

Q&A from the Bais HaVaad Halacha Hotline

Full Blast

September 26, 2024

Q If I heard a cough or a sneeze during a shofar blast, was I *yotzei*?



A There is a general rule that *trei kalei lo mishtam'ei* (two simultaneous sounds are not discerned). But shofar and other audio mitzvos that recur only annually are different: Because listeners are more attentive to them, they hear the mitzvah sound over competing sounds (Rosh Hashanah 27a). Still, if the noise was loud enough to overwhelm the shofar, you were not *yotzei*.

Tekiah is frequently blown longer than is required. (The minimum duration is the length of its corresponding *shvarim*, *truah*, or *shvarim-truah*.) If the coughing was brief, and you had already heard a sufficient length of the *tekiah*, *poskim* debate whether you fulfilled the mitzvah (Shulchan Aruch O.C. 587:3). The halacha follows the stringent view, that a *tekiah* cannot be interrupted, but a *bracha* should not be recited when repeating it (Mishnah Brurah *ibid.* 15).

This halacha applies to *shvarim* and *truah* too, even though they are broken sounds (Ritva cited by Elef Hamagein *ibid.* 5).

You don't always have to make up a missing shofar blast after davening. In shul, the shofar is sounded in two stages, before Musaf and during Musaf, one of which is *de'Oreisa* and the other is *deRababan* (Rosh Hashanah 16a). A third stage, at the end of davening, fulfills the minhag to complete 100 blasts.

Because one of the first two stages is a *takanas tzibur* rather than an obligation of the individual, if you missed a blast during the first stage, you can make it up at the second, and vice versa (see Chazon Ish 137:4).

If you missed a *shvarim-truah* sequence, you may need to hear it again, depending on your shul's minhag: The *Rishonim* debate whether *shvarim-truah* is done in one breath or two, so both variations must be heard (See Rama 590:4 and Sha'ar Hatziyun *ibid.* 18). In most shuls, the *shvarim-truahs* of the first stage are done in one breath and those of the second in two. So if you missed a single-breath *shvarim-truah*, you should hear it again after davening. In some shuls, the *shvarim-truahs* of the third stage

are once again done in one breath, so you can make it up then.