

Shoel U'Mashiv

A Quiet Kaddish

Rabbi Noah Whittenburg

Q - As *Davening* was about to commence, someone came over to me and in a very low, hoarse voice asked, “if I lost my voice, can I still recite *Kaddish* for my father?”

A - What is the purpose of *Kaddish*?

The *Aruch HaShulchan O.C. 55:1* explains that *Kaddish* was instituted following the desecration of *Hashem's* name that occurred due to the destruction of the first *Beis HaMikdash* and the scattering of the Jewish people amongst the nations.

Therefore, we pray that glory will be returned to His great name. The *Mishnah Berurah 55:1* says due to the awesomeness of *Kaddish*, it is best to minimize the number of times it is recited. Reciting it too freely is also a desecration of *Hashem's* name. The *Gemara Brachos 21b* learns that any *Dvar Sh'B'Kedusha* (sanctification of *Hashem's* name) recited requires 10 men. This is what the *Shulchan Aruch O.C. 55:1* says is the *Halacha*. Therefore, *Kaddish* can only be said with a *Minyan*.

Does it have to be audible?

The *Shulchan Aruch O.C. 215:2* says if one hears a Jew making a *Bracha*, even if they didn't hear the entire *Bracha* from beginning to end, they are able to answer *Amen*. The *Mishnah Berurah 215:6* records that there is a debate whether one needs to hear starting from *Hashem's* name until the end of the *Bracha* in order to answer *Amen* or whether hearing just the end of the *Bracha* is enough (i.e., *Borei Minei Mezonos*). The *Be'er Halacha 124:8* says if one does not know which *Bracha* is being recited, not to respond *Amen*. The implication from here is that reciting *Kaddish* quietly would not work. In *Halichos Shlomo 18:25* it says that Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach would say *Kaddish* for relatives on their *Yahrzeit* if they didn't have anyone reciting *Kaddish* for them. It adds that sometimes he would say the *Kaddish* very softly together with the other *Aveilim* since the *Amen* being answered on their *Kaddishim* also goes on the *Kaddish* being recited softly.

What should our friend do?

If he was the only person saying *Kaddish*, I would say that he should only recite *Kaddish* if 9 other men would be able to hear him. Otherwise, we would have to come up with another solution of someone saying *Kaddish* on his behalf. But in this case, he was one of multiple people saying *Kaddish*, so I told him to recite it softly along with them since the answering of the other *Kaddishim* goes on his *Kaddish*, as well.