



ERETZ HEMDAH

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לעילוי נשמת
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Possibly Early Mincha

Question: I (a woman) noticed after finishing *Mincha* that it was two minutes after the earliest time to *daven Mincha*, so I must have started *Shemoneh Esrei* (=SE) before the time. Should I repeat SE?

Answer: Earliest *Mincha* time on our halachic calendars is a half hour after *chatzot* (astronomical midday). Since the three *tefillot* relate to morning, afternoon, and night, we would have expected *Mincha* to begin at *chatzot*. The reason it does not is critical to answering your question.

One *gemara* (Yoma 28b) reports that Avraham *davened Mincha* right after *chatzot* and wonders why in the *Beit Hamikdash* they never slaughtered the afternoon *korban* until a half hour later. One of the *gemara*'s answers is that Avraham was an expert in knowing when it

was *chatzot*, whereas others wait a half hour to make sure it is afternoon. The Magen Avraham (233:1) learns from here that fundamentally the earliest time for *Mincha* is *chatzot*, and our practice of waiting a half hour is precautionary.

Another *gemara* (Berachot 26b) writes categorically that the earliest first starting time of *Mincha* (*Mincha Gedola*) is 6.5 hours (i.e., half an hour after *chatzot*), which corresponds to the earliest afternoon *korban* of the year (*Mincha Ketana* is at 9.5 hours into the day, the usual time of the *korban*). One reconciliation of the *gemarot* is that Yoma follows the approach that the *tefillot* were modeled after the patriarch's *tefillot* and that Berachot follows the approach that they are modeled after the *korbanot*, i.e., never before 6.5 hours (Magen Gibborim 233:1).

Conceptually, the Magen Avraham (*ibid.*) saw the extra half hour as a precaution, according to which we would expect that if one accidentally *davened* during the half hour he would be *yotzei*. Yet, he infers from the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 233:1) that since he views *Mincha Gedola* itself as *b'di'eved*, before 6.5 hours must be totally invalid. The Pri Megadim (*ad loc.*) counters that there could be three levels: optimal- *Mincha Ketana*; less than optimal- *Mincha Gedola*; *b'di'eved*- during the half hour.

The Mishna Berura (233:2) suggests that if we wait a half hour due to concern for mistake, we should treat someone who *davened* then like one who is unsure if he *davened* properly, who does not need, according to the basic law, to *daven* again (see Be'ur Halacha 107:1). However, he also raises the following reason not to be *yotzei b'di'eved*. Irrespective of the original

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reason for adding the half hour, once it was set, prior to that time is simply and fully the wrong time (Sha'ar Hatziyun 233:6). This approach finds expression in the opinion that during this half hour, one can even *daven Shacharit* (see Mishna Berura 89:7). The Mishna Berura does not resolve the question whether one who *davened Mincha* during the half hour must repeat *Mincha*. (If one chose to do so, she **might** make a condition that if she was already *yotzeit*, the second *tefilla* is a *nedava* (see opinions in Ishei Yisrael 27:(9)).)

We now turn to your case's specific details. The fact that you **ended SE** at the right time does not help. Although a minority opinion holds that if one starts *SE* at the right time, he is *yotzei* even if he finishes after the end point, that is because the beginning may have special importance (see Aruch Hashulchan, OC 110:5). The end does not have such importance!

What is helpful is that your case occurred in early winter. It is not clear whether the half hour is a *sha'ah zemanit* or 30 minutes on the clock (see Sha'ar Hatziyun 233:8), and most calendars are *machmir* in both directions. Therefore, you started before the end of the

30 minutes, but after half of a winter *sha'ah zemanit*. Your being a woman might call for slight leniency. Women are obligated in *tefilla*, but **some** say that once a day suffices (see Mishna Berura 106:4). Even if you *daven Mincha* regularly, this doubt can be added to the others.

Most *poskim* rule that one who *davened Mincha* during the half hour after *chatzot* was *yotzei* (see Ishei Yisrael 27:5; Tefilla K'hilchata 3:39). This is clearer in your case due to the additional indications. ■

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