

Halacha Highlight

Listening to the *shaliach tzibbur's* recitation of *shemone esrei*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 124 Seif 10

יכון דעתו וישמע משליח צבור כל שמונה עשרה ברכות

He should concentrate and listen to the *shaliach tzibbur* recite all of *shemone esrei*

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' י) addresses someone who recited *shemone esrei* but forgot to add something that requires him to repeat *shemone esrei*. Shulchan Aruch rules that rather than repeat *shemone esrei* himself, he may listen to *chazaras hashatz* and thereby fulfill his obligation. Even though normally one who is capable of *davening* by himself cannot fulfill his obligation by listening to the *shaliach tzibbur*, in this circumstance he may discharge his obligation since he recited *shemone esrei* but merely forgot an essential addition. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק מ"א) in the name of Birkei Yosef notes that when one listens to *chazaras hashatz* in order to fulfill his obligation should not recite *modim d'rabanan*; rather he should listen to *modim* that is recited by the *shaliach tzibbur*. He then observes that a custom developed for the *shaliach tzibbur* to recite *modim* quietly. The source for this custom is unknown and he maintains that it is mistaken. Although Chazal enacted the recitation of *modim d'rabanan* which takes place simultaneously with the *shaliach tzibbur's* recitation of *modim*, nevertheless, the *shaliach tzibbur* should recite all of *modim* out loud. At the very least the *shaliach tzibbur* must make sure that at least ten people hear his recitation of *modim*. Some authorities suggest that together with Chazal's enactment to recite *modin d'rabanan* they also enacted that the *tzibbur* is not obligated to hear the *shaliach tzibbur* recite *modim*. There are also those authorities who maintain that the *shaliach tzibbur* should pause after the words לעולם ועד and resume after the *tzibbur* finishes *modim d'rabanan* (פסקי תשובות סי' קכ"ז אות א'). Mishnah Berurah (סי' קכ"ז סק"ג) disagrees and writes that the *shaliach tzibbur* is not required to wait for the *tzibbur* to recite *modim d'rabanan*.

Mishnah Berurah (סק"מ) notes that later authorities write that it is preferable for a person in this case to repeat *shemone esrei* for himself. Their reason is that nowadays not everyone is capable of listening to every word of every *beracha* recited by the *shaliach tzibbur*. Additionally, if the *shaliach tzibbur* swallows some of his words one may certainly not rely on his recitation.

Stories to Share

The Value of Amen

ש"ע ס' קכ"ד, י"ב: "העונה אמן לא יגביה קולו יותר מהמברך..."

The halachos of when and how to say amen are quite complex. It is very easy to find questions that are not discussed explicitly in Shulchan Aruch or its commentaries. The only thing to do in such instances is to go to a great halachic authority and get a Torah-true answer.

One man who lived in Israel enjoyed saying amen. When he learned from the Shelah Hakadosh that saying amen is more valuable than intoning a blessing—unless the one reciting the blessing does so with deep feeling—he redoubled his efforts. (השל"ה מובא בא"י כ"א, אות י"א) And when he found out that one must not answer brochos in a louder tone than the one who says the brochah, he began to observe this halachah...or so he thought. But then he realized that he had a shaila. In Israel the custom is for the kohanim to recite birkas kohanim during shacharis each day. In his shul there were several kohanim, each intoning the berachah in his own way. Since they used different tones, he wondered whether he could answer amen in a loud tone, like the kohein who intoned the blessing loudly. Or perhaps he was required to say amen no louder than the kohein who said the blessing in low tone of voice?

Overview

Siman 124 Seif 9:

If some people take a long time to answer אמן the one reciting the *beracha* is not required to wait for them.

- ❖ The *shaliach tzibbur* may not begin the next *beracha* until most of the *tzibbur* answers אמן. The same principle applies to *kaddish*, meaning the *shaliach tzibbur* may not begin יתברך until the *tzibbur* begins יהא שמיא רבא. Out of ignorance many people are not careful about this and begin the next *beracha* without waiting for the *tzibbur* to answer אמן. Sha'arei Teshuvah maintains that this issue is essential and one may not answer אמן if the *shaliach tzibbur* started the next *beracha*. (M.B. 37)
- ❖ Shulchan Aruch refers to where the *tzibbur* is not obligated to recite that *beracha*. (M.B. 38)

Siman 124 Seif 10:

One who forgot יעלה on Rosh Chodesh or Chol HaMoed or forgot something that requires one to repeat *shemone esrei* should concentrate and listen to the entire *chazaras hashatz*, from beginning to end as if he is *davening* by himself. He may not interrupt or speak and upon completion he should take three steps back. The reason he may discharge his obligation with *chazaras hashatz* even though he is capable of *davening* himself is that he *davened*, it is just that he forgot to include an additional prayer.

- ❖ The implication is that this *halacha* applies even if one left out משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם. (M.B. 39)
- ❖ Later authorities maintain that it is better for one to personally repeat *shemone esrei* since most people cannot concentrate on what the *shaliach tzibbur* says from the beginning to the end of the *shemone esrei*. Bach and Elya Rabba write that if the *shaliach tzibbur* swallows some words one may not rely on the *shaliach tzibbur* and must *daven* again for himself. (M.B. 40)
- ❖ Birkei Yosef writes that when listening to the *shaliach tzibbur* one should not recite מודים דרבנן, rather he should listen to the *shaliach tzibbur*. (M.B. 41)
- ❖ Nowadays since there are *chazanim* who read מודים quietly one can not discharge his obligation with the *shaliach tzibbur's* recitation. It is not clear why this custom developed and a *shaliach tzibbur* should make sure that at least ten people could hear his reading of מודים. (M.B. 41)

Siman 124 Seif 11:

If while a person is *davening* the *shaliach tzibbur* finishes a *beracha* and before the *tzibbur* finished answering אמן he finished his *tefila* he may answer אמן. Even if he did not hear the *beracha* altogether but he hears the *tzibbur* answer אמן and knows which *beracha* was recited he may answer with them and the same *halacha* applies to *kaddish* and *borchu*.

- ❖ According to Shulchan Aruch as long as the *tzibbur* is answering אמן it is considered as though the *beracha* is ongoing and one may answer אמן. Taz maintains that one may even answer אמן immediately after the *tzibbur* finishes answering אמן but other authorities follow Shulchan Aruch's ruling. (M.B. 42)
- ❖ Rema's addition is that one may answer אמן as long as he knows what *beracha* was recited. (M.B. 44)

Siman 124 Seif 12:

One who answers אמן should not raise his voice louder than the one reciting the *beracha*.

- ❖ One should also not respond to *borchu* or *birkas hazimun* louder than the one who is leading unless one's intent is to inspire others to respond. (M.B. 47)
- ❖ One answers אמן to the *beracha* of a child but not to the *beracha* of someone insane. It is permitted to answer אמן to a woman's *beracha* on a positive time bound *mitzvah*. (M.B. 47)

When this question reached Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zt"l, he ruled decisively. "You are permitted to say amen in the same tone of voice as the loudest kohein."

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