

Halacha Highlight

Overview

Waiting for the rov to finish *shemone esrei*

Rema Siman 124 Seif 3
אין לשליח ציבור להמתין עליהם
The *shaliach tzibbur* should not wait for them

Rema (סי' ג') writes that if there are individuals in the *tzibbur* who *daven* slowly the *shaliach tzibbur* should not wait for them even if they are prominent people in the *tzibbur*. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ג) explains that waiting for people who *daven* slowly burdens the *tzibbur* – טירחא דציבור. He then goes on to relate that the custom nowadays is to wait for the rov to finish *shemone esrei*. The reason is that most people *daven* quickly and those who carefully read each word do not have the opportunity to say *kedusha*. It is assumed that the rov is careful to read each word so the *shaliach tzibbur* waits for him to finish *shemone esrei* since that gives an appropriate amount of time for people to *daven* properly. Rav Akiva Eiger (ש"ת החדשות סי' ה') wrote that even the rov cannot give the *shaliach tzibbur* permission to not wait for him since waiting for the rov is considered to be a universal custom that must be observed.

Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ג) rules that if the rov *davens* slowly the *shaliach tzibbur* should not wait for him. Elya Rabba (אות י"ז) writes that a rov should not *daven* slowly and Machatzis HaShekel (ס"ק ז') explains that if a rov *davens* too slowly he is acting improperly by burdening the *tzibbur*, therefore, they should not wait for him. Rav Moshe Sternbuch (ש"ת תשובות והנהגות ח"א סי' קט"ז) contends that on Shabbos and Yom Tov when many people are gathered in *shul* it is appropriate for the *shaliach tzibbur* to wait for the rov since it demonstrates honor for the Torah. Consequently, the rov has to be especially careful that he should not *daven* too slowly since that would burden the *tzibbur*. An exception to this rule is if a rov has his own Bais Midrash and the people who come know that he *davens* slowly. In such a case it is assumed that they accept the speed at which he chooses to *daven* (פסקי תשובות אות ו').

Stories to Share

The People in the Fields

ש"ע ס' קכ"ד, ג': "קהל שהתפללו וכלם בקיאים בתפל אעפ"י יד ע"צ וחוזר..."
Someone once asked the Kotzker Rebbe, "Why must we still repeat the shemonah esrei nowadays? After all, everyone says the shemonah esrei, don't they? What need is there for a shaliach tzibbur?"

The Kotzker Rebbe responded, "As you know, if one wishes to bring merit to the soul of a person who has died, electing to lead the prayers is one way to do it. One of the reasons for this is of course the kaddish. But one can say kaddish even without being the chazzan! The truth is that the chazaras hashatz also helps the souls of those who have passed away. And this is why it is an injunction that will never be revoked, even though it has been many long centuries that people have already known how to pray for themselves. One would be hard pressed to find someone who really doesn't say the entire service for himself."

שפתי צדיקים, ע' פ"ג

When someone put these questions to the Chazon Ish he answered differently. "We still recite the chazaras hashatz for the am she'basados, the people stuck in the fields, of today. They are those people who do not pray because they don't know better. Either they or their parents were taken in by the modern sectarian and 'enlightenment' movements, and they don't understand the importance of prayer at all. Since these people are considered like victims taken captive while young and raised among non-Jews, they are hardly responsible for their failure to come to synagogue. We recite the chazaras hashatz for them!"

מובא במעשה איש

Siman 124 Seif 1:

After the *tzibbur* finishes their *tefila*, the *shaliach tzibbur* repeats *shemone esrei* so that if there is someone who does not know how to *daven* he can pay attention to what the *shaliach tzibbur* says and will thereby discharge his obligation. The one who is discharging his obligation must pay attention to the entire *tefila* from the beginning through the end and he may not interrupt or talk and he should take three steps back as if he *davened* himself.

- ❖ Someone who knows how to *daven* does not fulfill his obligation even *b'dieved* with *chazaras hashatz*. (M.B. 1)
- ❖ The one listening must understand *lashon kodesh* because if he doesn't, he does not discharge his obligation even if he listens to the *shaliach tzibbur* say every word. In contrast, one who *davens* himself may *daven* in *lashon kodesh* even if he does not understand *lashon kodesh*. (M.B. 2)
- ❖ One listening to the *shaliach tzibbur* may not respond to *kedusha* or *borchu* and certainly he may not say *ברוך הוא הבורך שמו* but he should answer *אמן*. (M.B. 3)

Siman 124 Seif 2:

If the *shaliach tzibbur* arrives in *shul* and finds the *tzibbur* already reciting their silent *shemone esrei* and he must stand before the *amud* right away, he may approach the *amud* and *daven* out loud for the *tzibbur* and is not required to repeat *shemone esrei* silently. The same *halacha* applies in a pressing circumstance, e.g. one fears that the time for *davening* will pass, and he can *daven chazaras hashatz* out loud and the *tzibbur* *davens* with him saying each word with him quietly until after *הא-ל הקדוש*. It is preferable for there to be at least one person to answer *אמן* to the *shaliach tzibbur*.

- ❖ Shulchan Aruch refers to where there is no one else who could serve as *shaliach tzibbur* because if there is someone else it is not proper for someone to serve as *shaliach tzibbur* if he did not *daven* his silent *shemone esrei*. (M.B. 4)
- ❖ Later authorities write that if someone already *davened* but will serve as *shaliach tzibbur* again he should not repeat his silent *shemone esrei*. (M.B. 5)
- ❖ Rema refers to where the *shaliach tzibbur* would not be able to complete his *shemone esrei* within the time for *davening*. (M.B. 7)
- ❖ If time is not so pressing the *tzibbur* should not begin *davening* until after the *shaliach tzibbur* finishes *הא-ל הקדוש*. (M.B. 8)
- ❖ The *tzibbur* should also say *לדור ודור* with the *shaliach tzibbur*. (M.B. 9)
- ❖ Rema refers to where time is not so pressing although there is a concern of possibly missing the time for *davening* but if the time is more pressing then it is sufficient to rely upon a child to answer *אמן* or find someone who already *davened* to answer *אמן* if he is readily available but if not they may *daven* without someone to answer *אמן*. (M.B. 10)

Siman 124 Seif 3:

Even if a *tzibbur* *davened* and they are all capable of *davening* for themselves the *shaliach tzibbur* repeats *shemone esrei* in order to fulfill Chazal's enactment. If there are individuals in the *tzibbur* who are *davening* slowly the *shaliach tzibbur* should not wait for them even if they are prominent people in the community. Similarly, if there is a *minyan* in the *Bais HaKnesses* they should not wait for a prominent person or leader who has yet to arrive.

- ❖ Nowadays the custom is to wait for the rov and the reason is that most people *daven* quickly and someone who says every word will miss *kedusha*, therefore, the *shaliach tzibbur* waits for the rov who will *daven* at a proper pace. If the rov is not there the *shaliach tzibbur* should wait for someone who *davens* at a proper pace. (M.B. 13)
- ❖ If a person needs to *daven* a longer *shemone esrei* and fears that he will be mocked may step back when the *shaliach tzibbur* begins *chazaras hashatz* and then return to his place and finish his *shemone esrei*. (M.B. 13)
- ❖ Nowadays the custom is to wait for the rov to arrive in *shul* because it is common for him to give a *shiur* after *davening* and if they start without him they may leave before he is ready to give the *shiur* and miss out on their Torah learning. Elya Rabba writes that the rov should arrive in *shul* early so that the *tzibbur* does not have to wait for him. (M.B. 15)