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{ TOPIC }

EATING AND DRINKING BEFORE HEARING THE SHOFAR



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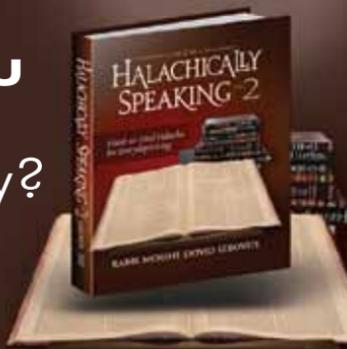
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EATING AND DRINKING BEFORE HEARING THE SHOFAR

We spend most of the day *davening* in *shul* on *Rosh Hashanah*. The *davening* usually concludes long after a normal *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov davening*. Even though it is the day of judgment, it is very difficult to avoid eating until after *mussaf*. Over the years, the practice has developed to eat and drink at a small break before the *shofar* is blown.¹ Is this practice recommended? Is *kiddush* required beforehand? Is there a difference when *Rosh Hashanah* falls out on *Shabbos* and the *shofar* is not blown? Which foods and drinks are permitted? How much? What are some of the other *halachos* which apply to this break? All these concerns will be discussed in this issue.

Eating Before *Mitzvos* – Introduction

The *Shulchan Aruch* rules in many different places that eating before fulfilling a *mitzvah* is not allowed. For example, the *Shulchan Aruch*² says that one may not eat before taking a *lulav* on *Succos*.³ On the first day he has to stop eating even in middle of the meal.⁴ On the other days, he does not have to stop as long as there is enough time in the day to perform the *mitzvah* after the meal. Some opine

1. See Katzei Hamatei 588:4, Natei Gavriel page 288:footnote 1, teshuva pages 451-457.
2. 652:2, Chai Adom 148:16, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 137:5. Refer to Meseches Succah 38a, Shabbos 9b. See Besamim Rosh 74, Moed Lechol Chai 23:160.
3. Refer to Biur Halacha 652 "ossur" who says this applies to other activities as well.
4. Mishnah Berurah 8.



that the second day of *Yom Tov* has the same *halacha* as the first day.⁵ Other discussions concerning eating before a *mitzvah* include: before *mincha* and *maariv*,⁶ before *bedikas chometz*,⁷ before *megilla* reading,⁸ and before *Chanukah* lighting.⁹

Reason

The reason for not eating (and various other activities) before doing *mitzvos* is that we are afraid that one will forget to do the *mitzvah* since he is preoccupied with eating.¹⁰

The *Rokeach*¹¹ brings down that as a *chavivus* to a *mitzvah*, *Chassidim* would fast before performing *mitzvos* such as *lulav* and others.

Tasting – *Hilchos Lulav*

The *Magen Avraham*¹² says that although eating is prohibited, tasting is permitted.¹³ However, one should not be lenient unless it is a great need.¹⁴ Tasting means eating no more than a *kebeitzah* of bread, but there is no limitation on fruit¹⁵ or non-intoxicating beverages.¹⁶ Eating an item

5. Taz 3, Mishnah Berurah 8.

6. Shulchan Aruch O.C. 233. Refer to Kulo Machmadim 14.

7. Shulchan Aruch O.C. 433, Magen Avraham 445:2.

8. Shulchan Aruch O.C. 692. Refer to Nishmas Avraham 1:page 330.

9. Shulchan Aruch O.C. 672:5.

10. Refer to Rashi Meseches Shabbos 9b "ad", Tzitz Eliezer 6:7, Moadim V'zemanim 1:4.

11. 353.

12. 652:4.

13. This is the opinion of others as well (Erech Shai 652).

14. Mishnah Berurah 7.

15. Refer to Shulchan Aruch 232:3, Mishnah Berurah 35.

16. Magen Avraham 17, Mishnah Berurah 232:3, Heishiv Moshe 19.

made with the five grains is permitted, as long as one does not make a meal from it.¹⁷

Introduction to Eating Before *Shofar*

All these rules should apply to *shofar* as well. Therefore, some question the practice of making *kiddush* before *tekios*¹⁸ and eating more than the allotted *shiur* of *mezonos*.¹⁹

Some *poskim* wonder why the *halacha* of not eating before *shofar* is not mentioned in the *Gemara* or *Shulchan Aruch*,²⁰ since this *halacha* is discussed in regard to many *mitzvos*. Some explain that since *Rosh Hashanah* is the day of judgment one will not forget to stop eating to hear the *shofar* (see below).²¹

Shofar – Forbidden to Eat

There are *poskim* who say that a healthy person should not eat before *shofar*. The *Matei Ephraim*²² prohibits eating before *shofar*, and a weak person should eat in private.²³ *Harav Henkin zt"l*²⁴ is quoted as saying that one should not eat before *tekios* (except for sick people).

Eating Before *Shofar* – Reason for Custom

The *Sdei Chemed*²⁵ says that in his days it was common for people to make *kiddush* and drink tea even before

17. Mishnah Berurah 232:34.

18. Refer to Oles Shmuel 83, Tzemech Yehuda 1:38, Betzel Hachochma 4:147, Mekadesh Yisroel 133.

19. Avnei Yoshpei 4:82:2.

20. Divrei Bineyahu 13:43.

21. Ibid. Refer to Tosefta Meseches Shabbos 1:7, Magen Avraham 692:7.

22. 588:2. Refer to Maharsham 1:1, Pe'as Sudcha 2:130.

23. Teshuvos V'hanhagos 4:137.

24. Yeshurun 20:page 160:2, see Bnei Bonim 1:14, 2:page 233. Refer to Minchas Yitzchok 5:111.

25. Mareches Rosh Hashanah 2:pages 88-89:31.

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laining. There were many *talmidei chachamim* in the crowd, and no one protested.²⁶

The *Sdei Chemed* only permitted drinking; however, the custom of many is that even a healthy person may eat a small *shiur* of food as well. What is the rationale for this?

The *Tzitz Eliezer*²⁷ explains as follows: The prohibition of eating before performing a *mitzvah* is because we are afraid that one will forget to do the *mitzvah* since he is preoccupied with eating. On *Rosh Hashanah*, however, everyone eats together, and the entire break is over in a short period of time. It is very unlikely that the entire congregation will forget about the *shofar* because of the eating. Therefore, it is permitted to make *kiddush* and eat and drink within the parameters expressed above (see “Tasting”).

Others offer a unique explanation for this *heter*: During the era when the *Sanhedrin* established the calendar based on witnesses’ sightings of the moon, they would not blow *shofar* until the witnesses testified. The witnesses most often would not appear until the latter part of the day. *Chazal* did not impose a prohibition to eat until *tekias shofar* because it would constitute too great a burden to require everyone to wait until the end of the day to eat.²⁸ Even today, when we have a set calendar, there is no restriction on eating before *shofar*.

The *Moadim V’zemanim*²⁹ says we know that one is supposed to have *simchas Yom Tov*, and the long *davening*

26. Refer to Mekadesh Yisroel 133.

27. 6:7, 7:32, 8:21, 18:18:3, 20:23, see Chasam Sofer Y.D. 7, Meoros Nosson (Purim) 34, Nefesh Chai (Margoles) 584, Minhag Yisroel Torah 585:3.

28. Hisoreros Teshuva O.C. 1:225.

29. 1:4. Refer to *ibid* for additional reasons.

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may limit the *simchas Yom Tov*. Therefore, we eat a bit at the break.³⁰

Another argument is that we make a break for the older people and women who need to eat because the *davening* is too long. Once we are making a break, the healthy people may also eat.³¹

In any case one should make sure not to overeat, as a full stomach will hinder his concentration.

Women

The restriction on eating before *tekias shofar* is more lenient in regard to women, because they are generally exempt from time-bound *mitzvos* like listening to the *shofar*.³² There are *poskim*, however, who hold that although women are technically exempt from listening to *shofar*, they have nevertheless accepted this *mitzvah* upon themselves as an obligation.³³ Based on this view, it has become customary all over the world for women to go to *shul* to listen to the *shofar*, or else to hear the *shofar* at home.

Not all *poskim*, however, agree that women have accepted upon themselves an obligation from which they are clearly exempt.³⁴ Some *poskim* rule, therefore, that women are not obligated to listen to *tekias shofar*.³⁵ Although most women follow the stringent opinion, a

30. Moadim V'zemanim 1:4.

31. Nezer Hatorah 7:page 96.

32. O.C. 589:6.

33. See Magen Avraham (O.C. 489:1, concerning *sefiras ha-omer*) who says that women have accepted [certain] time-restricted *mitzvos* as obligations. He does not, however, single out *shofar* more than any other time-restricted *mitzvah*. Chai Adam (141:7) and R' Akiva Eiger (Teshuvos 1, addendum) also state that women have accepted *shofar* as an obligation.

34. See Nezirus Shimshon (quoted in Sdei Chemed, Ma'areches Mem, 136) and Teshuvos Sha'arei De'ah 2:237.

35. Salmas Chaim 1:88.

woman who must eat before *tekias shofar* may do so,³⁶ even if the amount of food she requires is considered a *kevius seudah*.

Custom in *Yeshivos*

The custom of many *Yeshivos* is for everyone to go to the dining room, hear *kiddush* and eat.³⁷ Others are not happy with this since everyone eats publicly.³⁸ It would be preferable that those who are weak should make *kiddush* and eat in private.³⁹

Custom of Some *Gedolim*

The *Steipler zt"l* used to recite the *zohar* and other *tefillos* during the break. In his later years he recited portions of *tehillim*.⁴⁰ He did not make *kiddush* before *tekios*.⁴¹ *Harav Moshe Feinstein zt"l* did not eat before *tekios*.⁴² *Harav Elyashiv zt"l*⁴³ and *Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita* do not eat or drink before *tekios*.

Weak Person

If one is weak and will not be able to concentrate without eating, he should make *kiddush* and eat and drink. This

36. Eishel Avraham Butchatch 589, Chai Adam 141:7, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 129:19. Refer to Rivevos Ephraim 3:393:2, 4:144:32.

37. Opinion of Harav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l as quoted in Lev Avraham 1:page 18.

38. Refer to Minchas Yitzchok 5:111.

39. Divrei Bineyahu 13:43.

40. Orchos Rabbeinu 2:page 182:4. Refer to Darchei Chaim V'sholom 716:page 251.

41. Orchos Rabbeinu 2:page 181:1. Refer to Chelek Levi 189.

42. As related by Harav Aron Felder Shlita.

43. As quoted in Chag B'chag page 113:footnote 79.

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should be done in a discreet manner.⁴⁴ One may drink coffee and tea without *kiddush* according to many *poskim*.⁴⁵

Appointing a *Shomer*

In a place where a person reminds people to go to *shul* for *mincha* or *maariv*, it is permitted to eat a regular meal before *davening*, since people will not forget to *daven*.⁴⁶ The *poskim* do not mention this as an option to permit a person to eat before hearing the *shofar*.⁴⁷

Rosh Hashanah on Shabbos

When *Rosh Hashanah* falls out on *Shabbos*, the *shofar* is not blown. Therefore, some *poskim* say that one may eat before *mussaf*. However, one is still bound by the *halachos* that apply to eating before *mussaf* on a regular *Shabbos*, as discussed below.⁴⁸ Others feel that one should not eat even when *Rosh Hashanah* falls out on *Shabbos*.⁴⁹

Kohanim and Eating at the Kiddush

A *kohen* who wishes to *duchan* at *birchas kohanim* should not drink a *reviis* of wine because he will not be in the correct state of mind to perform the *mitzvah*.⁵⁰

Leaving *Sifrei Torah* on the *Bimah*

During the break on *Rosh Hashanah*, the custom of most places is to place the *sifrei Torah* on the *bimah*, covered with a *tallis*. This may be considered a disgrace, since the *sifrei*

44. Matei Ephraim 588:2.

45. Katzei Hamatei 588:5. See Orchos Rabbeinu 2:page 181:1.

46. Rama O.C. 232:2, Mishnah Berurah 235:18.

47. Refer to Peshat V'iyen Meseches Berachos page 98:447, Piskei Teshuvos 585:2.

48. Opinion of Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Mikadesh Yisroel (Yomim Noraim) 140.

49. Moadim V'zemanim 8:1:4, Teshuvos V'hanhagos 4:138, 5:179.

50. Refer to Shulchan Aruch 128:38, Ohr Hahalacha 1:page 56:38, Moadim V'zemanim 1:4. See Kaf Hachaim 286:26.



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Torah are left alone, and the *shul* is empty of people. Is this the preferred method, or is there an alternative? Often, there are a few people who do not eat and remain in the *shul*, so they can watch the *sifrei Torah*. Some recommend returning the *sifrei Torah* to the *aron kodesh* before the break.⁵¹ There are a few disadvantages to this approach. First, the *shofar* reminds us of *Har Sinai (Torah)*, so it is appropriate to keep the *sifrei Torah* on the *bimah* for *shofar*. In addition, the half *kaddish* that is said before *mussaf* applies to returning the *sifrei Torah* to the *aron kodesh*. If one would place them in the *aron kodesh* before the break, then no half *kaddish* would be said before *mussaf*. The custom of most places is to leave the *sifrei Torah* on the *bimah*, covered with a *tallis*.⁵²

Tallis and the Break

People frequently remove their *tallis* during the break. Usually the break is not for more than 20-30 minutes. The question arises whether one has to recite another *beracha* on his *tallis* when he returns from the break. Some require a new *beracha*,⁵³ but the custom is not to recite a new *beracha* unless the break is for more than two hours.⁵⁴

Eating Before *Mussaf* in General (not necessarily related to *Rosh Hashanah*)

There is a discussion in the *poskim* if one is permitted to eat before *Mussaf* on *Shabbos*. There is a minority opinion that holds one may not even taste food before *Mussaf*;⁵⁵

51. Ze Hashulchan 500:page 80, Katzei Hamatei end of 590:28, Gam Ani Odcha 86:19 (page 178).

52. Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Elef Hamagen 621:6, Oles Noach 7:pages 31-33, Teshuvos V'hanhagos 2:277, Be'er Eliyahu O.C. 3:76, Refer to Matei Ephraim 590:37.

53. Orchos Rabbeinu 1:page 2 (additions to chelek 1).

54. Kol Amunim 1:page 28:1.

55. Refer to Meseches Berochos 28b.

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but the *halacha* does not follow this opinion and one is allowed to taste before *Mussaf*.⁵⁶ This includes bread up to a *kebeitzah*, fruit, and *mezonos*.⁵⁷ There are some *poskim* who say that even a meal would be permitted if one feels ill and needs to eat in order to concentrate.⁵⁸ However, this is not the overwhelming custom unless one is weak.⁵⁹ In addition, there is a discussion whether one who eats before *davening* is required to make *kiddush*. There are some who are lenient, since the obligation for *kiddush* may only apply after *davening*,⁶⁰ but most *poskim* require *kiddush* prior to eating before *davening*.⁶¹ If one does not have wine or other valid beverages for *kiddush*, he can be lenient.⁶² If there is no food, then one should drink an entire *reviis* of wine.⁶³ There is a discussion in the *poskim* if one may eat before *mussaf* by appointing a *shomer* to remind him to *daven mussaf* after he finishes eating.⁶⁴

56. Meseches Berochos 28b, Taz 286:2.

57. Shulchan Aruch 286:3, Magen Avraham 1, Mishnah Berurah 8. For a discussion on this refer to Birurei Chaim 1:pages 329-333.

58. Bach O.C. 286, Chasam Sofer O.C. 69, Mishnah Berurah 9, Shar Hatzzyion 9, Kaf Hachaim 31, Aruch Hashulchan 13.

59. Refer to Magen Avraham 286:1, Taz 2, Mishnah Berurah 9. Refer to Shulchan Aruch 286:3, Aruch Hashulchan 286:13, Kaf Hachaim 31, Yabea Omer O.C. 5:22, see Nishmas Shabbos 2:362.

60. Birchei Yosef 386:7, Daas Torah 286:3, Ikrei Hadat O.C. 13:3, Ohr L'tzyion 2:2:14. Refer to Chelek Levi 189:page 72.

61. Magen Avraham 286:1, Erech Shai 652, Biur Halacha 286 "achila," 289 "chovas," Aruch Hashulchan 286:14, Kaf Hachaim 286:24, Aprakasisa D'yana 1:65, Hisoreros Teshuva 138, opinion of Harav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l quoted in Yeshurun 15:page 122, Nishmas Shabbos 2:364, Mikadesh Yisroel (Yomim Noraim) 137, Shevet Halevi 4:54:3, Betzel Hachochmah 4:147, Igros Moshe O.C. 2:26:2, , Avnei Yoshpei 1:66.

62. Sharei Teshuva 1, Mishnah Berurah 386:9, Kaf Hachaim 28, Yabea Omer O.C. 5:22. Refer to Minchas Shabbos 77:34, see Kovetz Bais Aron V'Yisroel 12:pages 107-111.

63. Mishnah Berurah 286:7.

64. Refer to Sharei Zevulun 13:page 69-73 in great depth.

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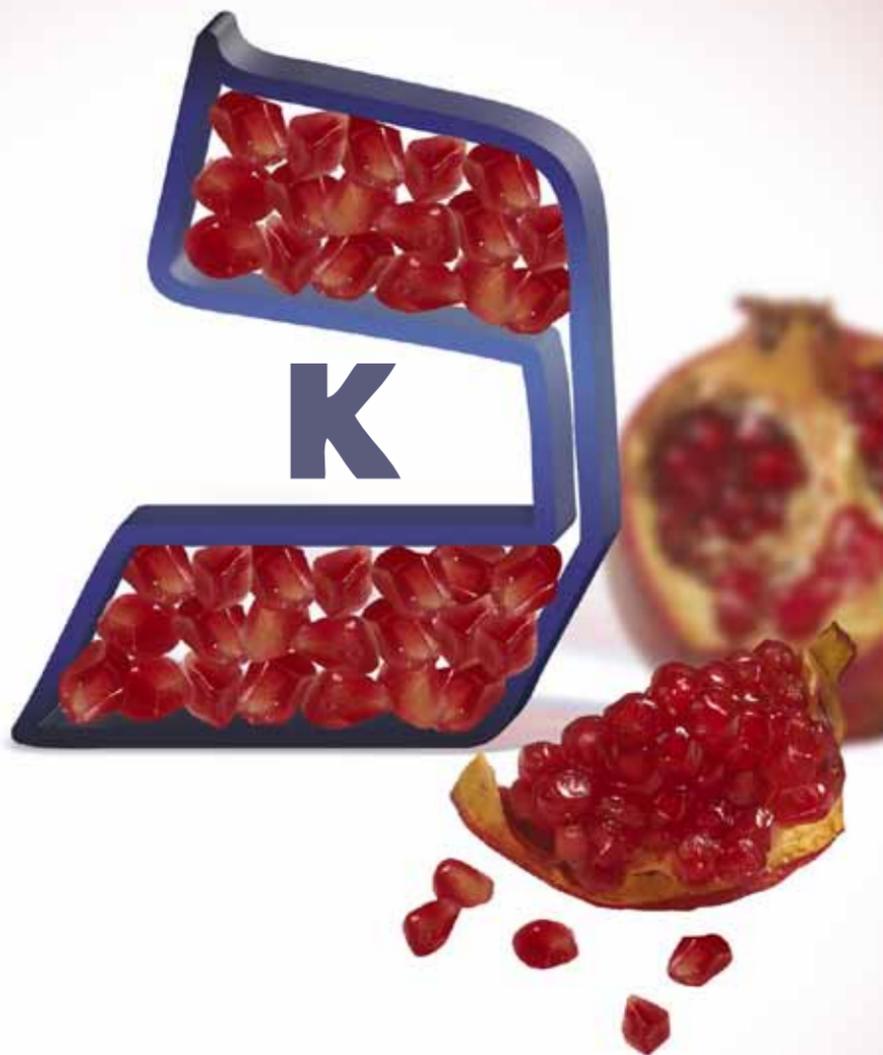
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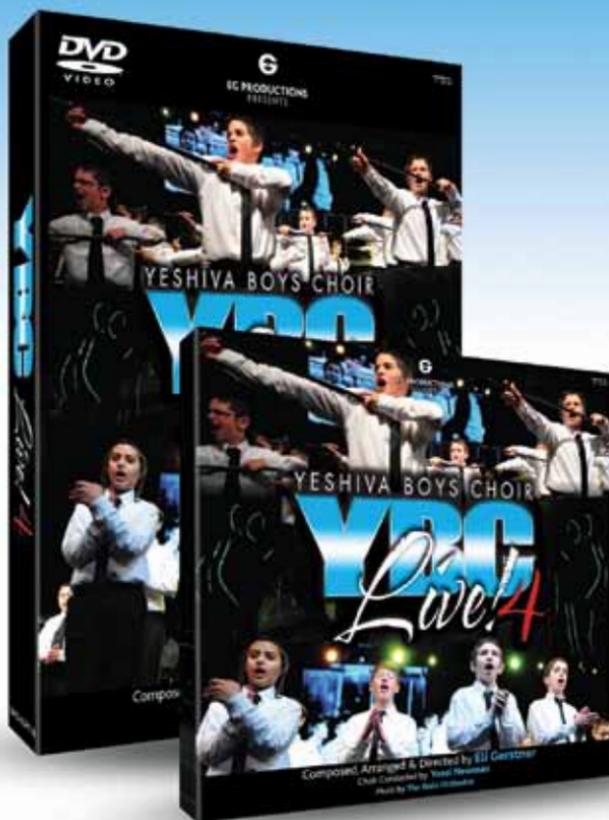
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