

HALAKHA

In the Temple the priest utters the name of God as it is written – **בְּמִקְדָּשׁ אָמַר אֶת שֵׁם כְּתָבוֹ**: When the priests bless the nation in the Temple, they utter the Tetragrammaton as it is written, i.e., *yod, heh, vav, heh*. Outside of the Temple, they use the substitute name of Lordship. After the death of Shimon HaTzaddik, the priests ceased using the Tetragrammaton when blessing the nation, even in the Temple, so that no unworthy person would be taught the name. This is in accordance with the mishna here and the Gemara in tractate *Yoma*, 39b (Rambam *Sefer Ahava*, *Hilkhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim* 14:10–11).

Lift their hands so they are aligned with their shoulders – **נִשְׂאִים אֶת יְדֵיהֶן כְּתִפְיָהֶן**: When the priests bless the people they must lift their hands to the level of their shoulders. According to the esoterica, the right hand should be lifted slightly higher than the left one (Rambam *Sefer Ahava*, *Hilkhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim* 14:3; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Hayyim* 128:12).

And in the Temple, above their heads – **בְּמִקְדָּשׁ עַל גְּבִי**: When the priests recite the blessing in the Temple, they lift their hands above their heads, except for the High Priest, who does not lift his hands higher than the frontplate (Rambam *Sefer Ahava*, *Hilkhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim* 14:9).

So you shall bless, in the sacred tongue – **בְּלִשׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ**: The priests may recite the Priestly Benediction only in Hebrew (Rambam *Sefer Ahava*, *Hilkhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim* 14:11; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Hayyim* 128:14).

So you shall bless, while standing – **בְּעֵמִידָה**: The priests may recite the Priestly Benediction only while standing (Rambam *Sefer Ahava*, *Hilkhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim* 14:11).

Performs the Temple service while standing – **בְּעֵמִידָה**: The Temple service must be performed while standing. Anyone who serves in the Temple while sitting has desecrated the sanctity of the Temple, and his service is invalid (Rambam *Sefer Avoda*, *Hilkhot Biat HaMikdash* 5:16).

BACKGROUND

Frontplate – **צִיץ**: The frontplate of the High Priest was a plate of gold on which the words: “Sacred to the Lord” (Exodus 28:36), were engraved. This plate was tied to the forehead of the High Priest, adjacent to where his hairline began.

The frontplate was one of the eight priestly vestments that made up the raiment of the High Priest. It is one of the four vestments that are called the golden vestments. The High Priest would wear all eight vestments the year round, except during part of the Yom Kippur service, when he would wear only the four white vestments that all priests wore.

כְּתָבוֹ, וּבְמִדֵּינָה – בְּכִינוּיָו; בְּמִדֵּינָה כְּהִנְיָם נוֹשְׂאִים אֶת יְדֵיהֶן כְּנֶגְדַּת כְּתָבָהּ, וּבְמִקְדָּשׁ – עַל גְּבִי רִאשִׁיָהֶן, חוּץ מִכֵּהֶן גְּדוּל, שְׂאִינוּ מִגְּבִיָּה אֶת יְדֵיו לְמַעַל מִן הַצִּיץ; רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אָמַר: אִף כֵּהֶן גְּדוּל מִגְּבִיָּה יְדֵיו לְמַעַל מִן הַצִּיץ, שְׂנֵאָמַר: “וַיִּשָּׂא אֶהָרֶן אֶת יָדָיו אֶל הָעַם וַיְבָרְכֵם.”

גַּמ' תָּנוּ רַבָּנָן: “כֹּה תְבָרְכוּ” – בְּלִשׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ. אֲתָה אָמַר: בְּלִשׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ, אוֹ אֵינוֹ אֱלֹא בְּכָל לָשׁוֹן? נֹאמַר כָּאֵן “כֹּה תְבָרְכוּ”, וְנֹאמַר לְהֵלֶן: “אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲמֹדוּ לְבָרְךָ אֶת הָעַם”, מֵה לְהֵלֶן בְּלִשׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ, אִף כָּאֵן בְּלִשׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ.

רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אָמַר: אֵינוֹ צָרִיךְ, הֲרֵי הוּא אָמַר: “כֹּה”, עַד שְׂאִימְרוּ בְּלִשׁוֹן הַזֶּה.

תֵּנִיָּא אִידָךְ: “כֹּה תְבָרְכוּ” – בְּעֵמִידָה. אֲתָה אָמַר: בְּעֵמִידָה, אוֹ אֵינוֹ אֱלֹא אִמְלוּ בִישִׁיבָה? נֹאמַר כָּאֵן “כֹּה תְבָרְכוּ”, וְנֹאמַר לְהֵלֶן “אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲמֹדוּ לְבָרְךָ”, מֵה לְהֵלֶן בְּעֵמִידָה, אִף כָּאֵן בְּעֵמִידָה.

רַבִּי נָתָן אָמַר: אֵינוֹ צָרִיךְ, הֲרֵי הוּא אָמַר: “לְשִׁרְתוֹ וּלְבָרְךָ בְּשִׁמוֹ”, מֵה מְשִׁרְתָּ בְּעֵמִידָה, אִף מְבָרְךָ בְּעֵמִידָה. וּמְשִׁרְתָּ גּוֹפִיָּה מְנִלָּן דְּכִתְיָב: “לְעַמּוֹד לְשִׁרְתָּ.”

as it is written^h in the Torah, i.e., the Tetragrammaton, and in the country they use its substitute name of Lordship. In the country, the priests lift their hands so they are aligned with their shoulders^h during the benediction. And in the Temple they lift them above their heads,^h except for the High Priest, who does not lift his hands above the frontplate.^b Since the Tetragrammaton is inscribed on it, it is inappropriate for him to lift his hands above it. Rabbi Yehuda says: Even the High Priest lifts his hands above the frontplate, as it is stated: “And Aaron lifted up his handsⁿ toward the people and blessed them” (Leviticus 9:22).

GEMARA The Sages taught: The mitzva given to the priests: “So you shall bless the children of Israel” (Numbers 6:23), is that they bless them in the sacred tongue,^h Hebrew. Do you say that the benediction must be recited in the sacred tongue, or perhaps it may be recited in any language? The *baraita* answers: It is stated here, with regard to the Priestly Benediction: “So you shall bless,” and it is stated there, with regard to the blessings and curses: “These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people” (Deuteronomy 27:12). There is a verbal analogy between these two usages of the word “bless”: Just as there, the blessings and curses were recited in the sacred tongue, as stated above (33a), so too here, the Priestly Benediction is recited in the sacred tongue.

Rabbi Yehuda says: It is not necessary to derive this from a verbal analogy, as it says with regard to the Priestly Benediction: “Thus,” which means that it is not recited correctly unless they recite it in this exact language, as it is written in the Torah.

It is taught in another *baraita*: “So you shall bless,” means while standing.^h Do you say that the benediction must be recited while standing, or perhaps it may even be recited while sitting? It is stated here: “So you shall bless,” and it is stated there, with regard to the blessings and curses: “These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless.” Just as there, the blessing was recited while standing, so too here, the priests must recite the Priestly Benediction while standing.

Rabbi Natan says: It is not necessary to derive this from a verbal analogy, as it says in the verse: “At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi to bear the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister to Him and to bless in His name” (Deuteronomy 10:8). Just as a priest performs the Temple service while standing,^h so too, he blesses while standing. The Gemara asks: And from where do we derive that he performs the service itself while standing? As it is written: “To stand to minister in the name of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 18:5).

NOTES

As it is stated: And Aaron lifted up his hands, etc. – **שְׂנֵאָמַר וַיִּשָּׂא** שְׂנֵאָמַר וַיִּשָּׂא: The mishna seems to imply that Rabbi Yehuda presents a proof from this verse for his opinion that the High Priest does lift his hands above the frontplate, as it is stated that Aaron lifted up his hands when he recited the blessing. However, in *Tosefot Yom Tov* and other commentaries, this understanding is found to be difficult. They explain that the verse is not a continuation of Rabbi Yehuda’s statement. Rather, it is a proof for the principal ruling stated in the mishna, that the Priestly Benediction must be recited with lifted hands.

Just as a priest performs the Temple service while standing – **מֵה מְשִׁרְתָּ בְּעֵמִידָה**: In *Tosefot HaRash*, *Tosefot HaRosh*, and other

commentaries, other possible implications of this comparison between the service in the Temple and the Priestly Benediction are discussed. For example, they discuss whether a priest who became an apostate and then repented is again permitted to recite the benediction, or whether it is prohibited for him to do so just as he is prohibited from performing the Temple service. According to the Rambam, it is apparently prohibited. However, according to other commentaries, since the benediction is recited outside of the Temple, the priest should be allowed to recite it. Others draw a distinction between a priest who had merely become an apostate and one who engaged in idol worship.

This *halakha* was difficult for Rabbi Yonatan – קשיא – *Tosafot* explain that this statement is not part of the *baraita*. According to this explanation and according to the *Sifrei*, it seems that Rabbi Natan, who resolves the difficulty, is actually Rabbi Yonatan, who, after raising a difficulty with the source cited in the *baraita*, offers a different source.

It is taught in another *baraita*: “So you shall bless” means with lifted hands. Do you say that the priests must recite the benediction with lifted hands, or perhaps they may recite it without lifted hands? It is stated here: “So you shall bless,” and it is stated there, with regard to the dedication of the Tabernacle: “And Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them” (Leviticus 9:22). Just as there, Aaron blessed the nation with lifted hands, so too here, the Priestly Benediction is recited with lifted hands.

This *halakha* was difficult for Rabbi Yonatan^N to understand: If this *halakha* is derived from the dedication of the Tabernacle, then why not also say: Just as there, the High Priest was the one who recited the blessing, and it was the New Moon, and the offerings that were brought were a communal service, so too here, the Priestly Benediction must be recited only by the High Priest, and on the New Moon, and when performing a communal service?

Rabbi Natan says: It is not necessary to derive from a verbal analogy that the Priestly Benediction is recited with lifted hands, as it says with regard to Aaron: “To stand to minister in the name of the Lord, him and his sons forever” (Deuteronomy 18:5). In this verse, his sons are juxtaposed with him. Just as Aaron recited the Priestly Benediction with lifted hands, so too, his sons recite the benediction with lifted hands. And furthermore, it is written “forever,” which indicates that it is referring not only to special occasions. And although the verse is not referring to the Priestly Benediction, the benediction is juxtaposed to the Temple service in another verse: “To minister to Him and to bless in His name” (Deuteronomy 10:8).

And it is taught in another *baraita*: “So you shall bless the children of Israel” means the blessing should be recited with the ineffable name. Do you say that the Priestly Benediction must be recited with the ineffable name, or perhaps it is recited with only the substitute name, *Adonai*? The verse states: “So shall they put My name” (Numbers 6:27), which means My name that is unique to Me.

One might have thought that even in the outlying areas, outside the Temple, this ineffable name is used. It is stated here, with regard to the Priestly Benediction: “So shall they put My name,” and it is stated there, with regard to the place one must sacrifice offerings: “The place that the Lord your God has chosen out of all your tribes to put His name there” (Deuteronomy 12:5). The verbal analogy teaches that just as there, the expression “to put His name there” is referring to the Temple, so too here, the mitzva of “so shall they put My name” applies in the Temple and not anywhere else.

Rabbi Yoshiya says: It is not necessary to derive this *halakha* from the verbal analogy, as it can be derived from a verse. It says in the verse: “In every place where I cause My name to be mentioned I will come to you and bless you” (Exodus 20:20). Does it enter your mind that this verse literally means that the Divine Presence will be revealed everywhere? Rather, this verse must be interpreted by transposition. It must be reordered and read as follows: In every place where I will come to you and bless you, there I will cause My name to be mentioned. Rabbi Yoshiya explains that God is stating: And where will I come to you and bless you? In the Temple. Therefore, he derives: There, in the Temple, I will cause My name to be mentioned, but the ineffable name is not mentioned elsewhere.

It is taught in another *baraita*: “So you shall bless the sons of Israel” (Numbers 6:23). I have derived only the *halakha* to bless the sons of Israel. From where do I derive the *halakha* of blessing converts, women, and emancipated slaves? The verse states immediately afterward: “You shall say to them,” meaning to all of the Jewish people.

תנא אידך: “כה תברכו” – בנשיאות כפיים: אתה אומר: בנשיאות כפיים, או אינו אלא שלא בנשיאות כפיים? נאמר כאן “כה תברכו”, ונאמר להלן: “וישא אהרן את ידו אל העם ויברכם”, מה להלן בנשיאות כפיים, אף כאן בנשיאות כפיים.

קשיא ליה לרבי יונתן: אי מה להלן בהן גדול וראש חודש ועבודת צבור, אף כאן בהן גדול וראש חודש ועבודת צבור!

רבי נתן אומר: אינו צריך, הרי הוא אומר: “הוא ובניו כל הימים”, מקיש בניו לו, מה הוא בנשיאות כפיים אף בניו בנשיאות כפיים, ובתב: “כל הימים”, ואיתקש ברכה לשירות.

ותנא אידך: “כה תברכו את בני ישראל” – בשם המפורש. אתה אומר: בשם המפורש, או אינו אלא בכינוי? תלמוד לומר: “וישמו את שמי”, שמי המיוחד לי.

יכול אף בגבולין כן? נאמר כאן: “וישמו את שמי”, ונאמר להלן: “לשים את שמו שם”, מה להלן בית הבחירה, אף כאן בבית הבחירה.

רבי יאשיה אומר: אינו צריך, הרי הוא אומר: “בכל המקום אשר אזכיר את שמי אבוא אליך”. בכל מקום סלקא דעתך? אלא מקרא זה מסורס הוא: בכל מקום אשר אבוא אליך וברכתך שם אזכיר את שמי. והיכן אבוא אליך וברכתך? בבית הבחירה, שם אזכיר את שמי בבית הבחירה.

תנא אידך: “כה תברכו את בני ישראל” – אין לי אלא בני ישראל, גרים, נשים, ועבדים משוחררים מניין? תלמוד לומר: “אמור להם”, לכולהו.

Face-to-face – פנים כנגד פנים: The Priestly Benediction must be delivered face-to-face, with the priests and the people facing each other (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim* 14:11; *Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 128:10, 23).

When there are two priests, he calls: Priests – לְשָׁנִים קוֹרֵא: If there are a minimum of two priests, one of the congregants calls out to them: Priests, so that they may begin reciting the Priestly Benediction. The prayer leader himself may do this, and it is not considered an interruption of the prayer. There is a custom for him to raise his voice when he says the word: Priests, in the prayer that is recited prior to the Benediction (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim* 14:8; *Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 128:10).

NOTES

Facing the back of the necks – פנים כנגד עורף: According to Rashi, this means that the priests face the backs of the congregation. Rabbeinu Hananel explains this differently: The congregation faces the backs of the priests, and the priests face the Divine Presence.

But when there is one priest he does not call: Priest – בְּהֵן קוֹרֵא: An opinion is cited in *Tosefot HaRosh* that this means that when there is only a single priest in the synagogue, he does not transgress by refraining from reciting the benediction. This is dependent on a dispute among the early commentaries over whether a single priest has an obligation to recite the benediction (Rambam; Meiri), or whether the obligation exists only when two priests are present (*Tosafot on Menahot* 44a).

Perek VII
Daf 38 Amud b

NOTES

And the *halakha* is not in accordance with the opinion of Rav Hisda – וְלִית הִלְכָתָא בְּוֹתִיָּה דְּרַב חֲסֵדָא: The *halakha* is in accordance with the opposite opinion stated in the Jerusalem Talmud, which cites Rav Hisda in the opposite manner, that it is a mitzva for an Israelite to call up the priests. This is derived from the phrase “say to them,” which is interpreted to mean that someone else should call up the priests. For this reason, the Rambam rules that ideally an Israelite should call up the priests.

תְּנִיָּא אִידָךְ: “כֹּה תְּבָרְכוּ” – פְּנִים כְּנֶגְדַּ פְּנִים. אַתְּהָ אֹמֵר: פְּנִים כְּנֶגְדַּ פְּנִים, אִינּוּ אֵלָא פְּנִים כְּנֶגְדַּ עוֹרְףָּ? תְּלַמּוּד לֹמַר: “אָמור לָהֶם”, כְּאָדָם הָאוֹמֵר לְחֵבִירוֹ.

תְּנִיָּא אִידָךְ: “כֹּה תְּבָרְכוּ” – בְּקוֹל רֹם, אִינּוּ אֵלָא בְּלַחֲשׁ? תְּלַמּוּד לֹמַר: “אָמור לָהֶם”, כְּאָדָם שְׂאוֹמֵר לְחֵבִירוֹ.

אָמַר אַבְיִי, נִקְטִינָּן: לְשָׁנִים קוֹרֵא “כֹּהֲנִים”, וְלֹאֲחָד אִינּוּ קוֹרֵא “כֹּהֵן”, שְׁנֵאמַר: “אָמור לָהֶם”, לְשָׁנִים. וְאִמַּר רַב חֲסֵדָא, נִקְטִינָּן: כֹּהֵן קוֹרֵא “כֹּהֲנִים”, וְאִין יִשְׂרָאֵל קוֹרֵא “כֹּהֲנִים”, שְׁנֵאמַר: “אָמור לָהֶם”, אָמִירָה.

It is taught in another *baraita*: “So you shall bless,” means that the priests must recite the Priestly Benediction **face-to-face^H** with the congregation. Do you say that the Benediction must be recited **face-to-face**, or perhaps it is **only** recited with the faces of the priests **facing the back of the necks^N** of the congregation? The verse states: “You shall say to them,” **face-to-face, like a person who is talking to another.**

It is taught in another *baraita*: “So you shall bless” means that the benediction must be recited **out loud**. Or, perhaps, is it recited **only in a whisper**? The verse states: “You shall say to them,” **like a person who is talking to another.**

Abaye said: We have a tradition with regard to the prayer leader calling the priests to recite the Priestly Benediction: When there are two priests, he calls: **Priests,^H** but when there is one priest he does not call: **Priest,^N** as it is stated: “You shall say to them,” in plural, meaning to a minimum of two priests. And Rav Hisda said: We have a tradition that a priest calls: **Priests,** but an Israelite does not call: **Priests,** as it is stated: “You shall say to them,” which means that the saying

מְשַׁלְּהֵם תְּהָא. וְהִילְכָתָא בְּוֹתִיָּה דְּאֲבִי, וְלִית הִילְכָתָא בְּוֹתִיָּה דְּרַב חֲסֵדָא.

(סימון: מתאו"ה לברכה דוכ"ן בעבוד"ה כו"ס מכ"ר נהנה בעג"ה).

אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי: מִיָּן שְׁהִקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מִתְאַוָּה לְבִרְכַת כֹּהֲנִים? שְׁנֵאמַר: “וְשָׂמוּ אֶת שְׁמִי עַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֵם.” וְאִמַּר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי: כָּל כֹּהֵן שֶׁמְבָרַךְ מִתְבָּרַךְ, וְשֵׂאִינוּ מְבָרַךְ אִין מִתְבָּרַךְ, שְׁנֵאמַר: “וְאֲבָרְכָה מְבָרְכֶיךָ.”

should be from them; one of the priests themselves should call: Priests. The Gemara concludes: **And the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Abaye,** that when only one priest is present, the prayer leader does not call: Priest. **And the halakha is not in accordance with the opinion of Rav Hisda,^{NH}** as an Israelite may also call: Priests.

S The Gemara cites a mnemonic device for the statements of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi: **Desires the benediction, platform, during the service, cup, recognize, derives benefit, from a heifer.**

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: From where is it derived that the Holy One, Blessed be He, desires the Priestly Benediction? As it is stated: “So shall they put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them” (Numbers 6:27). This shows that God waits for the priests to bless the people, and only then He Himself blesses them. **And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: Any priest who blesses^H the people is blessed from Heaven, and one who does not bless the people is not blessed, as it is stated: “And I will bless those who bless you” (Genesis 12:3).**

HALAKHA

And the *halakha* is not in accordance with the opinion of Rav Hisda – וְלִית הִלְכָתָא בְּוֹתִיָּה דְּרַב חֲסֵדָא: The *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion cited in the Jerusalem Talmud that the priests should be called up by an Israelite *ab initio*. If the prayer leader is a priest, then an Israelite should stand next to him and call to the priests instead (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim* 14:8; *Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 128:22).

כָּל כֹּהֵן שֶׁמְבָרַךְ וכו': Any priest who does not bless the people of Israel is not blessed in return, and a priest who blesses the people is in turn blessed (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim* 15:12).

Any priest who does not ascend the platform – כָּל כֹּהֵן שֶׁאֵינוֹ עוֹלֵה לְדוֹבֵן: If a priest is in the synagogue when they call the priests or is told to ascend the platform for the blessing, and if he does not do so when there is no reason why he may not go up to recite the blessing, it is considered as if he had violated three positive mitzvot. The *Mishna Berura* notes that in truth he actually has violated only one positive mitzva (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim* 15:12; *Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 128:2).

Any priest who does not ascend during the blessing of the Temple service – כָּל כֹּהֵן שֶׁאֵינוֹ עוֹלֵה בְּעִבּוּדָה: Any priest who does not begin walking during the blessing of the Temple service in order to ascend to recite the Priestly Benediction may not recite the benediction during that prayer. If he did begin walking, even if he did not arrive at the platform until after the blessing of the Temple service, he may ascend and recite the benediction (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim* 15:11; *Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 128:8).

אם – אם הישׁוּב וְהָיָה לוֹ לְרַבֵּי הַתְּפִלָּה שֶׁנֶּשְׂאָה בְּפִיו וְכִי עוֹלֵה בְּעִבּוּדָה: If the prayer leader is a priest, even if he is the only priest present, he may lift his hands and recite the Priestly Benediction only if he is certain that he can resume his prayer afterward without becoming confused. However, nowadays, as the prayer leader reads from a prayer book, the custom is that he recites the Priestly Benediction along with the other priests (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim* 15:10; *Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 128:20).

NOTES

עוֹבֵר בְּשִׁלְשָׁה עֲשָׂה – Violates three positive mitzvot: According to the Rambam, this does not mean that a priest who does not recite the Priestly Benediction actually violates three mitzvot. He violates only one mitzva, but the verse ascribes him blame tantamount to the transgression of three prohibitions.

Who does not ascend during the blessing of the Temple service – שֶׁאֵינוֹ עוֹלֵה בְּעִבּוּדָה: In the Temple, the priests recite the benediction during the actual Temple service. However, in the *Amida* prayer, since the content of the benediction and of the blessing of Temple service are unrelated, the priests recite the benediction only after the blessings of the Temple service and thanksgiving, which are considered one and the same. Furthermore, the verse that states that Aaron blessed the people when he “came down from performing the sin-offering” indicates that the Priestly Benediction is recited after the Temple service (see Jerusalem Talmud *Berakhot* and Rabbi David Luria).

One who has a good eye will be blessed [yevorakh] – טוב עין הוא יְבָרֵךְ: This homiletic interpretation is apparently based on the identical spelling of the words *yevorakh*, will be blessed, and *yevarekh*, will bless. The Maharsha explains that one who recites the blessings is himself blessed. Therefore, it is appropriate for a generous person to recite the blessing, so that he will receive more blessing.

The Maharsha adds that the statement that one who is generous should recite the blessing applies to the Priestly Benediction as well, as the benediction should be recited with a generous attitude. For this reason, the blessing that the priests recite before the benediction includes the phrase: To bless His nation Israel with love. While the phrase: With love, is not mentioned in the Torah’s description of the benediction, it is included in the blessing that the priests recite before the benediction to emphasize that the priests must deliver the blessing with a generous attitude toward the people.

And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: Any priest who does not ascend the platform^h to recite the Priestly Benediction violates three positive mitzvot:ⁿ “So you shall bless,” “And you shall say to them” (Numbers 6:23), and “So shall they put My name” (Numbers 6:27).

Rav says: One need be concerned that a priest who does not ascend to recite the Priestly Benediction is perhaps the son of a priest and a divorced woman, or the son of a priest and a *yevama* who has performed *halitza* [*halutza*]. Perhaps he does not ascend to recite the Priestly Benediction because he is disqualified from the priesthood.

The Gemara comments: And they do not disagree. This statement of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi is referring to a case where he ascends periodically. Therefore, there is no reason to believe that he is disqualified from the priesthood, and the assumption is that he violates three positive mitzvot. Whereas that statement of Rav is referring to a case where one does not ascend to recite the Priestly Benediction even periodically, and therefore there is reason to suspect that he is disqualified from the priesthood.

And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: Any priest who does not ascend the platform during the blessing of the Temple service^{HN} recited in the *Amida* prayer may no longer ascend to recite the benediction, as it is stated: “And Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them; and he came down from offering the sin-offering, and the burnt-offering, and the peace-offerings” (Leviticus 9:22). Just as there, in the Tabernacle, Aaron lifted up his hands during the service, as evident from the fact that only after he blessed them does it say that he came down from sacrificing the offerings, so too here, in the *Amida* prayer, the Priestly Benediction is recited during the blessing of Temple service.

The Gemara asks: Is that so? But didn’t the priests Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Asi ascend after the blessing of the service? The Gemara answers: Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Asi would begin walking to the platform during the blessing of the service, but they would not arrive there until after the conclusion of this blessing. And this is sufficient in accordance with what Rabbi Oshaya taught: They taught that a priest may not recite the benediction if he did not ascend the platform during the blessing of Temple service only in a case where he did not begin walking. But if he began walking before the prayer leader finished the blessing, he may ascend the platform even after he has finished the blessing.

And concerning this issue, we also learned in a mishna (*Berakhot* 34a): A priest who serves as prayer leader does not recite the Priestly Benediction, but if he is certain that he can lift his hands^h and recite the benediction, and then resume his prayer without becoming confused, he is permitted to do so. And we discussed it and raised the following difficulty: If he did not begin walking to ascend the platform during the blessing of the service, how is it permitted for him to recite the benediction? Rather, it must be explained that he moved slightly to show that he also wanted to ascend the platform. Here too, the statement of Rabbi Oshaya is referring even to a case where the priest uprooted himself slightly from his place during the blessing of the service.

And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: One may give a cup of blessing to recite the blessing of Grace after Meals only to someone with a good eye, i.e., a generous person, as it is stated: “One who has a good eye will be blessed [yevorakh],ⁿ for he gives of his bread to the poor” (Proverbs 22:9). Do not read it: “Will be blessed.” Rather, read it: Will bless [yevarekh].

ואמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: כל כהן שאינו עולה לדוכן, עובר בשלשה עשה: “כה תברכו”, “אמור להם”, “ושמו את שמי”.

רב אמר: חוששין שמא בן גרושה או בן חלוצה הוא.

ולא פליגי: הא דסליק לפרקים, הא דלא סליק לפרקים.

ואמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: כל כהן שאינו עולה בעבודה – שוב אינו עולה, שנאמר: “וישא אהרן את ידיו אל העם ויברכם וירד מעשת החטאת והעולה והשלמים”.

מה להלן בעבודה, אף כאן בעבודה.

איני? והא רבי אמר ורבי אסי סליקי! רבי אמר ורבי אסי מעיקרא הו עקרי ברעניהו, ממטא לא היה מטו התם, וכדתני רבי אושעיא: לא שנו אלא שלא עקר את רגליו, אבל עקר את רגליו – עולה.

ותנן נמי: אם הבטחתו שנושא את כפיו וחוזר לתפלתו – רשאי, והוינן בה: הא לא עקרי! אלא דנד פורתא, הכא נמי דעקר פורתא.

ואמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: אין נותנין בוס של ברכה לברך אלא לטוב עין, שנאמר: “טוב עין הוא יברך כי נתן מלחמו לדל”.

אל תיקרי “ברך” אלא “ברך”.

Even birds recognize miserly people – אֲפִילוֹ עוֹפוֹת – מִכִּירוֹן בְּצָרֵי הָעֵץ: The Maharsha explains that even though birds do not have the capacity for this awareness, God does not allow them to be trapped in the nets of misers. In addition, he provides a rational explanation of this statement. A generous person will sometimes put out food for birds without intending to trap them. For this reason, the birds come to eat the food that they place in their nets as well. This is not the case with miserly people.

For in vain the net is spread, etc. – כִּי חָנֵם מוֹדֵה הָרֶשֶׁת – וְכוּ: Rashi explains that in context this verse pertains to people who steal, and it is understood that they do so because of their miserly nature. It should be noted that the subsequent verse states: “So are the ways of everyone who is greedy to gain profit; it takes away the life of its owners” (Proverbs 1:19).

For their brethren who are in the fields – לְאֶחָיהֶם – שְׁבֻשְׁדוֹת: It is explained in the Jerusalem Talmud (*Berakhot* 5:4), that with regard to their brethren in the fields, it makes no difference whether the people are facing the priests or not. It is also explained there that it is sufficient that the women and children who are in the synagogue answer amen after the priests when there are no other Israelite men present. However, it appears from the Gemara here that if possible, ten priests must answer amen. The later commentaries explain that when there are no people present in the synagogue to be blessed, the benediction is recited only by rabbinic institution (*Peri Megadim*). The reason for this ordinance is possibly so that the mitzva of the Priestly Benediction will not be forgotten in that synagogue (*Devar Shaul*).

וְאָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי: מִמֵּי שֶׁאֶפְּלוּ עוֹפוֹת מִכִּירוֹן בְּצָרֵי הָעֵץ? שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: “כִּי חָנֵם מוֹדֵה הָרֶשֶׁת בְּעֵינֵי כָּל בַּעַל כַּנָּף.”

וְאָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי: כָּל הַנְּהַגָה מִצָּרֵי הָעֵץ עוֹבֵר בְּלֹא שׂוֹאֵם: “אֵל תִּלְחֶם אֶת לֶחֶם רַע עֵינַי וְגו’, כִּי כְמוֹ שֶׁעַר בְּנִפְשׁוֹ בֵּן הוּא אֹכֵל וְשִׁתָּה יֹאמַר לְךָ” וְגו’. רַב נַחֲמָן בַּר יִצְחָק אָמַר: עוֹבֵר בְּשֵׁנֵי לְאוּוֹן, “אֵל תִּלְחֶם” וְיֹאֵל תִּתְּאוּרָא.

וְאָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי: אֵין עֲגֻלָּה עֲרוּפָה בְּאֵה אֶלֶּא בְּשִׁבְלֵי צָרֵי הָעֵץ.

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: “וְעֵנּוּ וְאָמְרוּ לֵדִינוּ לֹא שִׁפְכוּ אֶת הַדָּם הַזֶּה.” וְכִי עַל לִבְנוֹ עֲלָתָה שׁוֹקֵנִי בֵּית דִּין שׁוֹפְכֵי דְמַיִם הֵם? אֶלֶּא. לֹא בָּא לֵדִינוּ וּפְטָרְנוּהוּ וְלֹא רְאִינוּהוּ וְהִנְחִינוּהוּ. לֹא בָּא לֵדִינוּ וּפְטָרְנוּהוּ בְּלֹא מוֹזְנוֹת. לֹא רְאִינוּהוּ וְהִנְחִינוּהוּ בְּלֹא לְוִיָּהּ.

אָמַר אֲדָא אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמַלְאִי: בֵּית הַכְּנֶסֶת שְׁבוּלָה כְּהֻנִים, בּוֹלֵן עוֹלִין לְדוּכָן. לְמִי מְבָרְכִין? אָמַר רַבִּי זֵירָא: לְאֶחָיהֶם שְׁבֻשְׁדוֹת.

אֵינִי? וְהִתְנִי אַבָּא בְּרִיָּה דְרַב מְנַמִּין בַּר חִיָּיא: עִם שְׂאֲחוּרֵי כְּהֻנִים אֵינָן בְּכָלֵל בְּרֻכָּה! לָא קָשִׁיא. הָא דְאֵנְסִי, הָא דְלֹא אֵנְסִי.

וְהִתְנִי רַב שִׁמִּי מִבִּירְתָּא דְשִׁיחוּרֵי: בֵּית הַכְּנֶסֶת שְׁבוּלָה כְּהֻנִים, מְקַצְתָּן עוֹלִין וּמְקַצְתָּן עוֹנִין “אָמֵן”!

And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: From where is it derived that even birds recognize miserly people^N and do not eat the food they have set in bird traps? As it is stated: “For in vain the net is spread^N in the eyes of any bird” (Proverbs 1:17).

And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: Anyone who derives benefit from miserly people transgresses a prohibition, as it is stated: “Do not eat the bread of one who has an evil eye, and do not desire his delicacies, for as one that has reckoned within himself, so he is. He says to you: Eat and drink, but his heart is not with you” (Proverbs 23:6–7). Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak says: He transgresses two prohibitions, as it says “do not eat” and also “do not desire.”

And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: When a person is found slain between two cities and it is not known who killed him, a heifer whose neck is broken is brought. This occurs only because of miserly people.

As it is stated: “And they shall speak and say: Our hands have not shed this blood” (Deuteronomy 21:7). But did it enter our hearts to think that the Elders of the court are murderers? Why it is necessary for them to publicize that they did not kill him? Rather, they must declare: It is not so that this victim came to us and we dismissed him, and it is not so that we saw him and left him. In other words, he did not come to us and we in turn dismissed him without food, and we did not see him and then leave him without an escort. It is miserly people who do not provide others with food and cause them to travel to places where they might be murdered.

§ Adda said that Rabbi Samlai says: In a synagogue that is made up entirely of priests,^H everyone ascends the platform to recite the Priestly Benediction. The Gemara asks: If the entire congregation is composed of priests, for whom do they utter the blessing? Rabbi Zeira says: They say the blessing for their brethren who are in the fields.^N

The Gemara asks: Is that so? But didn’t Abba, son of Rav Minyamin bar Hiyya, teach that the people who are standing behind the backs of the priests^H are not included in the Priestly Benediction? The Gemara answers: That is not difficult. This is a case where the people are compelled to be in the fields because of their work, and they are therefore included in the benediction. Whereas that statement is referring to people who are not compelled to be away but still do not stand face-to-face with the priests. Consequently, they are not included in the benediction.

The Gemara asks: But didn’t Rav Shimi of Birte deShihorei teach the following *baraita*: In a synagogue that is made up entirely of priests, some of them ascend to recite the benediction and some of them answer amen?

HALAKHA

A synagogue that is made up entirely of priests – בֵּית הַכְּנֶסֶת: In a synagogue that is made up entirely of priests, if there are only ten priests, they all ascend to recite the Priestly Benediction, and they bless their brethren who are working in the fields. If there are women and children in the synagogue, they answer amen after the blessing. If there are more than ten priests present, ten priests remain behind to answer amen, and the rest go up and recite the benediction (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim* 15:9; *Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 128:25).

The people who are standing behind the priests – עִם שְׂאֲחוּרֵי כְּהֻנִים: People standing behind the priests are not included in the benediction. However, people standing in front of the priests or at their sides are included, even if there is an iron partition between them. Those who are working in the fields and cannot make it to the synagogue are also included in the benediction (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim* 15:8; *Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 128:24).

דַּאִישְׁתִּיר בֵּי עֲשָׂרָה – דַּאִישְׁתִּיר בֵּי עֲשָׂרָה: Where a quorum of ten remains – דַּאִישְׁתִּיר בֵּי עֲשָׂרָה: It appears from here that in addition to the priests who recite the blessing, there must be another ten men present to answer amen. This is also the opinion of the *ge'onim*. However, according to the Rambam, the priests themselves count as part of the quorum of ten. The Meiri points out that according to this opinion there is no need for ten men to answer amen to the blessing (see *Bah*). The Rambam's opinion is perhaps based on the opinion found in the Jerusalem Talmud that the response of the women and children is counted in this situation.

אֶפִּילוּ מְחִיצָה שֶׁל בְּרוֹזָל – אֶפִּילוּ מְחִיצָה שֶׁל בְּרוֹזָל: Even an iron partition – אֶפִּילוּ מְחִיצָה שֶׁל בְּרוֹזָל: According to *Tosefot HaRash*, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi is not addressing whether the partition precludes one from being included in the prayer quorum, as a partition certainly forms a partition in that regard. Rather, he is saying that if there is a quorum in the synagogue, a person standing outside can fulfill his obligation by hearing the benediction being recited inside.

The Gemara answers: That is **not difficult**. That is a case **where**, if some of the priests recite the benediction, a quorum of **ten** priests still **remains**^N to receive the benediction and answer amen. Therefore, only some of the priests ascend to recite the benediction. By contrast, **this** case, which Rabbi Simlai was referring to, is a case **where** a quorum of **ten does not remain** to answer amen, so it is better for all of the priests to ascend and bless the people working in the fields.

The Gemara returns to **the matter itself** cited above: **Abba, son of Rav Minyamin bar Hiyya, taught:** **The people who are standing behind the priests are not included in the benediction.**

The Gemara raises several questions with regard to this statement: It is **obvious** that **tall people standing in front of short people do not interpose** between the priests and the shorter people with regard to the Priestly Benediction. Similarly, a **chest** or ark containing a Torah scroll **does not interpose** between the priests and the people. However, **what** is the *halakha* with regard to a **partition**? **Come and hear** an answer from **what Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said:** **Even an iron partition**^N **does not interpose between the Jewish people and their Father in Heaven;** the people are included in the benediction.

A dilemma was raised before the Sages: **What is the halakha** in the case of people who are standing to **the sides** of the priests? Are they included in the blessing? **Abba Mar bar Rav Ashi said:** **Come and hear** an answer, **as we learned** in a mishna (*Para* 12:2) with regard to the *halakha* of sprinkling the waters of purification on vessels that contracted ritual impurity imparted by a corpse: If one **intended to sprinkle** the water **forward**

לָא קָשְׁיָא: הָא דְאִישְׁתִּיר בֵּי עֲשָׂרָה, הָא דְלָא אִישְׁתִּיר בֵּי עֲשָׂרָה.

גופא, תנא אבא בריה דרב מנימין בר חייא: עם שאחורי כהנים אינן בכלל ברכה.

פשיטא, אריכי באפי גוצי לא מפסקי; תיבה לא מפסקא; מחיצה מאי? תא שמע, דאמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: אפילו מחיצה של ברזל אינה מפסקת בין ישראל לאביהם שבשמים.

איבעיא להו: צדדין, מהו? אמר אבא מר בר רב אשי: תא שמע, דתנן: נתכוון להזות לפני?