



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

An overview to the mitzvah of the Priestly Blessings

תנו רבנן כה תברכו בלשון הקדש

The Chinuch writes (Mitzvah 378): The Kohanim are commanded to bless the Jewish people every day, as the Torah states (Bamidbar 6:23): "Such shall you bless Bnei Yisroel, say to them."

The root of this mitzvah is that in His great goodness, Hashem desires to bless His people through the ministering servants who stay in the Beis Hamikdash constantly (the Kohanim), whose every thought is attached to His service, and whose spirit is bound to reverent fear for Him the entire day. In their merit, the blessing would take effect for them; all their deeds would be blessed, and the pleasant goodness of Hashem would be with them.

Now, do not wonder and ask that if Hashem desires that the people be blessed, let Him command that His blessing abide with them, and that there be no need for the blessings of the Kohanim. The answer is that by the force of the worthiness of our acts blessing will be bestowed upon us. For His hand is open to every person who asks, as he is worthy and readied for the reception of good reward.

Therefore, because He chose us out of all the nations and wished that we should merit to attain His good reward, He adjured us and commanded us to arrange our activities and make ourselves worthy through His mitzvos to be deserving of the good reward. Moreover, in His great goodness, He commanded us that we should entreat Him for blessing, and we should beseech it through the pure ministering servants. For all this will bring merit to our spirits, and as a result we will be worthy to attain His goodness. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. What is the source that Birkas Kohanim must be recited in Lashon 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?

HALACHAH Highlight

Standing behind the kohanim

עם שאחורי כהנים אינן בכלל ברכה

The people behind the kohanim are not included in the beracha

Shulchan Aruch¹ rules that the people who stand behind the kohanim as they bless the people are not included in the beracha. Those who are behind the kohanim due to circumstances beyond their control, like the people in the fields who can not come to the Beis Haknesses because they are involved in their work, are included in the beracha. Accordingly, if the Aron Kodesh, where the kohanim stand, sticks out beyond the wall, those people who stand on the Eastern wall of the Beis Haknesses will not be included in the beracha since they will end up behind the kohanim. Bach² suggests that in circumstances when people purchase seats in the Beis Haknesses, the people on the Eastern wall are considered אנוסים since one is not permitted to take someone else's place. Mishnah Berurah³ writes that later authorities reject this suggestion since it should not be difficult to find an empty space somewhere in the Beis Haknesses for those people to stand during Birkas Kohanim.

Another issue discussed by the Poskim is whether Birkas Kohanim recited in Eretz Yisroel on a daily basis extends to those who live in the Diaspora. Maharam Chagiz⁴ suggests that

since the residents of Eretz Yisroel are supported by the generosity of those living in the Diaspora, Hashem, in His mercy, will allow Birkas Kohanim to extend to those living in the Diaspora. Rav Moshe Shternbuch⁵ initially writes that people in the Diaspora are included in the blessing conveyed by the Kohanim since they should be included in the category of those who are אנוסים and as a result are unable to be in the Beis Haknesses when the beracha is pronounced. He then entertains the possibility that the beracha only includes those people who are in the Beis Haknesses or at most those who live near the Beis Haknesses but could not come due to extenuating circumstances because we assume the kohanim had them in mind. It is difficult to believe, however, that Birkas Kohanim should include those people who live in the Diaspora. The only method that could work is if the kohen has a particular individual in mind and articulates before he begins the beracha that he is including Ploni in his blessing. If this method is followed the beracha will be able to extend to him as well. This, in fact, is his practice and before he leaves Eretz Yisroel he finds two kohanim with distinguished lineage and pays them to mention his name and have him in mind when they recite Birkas Kohanim. ■

1. שו"ע או"ח סי' קכ"ח סע' כ"ד
2. מובא דבריו במ"ב דלקמן
3. מ"ב שם ס"ק צ"ה
4. ספר אלא המצוות מצוות נשיאת כפים
5. שו"ת תשובות והנהגות ח"א סי' ק"ל ■

STORIES Off the Daf

The whispering Kohen

"כה תברכו בקול רם..."

In Israel, the custom is for the kohanim to bless the congregation every morning. A certain talmid chacham noticed that kohanim would get up to participate even if they were hoarse or unable to speak above a whisper. This bothered this talmid chacham to no end, since we find on today's daf that the kohen must offer the blessing out loud. The Gemara learns that a kohen may not bless in a whisper since the verse says, אמור להם—say to them—in a voice with the volume one would use when making conversation. This is the ruling in Shulchan Aruch as well. The Mishnah Berurah therefore rules that one who has a sore throat should not stand before the community

to offer the blessing.

This talmid chacham was at a loss to rationalize this behavior, so he asked the Tzitz Eliezer, ז"ל, if he had an explanation of the practice. After hearing this man out, the Tzitz Eliezer replied, "Although it is not clear from the Gemara that the entire congregation must be able to hear the Kohen since it merely prohibits whispering, the Sifrei says clearly that the entire congregation must hear. Rambam and Shulchan Aruch state that the kohen must bless in a קול רם which the Magen Avraham explains is a medium voice. So although it is true that the Mishnah Berurah says that one with a hoarse voice should not bless, I do have two ways to be give these kohanim credit. First of all, the Mishnah Berurah is not so decisive in his ruling, since he uses the language לכאורה פשוט—it seems obvious—which is not as decisive as simply writing פשוט—it is clear—or just his own

straightforward opinion.

The Tzitz Eliezer continued, "My second way of understanding this is that it may very well be that the Mishnah Berurah is discussing a lone kohen saying birkas kohanim on his own. He can not do this if he is hoarse and the congregation won't hear him. If he is with other kohanim and the congregants hear them, however, there is no indication that this is prohibited. Therefore I believe we should allow the custom of the many kohanim who, even if hoarse, join in with another kohen or group of kohanim who are heard by the entire group.

The Tzitz Eliezer concluded, "We should use the general rule of the Halachos Ketanos: If the halacha is not clear, you go with the minhag. Clearly, Hashem loves His nation and would not allow the masses to unknowingly follow a lone minority opinion if his reasoning was completely rejected from halacha!" ■