

## נתפלל ולא השמיע לאזנו יצא (ברכות ב:ד טז.)

How loud should one pray the Amidah? The Talmud Bavli states:

יכול ישמיע קולו בתפלתו כבר מפורש על ידי חנה שנאמר "וקולה לא ישמע" (שמואל א:יד)(ברכות לא.)

Read plainly this passage would seem to be saying that one should not allow his voice to be audible during the Amidah prayer even to one self. The Tana De-bei Eliyahu (also known as *Seder Eliyahu Rabba*) expresses this opinion explicitly: **כל המתפלל ומשמיע קולו לאזנו הרי זה מעיד עדות שקר** (ed. *Ish Shalom*, pg. 140).

Rashba, following the parallel passage in the Tosefta (3:6) which (in his version) states in full **יכול ישמיע קולו לאזנו** similarly rules that one's prayer should not be audible even to himself.

This reading is preserved only in the Ehrport manuscript of the Tosefta, but it is also recorded by a few authorities citing Rashba (e.g. Agur, laws of blessings, 146). It is possible, though that they are simply copying from Rashba and represent a single witness. Meiri (*ad loc*) took issue with this reading and considers it unsupported because it was unattested in any of the versions of the texts familiar to him.

Completely to the contrary, the Talmud Yerushalmi maintains that one must make his prayer audible to his ears: **נתפלל ולא השמיע לאזנו יצא (ברכות ב:ד טז.)**. The passage is dealing with the exceptional case where one does not make his prayer audible to his ears. This suggests that the norm was the contrary.

Rambam (Ahava, Laws of Prayer 5:9) follows the opinion of the Talmud Yerushalmi or in the least interprets the Talmud Bavli in light of it: **לא יגביה קולו בתפלתו ולא יתפלל בלבו אלא מחתך הדברים בשפתיו ומשמיע לאזנו בלחש**

Rambam's interpretation was adopted by a number of later authorities (e.g. Meiri, Agur) and is codified in the Shulkhan Arukh.