

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) **MISHNAH (cont.):** The Mishnah concludes its description of Birkas Kohanim.

2) Birkas Kohanim

A Baraisa presents a dispute regarding the source that Birkas Kohanim must be recited in L'shon Hakodesh.

Another Baraisa presents a dispute concerning the source that Birkas Kohanim must be recited while standing.

Another Baraisa records a dispute regarding the source that Birkas Kohanim is recited with raised hands.

Another Baraisa teaches that Hashem's explicit name was used for Birkas Kohanim only in the Beis Hamikdash but not throughout the land. An alternative source for using Hashem's explicit name in the Beis Hamikdash is cited.

A Baraisa teaches that the blessing is pronounced even on converts, women and freed slaves.

Another Baraisa teaches that the blessing must be pronounced with the kohanim facing the people.

A last Baraisa teaches that Birkas Kohanim is to be recited in a loud voice.

Two rulings related to Birkas Kohanim are recorded, one from Abaye and the other from R' Chisda, and the Gemara states that we follow Abaye's ruling but not R' Chisda's ruling.

3) R' Yehoshua ben Levi's eight statements

The Gemara presents eight statements of R' Yehoshua ben Levi and the first four statements are related to Birkas Kohanim.

The last four statements are related to those who are generous or miserly.

4) Birkas Kohanim (cont.)

R' Ada in the name of R' Simlai rules that in a Beis Haknesses of kohanim they all recite Birkas Kohanim.

R' Zeira explains that they are blessing their brethren in the fields.

Two unsuccessful challenges to this ruling are recorded.

The Gemara notes a number of items that do not constitute a barrier to Birkas Kohanim and then inquires whether a wall will constitute a barrier for Birkas Kohanim.

A statement of R' Yehoshua ben Levi is cited to prove that the wall will not constitute a barrier.

The Gemara inquires whether people standing on the sides of the kohanim are considered in front of the kohanim or behind them.

Abba Mar the son of R' Ashi cites a Mishnah to resolve this inquiry. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

Paying attention when the Torah is being read

אמר רבא בר רב הונא כיון שנפתח ספר תורה אסור לספר אפילו בדבר הלכה

Tosafos cites the Gemara in Berachos (8a) where Rav Sheishes turned away during the public reading of the Torah, as he continued his personal studies. When asked to explain his actions, he responded, "They are busy with their responsibilities, and I am doing my own pursuits." Yet, asks Tosafos, our Gemara states that during the reading of the Torah, a person must be attentive, and not deal even in halacha.

Several answers are given to resolve this problem. Tosafos first answers that Rav Sheishes turned around before he studied, and our Gemara would agree that this is acceptable. Rabeinu Tam and the Rosh reject this solution, because if it was a legitimate ploy to allow study while the Torah is being read, our Gemara should have mentioned that it is permitted if one turns his head. Another answer that is given is that Rav Sheishes was blind, and as such he was exempt from the mitzvah of reading the Torah in public. Once he was exempt, he was therefore released from the restriction not to study at this moment. This is why he was permitted to turn aside and continue his studies.

Rabeinu Chananel answers that Rav Sheishes represents a type of person who is *תורתו אומנתו*—his Torah was his vocation. This person is totally immersed in his studies, and, as such, he was permitted to continue his studies uninterrupted. Today, however, no one may use this dispensation, and everyone must be fully attentive to the Torah reading. According to this answer, the reason Rav Sheishes turned his head was that it would have been disrespectful to the community to study without showing some restraint, even though he was exempt. Or, by turning his head he showed that he was *תורתו אומנתו*.

Tosafos in Berachos answers that Rav Sheishes studied quietly, whereas the prohibition mentioned by Rava in our Gemara is only when a person studies loudly, as this is a disturbance to the rest of the community.

תוספות שאנ"ץ explains that Rav Sheishes holds that one may study halacha during the reading of the Torah, and he disagrees with Rava who prohibits it.

The Rif (cited in Tosafos in Berachos) resolves this issue by saying that Rava only prohibits a person from studying halacha if there are not ten others who are listening intently to the reading. However, in the case of Rav Sheishes there were ten men who were listening beside him, so he was allowed to study. The *ב"ח* notes that according to this, we understand that Rav Sheishes turned his head in order to indicate to the others that they should not count him toward the ten listeners. ■

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 הרב גרשון זאב בן ר' מרדכי דוד, ז"ל

HALACHAH Highlight

Standing or sitting for Krias Hatorah

אמר רבא בר רב הונא כיון שנפתח ספר תורה אסור לספר אפילו בדבר הלכה

Rava bar R' Huna said: Once the Sefer Torah is opened it is prohibited for a person to talk even about a matter of halacha

Rava bar R' Huna rules that once the Sefer Torah is opened it is prohibited for a person to talk, and he derives this halacha from a verse which states (Nechemiyah 8:5): וכפתחו¹ עמדו כל העם—And when he began to read the Torah, the entire nation stood. The Gemara demonstrates that the word עמדו connotes silence. Teshuvos Binyomin Ze'ev² cites our Gemara and writes that even though the Gemara derives from this exposition that one must be silent during Torah reading, nonetheless, one can also derive that it is appropriate to stand during Krias Hatorah because a pasuk does not leave its simple meaning – אין מקרא אין מידי פשוטו. Teshuvos Rama MiPano³ cites a Yerushalmi that rules that one must stand for all matters of kedusha. Additionally, since one is obligated to stand for ברכו there is a concern that if a person sits during Krias Hatorah he may forget to stand when the next person called up says ברכו, therefore he advocates standing while the Torah is read.

Shulchan Aruch⁴ writes that it is unnecessary for a person to stand during Krias Hatorah because the only requirement is for the one reading the Torah and the one called up for an aliyah to stand⁵ but Rema⁶ adds that there are those who are strict and stand during Krias Hatorah. Mishnah Berurah⁷ explains that although all opinions agree that according to the letter of the law it is not necessary to stand during Krias Hatorah, nonetheless, it is

STORIES Off the Daf

Hashem should look upon all of us from His holy habitation

השקיפה ממעון קדשך

Someone once asked Rabbi Meir of Dvinsk, the author of Meshech Chochmah, to explain the significance of the sphere which is called מעון.

He elaborated based upon the verse cited in our Gemara to note that there are people who extend merciful gestures toward the poor and who perform acts to remedy the plight of orphans and widows. Few, however, actually open their spacious homes for the sake of the needy. Rather, they suffice in providing a meager home for them, albeit secure, in which they remain.

In the verse in Tehillim,(68:6), however, Hashem sets a higher standard for us to follow. “Father of orphans and Judge of widows is God, in the habitation (מעון) of His holiness”. Hashem, כביכול, raises and cares for the widow and the orphan in the מעון of His holiness. Consequently, only when a person follows this example can he declare about himself: “I have given to the stranger, to the orphan and to the widow as invited guests in my own home as You have directed me to do.”

It is precisely this level of kindness which brings a person to the level whereby מעון can in turn expect and request that- קדשך.

The Gemara (Chagiga 12b) tells us that there are seven levels in the heavens. Among them is the זבול, where the heavenly city of Yerushalayim is situated. It

REVIEW and Remember

1. What is the source that Birkas Kohanim must be recited in L'shon HaKodesh?
2. What is the source that the kohanim must face the people when they bless them?
3. Who should be honored with the cup of wine for Birkas Hamazon?
4. Does Birkas Kohanim extend to those who are not in the Beis HaKnesses?

appropriate for a person to stand. The reason is that during Krias Hatorah a person should behave as if he was receiving the Torah at that moment from Har Sinai and we know that all the people stood at the time the Torah was given at Har Sinai. If, however, a person will not be able to properly focus by standing for Krias Hatorah it is better to sit. Kaf Hachaim⁸ notes that Arizal sat during the entire Torah reading including ברכו. ■

1. ע' הגהות ר' יעקב עמדין והרש"ש
2. שו"ת בנימין זאב סי' קס"ג
3. שו"ת רמ"ע מפאנו סי' צ"א
4. שו"ע אור"ח סי' קמ"ו סע' ד'
5. מ"ב שם ס"ק י"ז
6. רמ"א שם
7. מ"ב שם ס"ק י"ט
8. כף החיים שם סק"כ ■

is there that the celestial Beis HaMikdash and Altar are located, and where the angel Michael stands and brings offerings. Above the זבול is the corridor named מעון. It is in the מעון that groups of ministering angels sing God's praise all night but remain silent during the day in deference to the Jewish nation who sing His praise at that time.

As we have seen, Hashem cares for orphans in the מעון sphere, which is accordingly to be understood as being at a level (מעון) even higher than that at which korbanos are offered (זבול). This being the case, we can appreciate the ruling of the Gemara (Sukkah 49b) that when one performs tzedakah, he is achieving a mitzvah which is even greater than offering any of the korbanos, as it says in Mishlei (21:3): “Performing charity...is preferred by God over a sacrifice.” ■

