

Q&A From the Bais HaVaad Halacha Hotline

In Good Order

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Q May I look at a sefer during the long *chazaras hashatz* of Musaf on Rosh Hashanah?

A Although many *poskim* frown on this at any time (see, e.g., Mishnah Brurah 124:17), on Rosh Hashanah the chazzan's repetition has additional significance in connection to *tekias* shofar.



According to the Gemara in Rosh Hashanah, the mitzvah of shofar includes the communal obligation to blow a series of shofar blasts—*tekiah*, *shevarim*, *teruah*, *tekiah*—after each of the three sections of Musaf: *Malchuyos*, *Zichronos*, and *Shofaros* (“*tekios al seder habrachos*”). In *nusach* Ashkenaz, this is fulfilled by blowing the shofar after each of these sections during *chazaras hashatz*. In *nusach* Sefard, it is done during the silent Musaf as well.

The Brisker Rav suggested that this halacha makes the entire *chazaras hashatz* a critical component of the mitzvah of *tekias shofar*. That is, part of the obligation of *tekias shofar* is to hear the *chazaras hashatz* along with *tekios* in the proper places. He therefore felt that *lechatchilah* (and possibly *bedi’eved* as well), one must listen carefully to every word of *chazaras hashatz*. This stringency was adopted in Yeshivas Brisk and some other places, where many are careful to complete their silent *shmoneh esrei* before the chazzan begins his repetition.

The Chazon Ish disagrees with the Brisker Rav. It does not appear that the Mishnah Brurah subscribes to the idea either, as he does not mention this requirement.

According to the Brisker Rav, one should not say *baruch Hu uvaruch Shemo* during the conclusion of each *bracha* in *chazaras hashatz* of Musaf, because these words constitute a *hefsek* in the middle of a *bracha* if one fulfills an obligation with its recitation. Since most people do in fact recite *baruch Hu uvaruch Shemo* at Musaf of Rosh Hashanah, it would appear that the common practice is not in accordance with the Brisker Rav. Nevertheless, his view should at least give us an additional reason not to look at a *sefer* during *chazaras hashatz* of Musaf on Rosh Hashanah, but to pay attention

to the words of the chazzan as much as possible.