

Helping Others to Complete Their Mitzva

Special thanks to Revach L'Neshama for the story

While fundraising in New York, Reb Elchonon Wasserman's host offered to give him a ride to his meeting in mid-Manhattan. Although R' Elchonon was not one to take favors at the expense of others, he agreed, since the host also needed to go the vicinity of R' Elchonon's destination.

As they got close to the building where R' Elchonon's meeting was to take place, the host pointed out the building, and suggested that R' Elchonon get off at the corner since the building was very close and the traffic situation made it not worthwhile to go around the block.

R' Elchonon politely asked the driver to take him around the block, to the front door. The driver was surprised by this request. R' Elchonon explained the reason for his request as follows. Chazal teach us: *המתחיל במצוה, אומרים לו גמור* – *when someone starts a mitzva, we tell him "complete it"*. This is teaching us that when you see a person who started a *mitzva*, but is reluctant to finish it, you should tell him "complete it". Hence, Rav Elchonon told the driver who began the mitzva of chesed, to complete it to drive Rav Elchonon to his destination.



Special Thanks to Menucha Supporters



Free weekly publication | Copyright © 2016 by Shlomo Epshteyn | Distributed in Chicago, IL; Beit Shemesh, Israel. Contact info & electronic list: menucha613@gmail.com | Menucha online: www.btya.org | Line-art images are copyright of Walder Education Pavilion of Torah Umesorah.

Halacha Challenge

Blowing a Shofar on Rosh Hashana for Chinuch

In light of the upcoming Yomim Tovim of Rosh Hashana, let's explore a practical halachic question relevant to Rosh Hashana: Is it permitted to blow a shofar when one is not doing it for the mitzva of hearing (or making others hear) the shofar?



On a Rosh Hashana afternoon, Reuven and his brother Shimon were walking back home from *shul*, joyfully singing the various *nigunim* from *Musaf*.

On the way, they met their friend Levi. "Good Yom Tov, Reuven and Shimon!" he

greeted them cheerfully. "Look what I have..." said Levi mysteriously as he pulled out a beautiful shofar from a decorated leather pouch.

"Wow, is it your shofar?!" asked Reuven. "Yep. My father gave it to me as a present for my birthday and taught me how to blow it." replied Levi. After a short pause, he asked: "Who wants to try to blow it? I can teach you how to blow the *tekios* of the *mitzva*."

Reuven is twelve years old, Shimon and Levi are both thirteen.

Q: Who is permitted to blow the shofar now? May Levi teach how to blow the *tekios* of the *mitzva*?

DEDICATIONS

- Le'u lei nishmas Chaya Miriam Bas Boruch

Special thanks to kehillas **Beis Tefillah Yonah Avraham**



Help: Two sources will help us answer the challenge. It is taught that on Shabbos and Yom Tov it is not allowed to play musical instruments. In fact, it is prohibited to use any instrument which is made to produce sounds. For example, on Shabbos and Yom Tov, one cannot knock on the door of a house with a door knocker.¹

Since a shofar is a musical instrument, we need to determine if blowing it on Rosh Hashana is permitted when one is not doing it for the sake of fulfilling (or making others fulfill) the *mitzva* of hearing shofar.

Another source that we need to know to solve our challenge is a mishna in masechet Rosh Hashana (4:5): *We don't stop children from blowing [the shofar]. In fact, we work with them (i.e., we teach them) until they will learn.* To solve our challenge, think which cases this mishna could be referring to.

Menucha's Answer*: Only Reuven is permitted to blow the shofar now. Levi may tell Reuven how to blow the *tekios* of the *mitzva*, but may not demonstrate.

Explanation: The fact that, in general, playing an instrument on Shabbos and Yom Tov is prohibited, is relevant to Rosh Hashana as well. In the laws of Rosh Hashana, the Rama teaches the following: *After they have fulfilled it (i.e., all of the tekios of Rosh Hashana), one should not blow [the shofar] any more for nothing* (i.e., one cannot blow the shofar from now, unless he is blowing it to be *motzi* others in the *mitzva* of hearing a shofar).² The Mishna Berura explains that since there is no longer a need to make any more *tekios*, blowing the shofar is prohibited now, just like on any other Yom Tov (under the general prohibition to play musical instruments on Shabbos and Yom Tov).³

However, the Rama there continues and says: *But it is permitted to tell a katan (i.e., a child under Bar Mitzva) to blow [a shofar], even if that child reached the age of chinuch. And [that child] is permitted to blow [a shofar] throughout the whole day.* The Mishna Berura adds that this halacha is telling us that the father of this child or any adult (i.e., a person who reached Bar Mitzva) may put effort in teaching this child (verbally) the way of blowing *tekios* properly.

Can you find another case in halacha where for chinuch purposes a child may do something that an adult cannot?

1. רמ"א א"ח ס' שלח סעי' א 2. רמ"א א"ח ס' תקצ"ו א, ועיין במ"ב א"ח ס' תקצ"ו ס"ק ד 3. מ"ב שם ס"ק ג

* Note: Menucha's answer is for Torah learning purposes only and not as a *halachic* ruling.

Riddles



Reb Yehuda knows *halacha* well. Therefore, when he began eating the *simanim* on Rosh Hashana, he pushed away the apple that was in front of him and asked for a date. "A fruit from *Shivas Haminim* is *kodem*!" he explained.

But when he was served a piece of date, he shook his head in disapproval and pointed to a fruit that was on a platter in the middle of the table. "According to *halacha*, I need to have that one," said Reb Yehuda.

What halacha was Reb Yehuda referring to?



(Of course, all of the fruits in Reb Yehuda's house are kosher and bug free)

Last week's Riddle

Levi squeezed fresh oranges to make 100% pure, home-made orange juice for Shabbos. Before Shabbos, he poured a cup of that orange juice in a cup and within seconds he drank exactly a *revi'is* of it (i.e., enough to say *Borei Nefashos* blessing). "Delicious!" he said to himself, realizing that this is the only thing that he drank or ate today. A minute later, he said: "I am not sure if I should say the *Borei Nefashos* blessing for that orange juice. Let me call my Rav." He called the Rav and told him the whole story. The Rav said: "No." *Why not?*

Answer

Levi merely tasted the juice to see if it tastes fine and fitting to be served on Shabbos. [For the details of this halacha, see the Shulchan Aruch at the end of *siman* 210, and the Mishna Berura there.]