The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן תקפ"ו סעיף י"א-י"ט

Overview

Siman 586 Seif 11:

If one added material to the shofar, whether from shofar material or other material, it is invalid, even if it originally contained the minimum size for a shofar.

Siman 586 Seif 12:

If one inverted the shofar and blew, the mitzvah is not fulfilled. Whether he inverted it as one inverts a shirt by turning it inside out or whether one widened the narrow part and narrowed the wide part. (Similarly, if one blew from the wide end.)

- ❖ It must be blown in the way that the horn was attached to the ram. (M.B. 60)

Siman 586 Seif 13:

If one shortened a long shofar it is valid as long as there remains the minimum size shofar.

- ❖ It is valid even if the sound changed as a result. (M.B. 63)

Siman 586 Seif 14:

If one scraped the inside or outside of the shofar leaving its last layer it is valid.

- ❖ It is valid even though scraping the shofar changed the sound. (M.B. 65)

Siman 586 Seif 15:

If one did not remove the male part and instead drilled a hole in it the shofar is valid. If one removed the male part and drilled a hole in it forming a shofar it is invalid.

- ❖ This is allowed even l'chatchila. (M.B. 67)
- ❖ Something that is not naturally hollow is not called a shofar. (M.B. 68)

Siman 586 Seif 16:

If one coated the mouthpiece gold it is invalid but if the coating is not on the mouthpiece it is valid. If one coated the inside of the shofar with gold it is invalid and if one coated the outside of the shofar with gold and it changes the sound it is invalid but if it does not affect the sound it is valid. Some commentators explain that "mouthpiece" refers to the inside of the thickness of the shofar where one places his mouth and the outer part of that section is called "not on the mouthpiece." According to others the thickness of the narrow end where one places his mouth is called the "mouthpiece" and the place "not on the mouthpiece" is the length of shofar from the narrow end towards the wide end.

- ❖ According to the first explanation, the inside of the mouthpiece is gold coated and it is invalid since the blast of breath first touches the gold. The part that is "not on the mouthpiece" is the outside of that section. According to the second explanation the entire section that goes in one's mouth is the "mouthpiece" and a small section of the shofar beyond that is "not on the mouthpiece" and it is assumed that gold covering that small section will not affect the sound of the shofar. (M.B. 70)
- ❖ Shulchan Aruch's wording is not specific since the status of a shofar that gold coated beyond the mouthpiece depends upon whether it affects the sound of the shofar. (M.B. 71)

Siman 586 Seif 17:

Those who draw designs on the outside of the shofar with paint are not acting properly (but it is permitted to carve images into the shofar in order to adorn it).

- ❖ There are times that this could change the sound of the shofar. (M.B. 72)

Siman 586 Seif 18:

If one added gold on the thick part of the shofar on its wide end he has added to the length of the shofar and it is invalid.

Siman 586 Seif 19:

If one distanced the shofar from his mouth and blew into it the blast is invalid.

- ❖ One's mouth must come in contact with the shofar. (M.B. 75)

Halacha Highlight

Beautifying the shofar

Shulchan Aruch Siman 586 Seif 16

צפהו זהב במקום הנחת פה

If one coated the mouthpiece of the shofar with gold

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ט"ז) writes that one who coats the mouthpiece of the shofar with gold invalidates the shofar. This is true even if one had the intent to beautify the shofar (שו"ע הרב סע' ט"ז). Seemingly this halacha is inconsistent with the principle that anything that is added for beautification purposes does not constitute an interposition. According to this principle, it should be permitted to coat the mouthpiece with gold if one's intent is to beautify it. The reason this principle does not apply in this case is that there is a specific requirement when it comes to shofar that one's mouth should be in direct contact with the shofar. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק ע"ה) cites a pasuk in Hoshea (8:1) that teaches this principle. For this reason, even if one added shofar material to the mouthpiece the shofar is invalid. Even though generally there is a principle that the same material does not constitute an interposition (מין במינו אינו חוצץ), nevertheless, in this case there is a specific requirement for one's mouth to be in direct contact with the shofar.

In seif 17 another similar principle is applied. Shulchan Aruch rules that those who color pictures on the shofar are not behaving correctly. Although the intent is to beautify the shofar and will not constitute an interposition between one's mouth and the shofar, it is improper since it can change the sound of the shofar. In the event that one is uncertain whether the paint changes the sound of the shofar if the quantity of paint is minimal one may be lenient and assume that the sound does not change. However, it is preferable not to paint the shofar and run the risk of changing its sound. Moreover, although Rema rules that one may carve pictures into a shofar even if it changes the sound since the change is not the result of a foreign substance, nevertheless, Poskim write that the custom is not to carve anything into the body of the shofar (פסקי תשובות אות י').