

Halachos of Shofar-Blowing Not During Davening

1. When blowing shofar not during davening, one should not blow before 3 hours of the day (i.e., ¼ of the day) have elapsed. In Baltimore this year (5781/2020) , that is 9:55.
2. There is no need for a “makri” to call out the notes when blowing not during davening.
3. **Berachos:** Before blowing shofar, two berachos are recited:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצונו לשמוע קול שופר
ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה

Note that Shehecheyanu is recited also on the second day, even if the first day is not Shabbos.

When blowing not in shul, one of the listeners may recite it for the group, or each listener may recite it for himself (or herself). If this is not practical, the person blowing may recite the berachos on behalf of the listeners.

Among Ashkenazim, it is customary that women recite these berachos as well. Sephardi women do not recite them. Note however, that even among Ashkenazim, **a man should not recite these berachos on behalf of a woman (or women)** unless the man is also reciting it for himself or another man (or men). Therefore, if the person blowing shofar has already fulfilled the mitzvah in shul (or anywhere else), and he is currently blowing only for women, the women should recite the berachos for themselves, and the person blowing should *not* recite it for them. If, in this case, none of the women is capable of reciting the berachos, shofar should be blown without the berachos being said.

If the shofar-blower does recite the berachos, he should hold the shofar while reciting them.

4. **Sounds:** When blowing not during davening, it is customary to blow only “30 sounds.” They are:

Tekiyah	Shevarim-Teruah	Tekiyah
Tekiyah	Shevarim-Teruah	Tekiyah
Tekiyah	Shevarim-Teruah	Tekiyah
Tekiyah	Shevarim	Tekiyah
Tekiyah	Shevarim	Tekiyah
Tekiyah	Shevarim	Tekiyah
Tekiyah	Teruah	Tekiyah
Tekiyah	Teruah	Tekiyah
Tekiyah	Teruah	Tekiyah Gedolah.

According to the Mishnah Berurah, the Shevarim-Teruah in this case should be blown without pausing or breathing in between. However, the sounds should not be actually joined together. On the other hand, one **must** take a breath between all of the other sounds, i.e., between the Tekiyah and the Shevarim-Teruah, between the Shevarim-Teruah and the next Tekiyah, between the Tekiyah and the next Tekiyah, etc. Any time one stumbles over a sound and restarts it, one should take a breath before restarting.

5. If the lines are blown out of order (for example, if one blows “Tekiyah, Shevarim, Tekiyah” before “Tekiyah, Shevarim-Teruah, Tekiyah”) one nonetheless fulfills the mitzvah lechatchilah.
6. **Length of Tekiyah:** Minimally, a Tekiyah must be as long as the non-Tekiyah sound of that line. That is, when blowing “Tekiyah, Shevarim-Teruah, Tekiyah,” the Tekiyos must be as long as is needed to blow Shevarim-Teruah; when blowing “Tekiyah, Shevarim, Tekiyah,” the Tekiyos must be as long as is needed to blow Shevarim; and when blowing “Tekiyah, Teruah, Tekiyah,” the Tekiyos must be as long as is needed to blow Teruah. Of course, different baalei tokaya take different amounts of time to blow a Shevarim and/or a Teruah, so the

required length of a Tekiyah will vary from baal tokaya to baal tokaya. Practically speaking, you are safe if the Tekiyos for “Tekiyah, Shevarim-Teruah, Tekiyah” are at least 3½ seconds long, and if the Tekiyos for “Tekiyah, Shevarim, Tekiyah” and “Tekiyah, Teruah, Tekiyah” are at least 1¾ seconds long. Bedieved, it is sufficient if any Tekiyah is 1¾ seconds long.

There is no maximum length for a Tekiyah.

7. Blowing a **Tekiyah Gedolah** at the end is only a matter of custom. One definitely fulfills the mitzvah if one blows an ordinary Tekiyah. As mentioned above, this can be as short as 1¾ seconds.
8. **A Shevarim** consists of three sounds blown without pausing or breathing in between them. Preferably, one should not blow more than three sounds. Each of these sounds should be the length of three of the Teruah sounds (three “beeps”). Bedieved, it is kosher if each sound is not shorter than two Teruah sounds and not longer than six Teruah sounds.
9. **A Teruah** consists of at least nine very short sounds blown without pausing or breathing in between them. It is perfectly fine to blow more than nine sounds. In fact, most baalei tokaya blow more than nine, in order not to mistakenly blow fewer than nine.
10. **Type of Sound:** One fulfills the mitzvah even if the sound is rough or faint. However, an actual gap (such as blowing “air”) in the middle of a sound invalidates it. Ideally, the tekiah should be a “straight” sound without any warble. However, if the sound does change in pitch or volume, or warble, one does fulfill the mitzvah.
11. **How to Hold the Shofar:** The opening of the shofar should preferably face up. It is customary to blow using the right side of the mouth. (There is a difference of opinions regarding which side a lefty should use.) But this only a preference, and one fulfills the mitzvah regardless of which part of the mouth was used. Likewise, it is customary to hold the shofar in one’s right hand while blowing, but one fulfills the mitzvah regardless of how the shofar is held. One may certainly use a second hand to assist in holding the shofar or wrapping one’s lips around the shofar.
12. The person blowing must **have in mind** that he is blowing on behalf of the people listening. It is a good idea to have in mind anyone who may be listening, not just the people assembled in front of the blower. That way, if someone else hears the blowing, he can fulfill the mitzvah, even if he is outside the room or elsewhere.
13. **Interruptions Between the Sounds:** There may not be extraneous shofar sounds in the middle of any line. For example, one may not blow a Teruah (or even part of a Teruah) before a Shevarim, or a Shevarim (or part of a Shevarim) after a Teruah, or two Shevarims or two Teruhs in a row. In each of these cases, one must start the line over again. For example, if, when blowing “Tekiyah, Shevarim, Tekiyah,” one mistakenly blew a Teruah after the Shevarim, one must restart with the first Tekiyah of that line. (If it was the second set of “Tekiyah, Shevarim, Tekiyah,” there is no need to redo the first “Tekiyah, Shevarim, Tekiyah.”)

If, however, one was trying to make the correct sound but was unsuccessful in doing so, there is no need to restart the line. Rather, one may take a breath and restart the sound. The exception to this is if the unsuccessful attempt involved three sounds (i.e., a Shevarim or three Teruah sounds). In such a case, the line should be restarted.

The baal tokaya may talk between the sounds if he is not fulfilling the mitzvah with that blowing.

14. **Another Shofar Blowing:** Since there may not be extraneous sounds in the middle of a line, the people listening should not hear other shofar sounds in the middle even if they come from a different shofar blowing. Therefore, if another shofar blowing can be heard, one should wait to start his blowing until the other blowing is completed.