

HALOCHOSCOPE ^{TOI}

May a father and his son or two brothers be accorded the honors of *Hagbahah* and *Gelilah* on the same Sefer Torah?

The issues:

(A) *Krias Hatorah* and *Kibudim*, honors associated with the reading of the Torah

(B) *Ayin Hara*, the evil eye

(C) *Hagbahah* and *Gelilah*, lifting the Sefer Torah and rolling it up

(A) *Krias Hatorah* and its *Kibudim*

With the exception of one occasion every year, or, according to some, two occasions, *Krias Hatorah*, the obligation to read publicly from the Torah is not Scripturally mandated. The *Krios* on Shabbos morning, Monday and Thursday were instituted by Moshe Rabbeinu to ensure Torah study every three days. The *Kriah* at Shabbos *Mincha* was instituted by Ezra.

When the Torah is read, it is divided up between different congregants. Initially, this meant that it was not read by the *Shliach Tzibbur*, leader of the congregation, as was the rest of the service. The Torah is read with specific cantillation notes for punctuation, and the correct vowels. These were transmitted by Hashem to Moshe at Sinai. Changing them alters the true meaning of the words of the Torah. Yet, the text of the Torah only shows the letters, with no vowels or notes. Thus, one must receive the correct vowels and notes from a reliable transmission source. These were transmitted orally until it was determined that a single teacher would no longer be able to transmit it all to each student. Nowadays, they appear in separate copies of the text, but never in a *Sefer Torah* that is kosher for *Krias Hatorah*. Before reading, one must prepare them.

Accordingly, originally, each *Oleh*, person ascending the Bimah to read a section of the Torah, was prepared to read his part. Many were not well versed enough to do this. For them, a *Shliach Tzibbur* would prepare, so he could do the reading for them, while they read with him, quietly. As a result, it became obvious to the assembled congregants who was educated and who was ignorant. To avoid embarrassing the uneducated, many communities instituted the practice of only allowing the *Shliach Tzibbur* to read the Torah at all times.

Being called to the Torah is a special privilege. The order in which one is called also shows prestige. Since it is a *Davar Shebikedusha*, sanctified, we give precedence to those whom we honor due to their sanctity. In accordance with the Mitzvah of *Vekidashto*, to defer to a Kohain in spiritual matters of precedence, if a Kohain is present he is given the first Aliya. Initially the honor shown a Torah scholar took precedence over an ignorant Kohain. Nowadays, the *Minhag* is to defer to the Kohain anyhow, due in part to the shame of an ignorant Kohain. Though, initially, this was viewed as disgracing the Torah, having become a *Minhag* it is no longer considered a disgrace.

A Levi also has sanctity, to a lesser degree. He is honored to with the second Aliya. In the absence of a Kohain or Levi a *Yisroel* gets the first Aliya, but is called "Bimkom Kohain" in place of a Kohain. This is to avoid confusion about why he is being given the first Aliya. A *Yisroel* may also get the first Aliya even if a Levi is present. The third Aliya is given to a distinguished member of the congregation, usually a Torah scholar. There is then an order of precedence listed by the Poskim, including the leaders of the community and its Rabbis, and their relatives. There is also a hierarchy of *Chiyuvim*, those who are considered to have a right to get an Aliya. These include those celebrating a personal *Simcha*, commemorating an event in their lives, or an annual event. On these occasions the person is considered on a special spiritual level. Though they have no true source, these have since attained the status of *Minhag*, and the practice may not be broken with.

Due to the privilege of the Aliyos, and the endearment shown toward Mitzvos in general and public Mitzvos in particular, the practice has arisen to auction the Mitzvos in shuls. Some Kibudim are included that do not have a Brocha recited. Though not *Davar Shebikedusha*, they are held dear due to their singularity. Only one person in the congregation can do each of these Mitzvos, and he is effectively a Shliach Tzibbur. Thus, removing the Sefer Torah from the ark and handing it to the Chazan, returning it, lifting it up, rolling it, and even handing the covers to the person rolling it, are often distributed or bought for special occasions and are considered special privileges. In addition, it is considered a greater honor for the Torah and for Hashem when more people are involved in the various Mitzvos. [See Gittin 59a-60a, Megillah 32a-33a, Poskim. Tur Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 135:3-9, Biur Halacha 136, 147:2, etc., commentaries.]

(B) *Ayin Hara*

The Poskim cite concern about calling two brothers or a father and son for

consecutive Aliyos, based on *Ayin Hara*, the evil eye. This phenomenon is discussed by the Talmud in various contexts. It is considered both an ethical issue to the person looking on and a precautionary issue for the one attracting the attention. Thus, one may not look at his fellow's crops growing. If he envies his fellow, Divine judgment could be aroused about how deserving his fellow is, where it would not have otherwise been aroused. One may not count Jews. One reason is to avoid *Ayin Hara*. Yaakov told his sons not to travel as a group, to avoid arousing *Ayin Hara*. Thus, we see that brothers attracting attention to themselves in public should be avoided. The Talmud says regarding certain practices that can arouse undesirable spiritual forces, that one who does not believe in them will not be harmed by them. Thus, some say that those who are not concerned with this aspect of *Ayin Hara* need not be concerned with calling a father and son consecutively. If they were called, many Poskim maintain that they should go ahead with the Aliya.

The Poskim maintain that the entire issue only arises if the names are called out before the Oleh ascends the Bimah. Some say that even if they are not announced beforehand, if a "Mi Shebairach" is said afterwards the same problem arises. If the two consecutive Aliyos are on two separate Sifrei Torah, many Poskim maintain that there is no problem calling the two up. If the second Oleh is a minor (such as for *Maftir* in a shul where this Aliya is given to a minor) the issue does not arise. [See e.g. Mikeitz 42:5 Ki Sisa 30:12 (Rashi), Sanhedrin 93a 107a Baba Basra 2b, Poskim. Tur Sh. Ar. O.C. 141:6, commentaries.]

(C) *Hagbahah and Gelilah*

These Mitzvos are actually practiced differently by different communities. *Hagbahah* is to show the congregation the part of the Torah that is read from. The congregants are obliged to see the writing in the Sefer Torah. Some communities do *Hagbahah* as they remove the Sefer, while others do it on the Bimah. Of these some do it before Kriah; some maintain that the entire Kriah is done with the Sefer in the upright position. All of these practices are based on a Scriptural reference. The term *Yakim*, he shall raise up, is used with reference to the words of the Torah. This is taken to refer to the *Chazan* or *Korai*, reader, lifting the Torah for all to see.

The prevailing practice in Ashkenazi communities is to do *Hagbahah* at the end of Kria. Usually it is not the *Korai* who does it. Instead it is given as a Kibud as part of the second Mitzvah, *Gelilah*. This is the Mitzvah to ensure that the Torah is not left uncovered after its use. It is rolled up and covered. In some communities both are done by the same person. In our communities they are divided. The pri-

mary Mitzvah is considered Hagabahah. The Golel is considered secondary.

The Talmud considers the privilege of *Hagbahah* (which is called *Golel*, to roll, in the Talmud) as the most rewarding of all the honors. Therefore, it is given to the most prominent of those who were given Aliyos. Most Poskim agree that it need not be given to an Oleh, but may be given to the greatest person present in Shul. The practice evolved to bid for this Aliyah, since its reward equals the rewards of all the others put together, and people prize it very much.

Unfortunately, since no *Brocha* is recited, many people think that Hagbahah is not as good as a regular Aliya. In any event, a Gabbai should make sure to give this honor to the most deserving congregant. Since there is no Brocha on Gelilah, and one need not be strong to do it, the practice has evolved in some shuls to give it to a minor, as *Chinuch*, training.

Some Poskim discuss giving the two parts of this Mitzvah to two brothers. They say that if the names are not announced, it may be given to brothers. Furthermore, some say that if a father is given the last Aliya his son may get Hagabahah. This ruling implies that even if the name is announced the issue of Ayin Hara does not arise. Though the other Poskim imply that if names are announced it should be avoided, there seem to be factors that should permit it. First, the two Mitzvos are really parts of one Mitzvah, the Golel. The fact that the other Mitzvah of Hagbahah is added in does not make it into a separate Mitzvah. Therefore, the second brother getting part of the same Mitzvah should not arouse the kind of Ayin Hara aroused by two brothers getting consecutive Aliyos. Second, the Gelilah part is already considered minor by the multitudes, especially since a minor sometimes performs it. Third, the two Mitzvos are not identical, and neither has a Brocha recited for it. In addition, even when they are announced, it is common practice to announce both the name of the Magbiah and the Golel in the same announcement. Though this might seem to be of even greater concern for Ayin Hara, since it is done this way, the perception is that they are part of one Kibud (which they really are). Therefore, it would appear that one may accord brothers these honors nowadays. [See Ki Savo 27:26, Yerushalmi Sotah 7:4, Megilah 32a, Poskim Tur Sh. Ar. O.C. 134:2 141 (Ar. Hash. 8), 147:1 2 4, 149:1 commentaries. Shearim Hametzuyananim Bahalacha 23:10. Avnei Cheifetz 16.]