

TEFILLAH B'TZIBBUR

by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

Question: What is the halachic definition of Tefillah b'tzibbur?

Discussion: Tefillah b'tzibbur means that ten adult men are davening Shemoneh Esreh together[1]. L'chatchilah, the ten men should begin reciting Shemoneh Esreh at the exact same moment[2], but b'diavad, even if all ten men did not begin the Shemoneh Esreh at the same time, it is still considered tefillah b'tzibbur[3].

Some poskim hold that if ten men are present but only six of them are davening Shemoneh Esreh, it is still considered tefillah b'tzibbur[4]. Many other poskim, however, disagree[5]. Some poskim hold that one who recites his own Shemoneh Esreh along with the sheliach tzibbur's chazaras ha-shatz also fulfills the obligation of tefillah b'tzibbur[6]. Most poskim, however, disagree[7].

Question: If one came late to shul for Shacharis, can he still manage to daven tefillah b'tzibbur?

Discussion: It depends on how late he came. Shulchan Aruch rules that it is more important to daven tefillah b'tzibbur than to recite the entire Pesukei d'zimrah. Therefore, one who came late should skip as much of Pesukei d'zimrah as necessary — except for Baruch she'amar, Ashrei (Nishmas on Shabbos) and Yishtabach — in order to be able to begin davening the Shemoneh Esreh with the rest of the congregation[8]. If one came so late that even if he would skip parts of Pesukei d'zimrah he would still be unable to begin Shemoneh Esreh with the entire congregation, he may still skip parts of Pesukei d'zimrah as long as he will be able to a) begin Shemoneh Esreh while there are still (at least) ten people davening[9]; and b) complete his entire Shemoneh Esreh before the sheliach tzibbur begins to recite Kedushah during chazaras ha-shatz[10]. If, however, he estimates that he does not have enough time to complete his Shemoneh Esreh before Kedushah will be recited, he should not daven Shemoneh Esreh with the tzibbur. Instead, he should wait and daven Shemoneh Esreh along with sheliach tzibbur's recitation of chazaras ha-shatz[11]. [Whether or not it is permitted to skip Pesukei d'zimrah in order to be able to recite Shemoneh Esreh along with the chazaras ha-shatz will depend on the dispute among the poskim mentioned earlier as to whether or not reciting Shemoneh Esreh along with chazaras ha-shatz is considered tefillah b'tzibbur.]

Question: Should a woman who comes late to shul for Shacharis skip parts of Pesukei d'zimrah in order to be able to recite Shemoneh Esreh with the congregation of men?

Discussion: Contemporary poskim are divided on this point: Some hold that since women are not considered as part of a tzibbur in any way, even if they pray at the same time that the tzibbur does,

their tefillah is not considered tefillah b'tzibbur. They should not, therefore, skip any part of Pesukei d'zimrah — which, according to many poskim, they are obligated to recite[12] — in order to daven with the tzibbur[13]. Other poskim, however, disagree. In their opinion, a woman who recites Shemoneh Esreh while the tzibbur is reciting it is considered as if she davened tefillah b'tzibbur, and she is permitted, therefore, to skip parts of Pesukei d'zimrah in order to be part of the tefillah b'tzibbur[14].

Question: As mentioned, one should skip parts of Pesukei d'zimrah for the sake of tefillah b'tzibbur. Is it also permitted to temporarily skip Birchos ha-Shachar for the sake of tefillah b'tzibbur and recite them after davening, or must they be recited before davening?

Discussion: The answer depends on which of the Birchos ha-Shachar are in question: Al netilas yadayim—may not be skipped, since after davening one can no longer recite Al netilas yadayim[15].

Asher yatzar—may not be skipped, since it must be recited immediately after one has relieved himself[16]. Elokai neshamah—may not be skipped, since some poskim maintain that after one has recited the blessing of Mechayeh ha-meisim in Shemoneh Esrei, he may no longer recite Elokai neshamah (since their content is similar[17]). Birchos ha-Torah—may not be skipped, since many poskim maintain that Pesukei d'zimrah (or any other pesukim) should not be said unless they are preceded by Birchos ha-Torah[18]. Birchos ha-shachar—may be said after davening. Consequently, if saying them first would cause one to miss tefillah b'tzibbur, he should wait till after davening to recite them—provided that he is sure that he will not forget to say them after davening[19].

Question: Which is the better choice for one who must skip some part of davening to make tefillah b'tzibbur—to skip Birchos ha-shachar and recite them after davening or to skip parts of Pesukei d'zimrah ?

Discussion: Chayei Adam[20] implies that reciting Pesukei d'Zimrah takes precedence over reciting Birchos ha-shachar before davening (except those mentioned earlier that may not be skipped), and some contemporary poskim rule in accordance with this view[21]. But several other poskim disagree and recommend not skipping any of the Birchos ha-shachar even at the expense of omitting some parts of Pesukei d'zimrah. They argue that the obligation to recite Birchos ha-shachar is mentioned in the Talmud, while the obligation to recite the parts of Pesukei d'zimrah that one is allowed to omit if necessary, is not[22]. In addition, Birchos ha-shachar were originally supposed to be said immediately upon arising and getting dressed; nowadays, we say them in shul, but we should not further delay them[23]. The mekubalim, too, are strongly opposed to reciting Birchos ha-shachar after davening[24].

1. *Mishnah Berurah* 90:28, quoting *Chayei Adam* 19:1.

2. *Mishnah Berurah* 66:35.

3. See Igros Moshe, O.C. 3:4 and Halichos Shelomo 1:8-7.
4. See Eimek Berachah, Tefillah 6; Chelkas Yaakov 2:138 and Minchas Yitzchak 3:10 and 9:6-7.
5. Harav Y.Z. Soloveitchik, quoted in Teshuvos v'Hanhagos 1:104; Orchos Rabbeinu 1:160; Igros Moshe, O.C. 1:28-30; Halichos Shelomo 1:5-8. [All poskim agree that it is permitted to recite Kaddish or chazaras ha-shatz for only six mispallelim, as long as ten men are present; Mishnah Berurah 69:8.]
6. Eishel Avraham, O.C. 52; Chasam Sofer (Igros Sofrim 14).
7. Peri Megadim (Eishel) 52:1 and 109:4; Salmas Chayim 91; Igros Moshe, O.C. 3:9.
8. See Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 52:1, who lists the various parts of Pesukei d'zimrah in order of "importance." Certain parts of Pesukei d'zimrah take priority over others when time constraints prevent one from reciting all of Pesukei d'zimrah.
9. Halichos Shelomo 1:8-7 and Devar Halachah 8.
10. See Mishnah Berurah 109:2 and Beiur Halachah, s.v. ha-nichnas.
11. Mishnah Berurah 109:14; Aruch ha-Shulchan 109:11-12.
12. See Mishnah Berurah 70:1 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 4. See also Aruch ha-Shulchan 47:25.
13. Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Avnei Yashfei, Tefillah 16 note 13 and Halichos Shelomo 1:5, Devar Halachah 4); Harav M. Shternbuch (Rigshei Lev, Hebrew edition, pg. 116).
14. Harav Y.S. Elyashiv and Harav S. Wosner (Avnei Yashfei, Tefillah 16 note 12); Harav C.P. Scheinberg and Harav M. Halberstam (Rigshei Lev, Hebrew edition, pgs. 115-116).
15. Mishnah Berurah 4:1.
16. Mishnah Berurah 7:5; 165:2.
17. Mishnah Berurah 52:9.
18. Rama, O.C. 46:9 and Mishnah Berurah 27-28.
19. Rama, O.C. 52:1. Although Aruch ha-Shulchan 52:8 rules that Lasechvi binah and Matir asurim may also not be recited after davening, most poskim disagree; see Igros Moshe, O.C. 5:20-12 and Yechaveh Da'as 4:5.
20. 19:4.
21. Rav C. P. Scheinberg (oral ruling, quoted in Tefillah K'hilchasah, pg. 192); Rav C. Kanievsky (Ishei Yisrael, pg. 151). See also Avnei Yashfei, Tefillah, pg. 121.
22. Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (oral ruling, quoted in Tefillah k'Hilchasah, pg. 192).

23. Rav S.Z. Auerbach (Halichos Shelomo 1:6-7 and Devar Halachah 10); Rav Y. Kamenetsky (oral ruling, quoted in Tefillah K'hilchasah, pg. 192).

24. See Kaf ha-Chayim 46:9, 32; 110:51.

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