekiah is in order, or instead of teruah he thinks that a shevarim is due and he blows the shevarim. In that case, it is not sufficient to merely ignore the wrong blast; rather the tokea must repeat the tekiah which precedes the shevarim(19).

When a tekiah needs to be repeated, it is proper that the makri notify the congregation of that (by banging on the bimah, etc.), so that the listeners do not lose track of which blasts are being blown.

ADDITIONAL HIDDURIM

As there are different views and/or stringencies pertaining to various aspects of tekias shofar, one who wishes to be extremely particular in this mitzvah may blow (or hear) additional blasts after the davening is over in order to satisfy all opinions. These



include the following hiddurim: There are several ways of blowing the shevarim sound; while some blow short, straight blasts, others make a slight undulation (tu-u-tu). Some opinions maintain that l'chatchillah, each shever should be no longer than the length of two beeps(20).

Some opinions hold that when the shevarim-teruah sound is blown, there may not be any break at all between them (even if no breath is taken); the shever must lead directly into the teruah(21). Some authorities insist that the tekiah sound be straight and clear from beginning to the end, with no fluctuation of pitch throughout the entire blast(22). (Courtesy of Rabbi Doniel Neustadt)

FOOTNOTES

1. This year, the shofar is blown only on the second day of Rosh Hashanah as the first day is Shabbos.
2. The most fundamental reason to perform this mitzvah, however, is simply that Hashem commanded us to do so.
3. Mateh Efrayim 585:2.
4. While the basic definition of a teruah is a "crying" sound, it was unclear if that resembled short "wailing" sounds or longer "groaning" sounds.
5. Rosh Hashanah 33b.
6. There are Rishonim who hold that a teruah is three short beeps. B'dieved, we may rely on that view to fulfill our obligation (Mishnah Berurah 590:12).
7. The obligation of women regarding tekias shofar was discussed in The Weekly Halachah Discussion, pg. 532-534.
8. Mishnah Berurah 585:2. A weak or elderly person may lean on a shtender or a table during these sets of tekios (Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 585:2).

9. Based on Mishnah Berurah 586:22 and 620:7. See also Mateh Efrayim 586:7 and Ktzev ha-Mateh 590:1. See, however, Mateh Efrayim 593:3 who seems to rule in this case that three TaSHRaTs should be blown.
10. Mishnah Berurah 592:2. B'dieved, one fulfills his obligation if he sat during these tekios; ibid.
11. See Mishnah Berurah 592:4.
12. Asher Yatzar, though, may be recited; Minchas Yitzchak 3:44; 4:47.
13. This is based on the minimum length of time required for the teruah, not on the actual time it took to blow a particular teruah.
14. Mishnah Berurah 587:16; haTekios k'Halachah u'Behidur 1 quoting several sources.
15. Shulchan Aruch Harav 590:7.
16. O.C. 590:4.
17. Mishnah Berurah 590:20 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 18. The makri, too, should take a breath between the announcement of shevarim-teruah, so that the tokea will follow his lead (Elef ha-Magen 22).
18. Based on Mishnah Berurah 290:34, Aruch ha-Shulchan 290:20 and Da'as Torah 590:8.
19. Another example is when the tokea mistakenly blows [or begins to blow] two sets of shevarim or teruos in a row. The original tekiah must be repeated.
20. See O.C. 590:3.
21. Avnei Nezer 443; Chazon Ish O.C. 136:1. This is difficult to perform properly.
22. Harav Y.L. Diskin, based on the view of the Ramban and Ritva, see Moadim u'Zmanim 1:5. Chazon Ish, however, was not particular about this; Orchos Rabbeinu 2:183.