



Taking Over as Chazan after Yishtabach

Question: I was supposed to take over as *chazan* at *Yishtabach*, but I absentmindedly said *Yishtabach* quietly as the previous *chazan* was finishing *Az Yashir*. I quickly asked him to say *Yishtabach* and *Chatzi Kaddish*, after which I took over. Was this appropriate?

Answer: There were a few potential options to consider (besides telling your friend to continue), which we will evaluate and compare.

Your apparent assumption that *Yishtabach* leads straight into *Kaddish* has some basis. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 53:1) instructs the *chazan* to stand by the *amud* before *Yishtabach* so he can go straight into *Kaddish* (see Mishna Berura 53:1). However, the connection is more between *P'sukei D'zimra* (which *Yishtabach* concludes) and *Kaddish* than *Yishtabach* itself, as the following *halacha* illustrates. When there is an acute need to speak in the midst of *Shacharit*, which is permitted between *Yishtabach* and *Kaddish*, it is necessary to recite a few *p'sukim* of *P'sukei D'zimra* to justify the upcoming *Kaddish* (Rama, OC 54:3). Although the break was long enough to divorce that which

preceded the break from *Kaddish*, it is permitted, necessary, and sufficient to say some *p'sukim* and not to repeat *Yishtabach*.

Even to the extent that there is some importance to connecting specifically *Yishtabach* to *Kaddish*, the important thing is probably the *tzibbur's* connection, irrespective of this *chazan's* recitation. We see this, to a great extent, when a new *chazan* starting at *Ashrei* recites *Kaddish* (*Titkabel*) on a different *chazan's* *chazarat hashatz* (see Divrei Sofrim, Yoreh Deah 376:103). There was even a *minhag*, cited and approved of by the Rav Pe'alim (II, OC 14), that after the *chazan* finishes *Yishtabach*, mourners (even one who did not say *Yishtabach*) recite *Chatzi Kaddish*.

The Pri Megadim (EA 52:1) posits that, classically, a *chazan* recites out loud all of *Yishtabach*, which enables people to be *yotzei* with him. The Chelek Levi (OC 31) says that our *chazanim*, who start at “*Berachot v'ho-da'ot ...*,” do not serve as full *chazanim* with all their *halachot*. One application of this distinction relates to the *halacha* that when a *chazan* is replaced in the middle of *tefilla*, the new *chazan* must go back to the beginning of the unit (Shulchan Aruch, OC 126:2). In theory this applies to the *berachot* of *Kri'at Shema*, but the Mishna Berura (59:29) points out that nowadays when everyone *davens* for themselves, the *chazan* functions more as a pace setter than a real *chazan* and he does not need to go back. So too here, we do

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not use a halachic *chazan* for *Yishtabach*. For all of these reasons, you could have and should have either started with *Kaddish* without ending off *Yishtabach* again or had your friend finish *Yishtabach* and you recite *Kaddish*. (The first way would have made it easier to avoid speaking to explain yourself, at a time when speaking is permitted only for special needs.)

Let us now analyze what you apparently assumed, i.e., that making a switch between *Kaddish* and *Barchu* is better because they are not as connected as *Yishtabach* and *Kaddish*. We saw that *Kaddish* relates to *P'sukei D'zimra*. In contrast, we repeat *Barchu* for those who missed even when not preceded by *Kaddish*. On the other hand, *Kaddish* and *Barchu* are quite linked. Classically, *Kaddish* goes with *Barchu* (see Shulchan Aruch, OC 69:1). Also we prefer to speak when critical between *Yishtabach* and *Kaddish* rather than between *Kaddish* and *Barchu* (Rama, OC 54:3; see the hesitation on the matter

in Darchei Moshe, OC 54:1). In short, it was unnecessary and slightly unfortunate to do the switch after *Kaddish*, but you did not ruin anything.

You were right not to wait until after *Barchu*. The Beit Yosef and Darchei Moshe (to OC 69) disagree to what extent *Barchu* with its response is self-standing. Although it is not unanimous (see Sdei Chemed, vol. VII, p. 337), there is reason to look at *Barchu* as the beginning of *Yotzer Ohr*, making it a less logical time to switch. However, due to the *chazan's* limited functionality at these points, this too would not have ruined anything. ■

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