The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן קכ"ח סעיף מ"ה

Overview

Siman 128 Seif 45:

When reciting the following words the *kohanim* turn to the south and north: יברכך, וישמרך, אליך, ויחנך, אליך, לך, שלום. The custom is to stretch out the tune while reciting these words because each word is the end of a *beracha* and רבון is recited at that time as will be discussed in *siman* 130. The *kohanim* also stretch out the tune at the end of each *pasuk*, i.e. וישמרך, ויחנך, שלום. The announcer does not recite רבון וכו'. It is prohibited for one to be served by a kohen even nowadays since it is comparable to deriving personal benefit from sacred property unless the kohen is *mochel*.

- The rationale is to spread the *beracha* towards the people that are on their sides. (M.B. 168)
- The *kohanim* should be careful not to divide a word into two, e.g וישמר and then the ך. *Chazzanim* should also be cautious about this issue. (M.B. 169)
- Even if the announcer is not the *shaliach tzibbur* e.g. a kohen is the *shaliach tzibbur*, he should not recite רבון since he may become distracted and will not be able to resume announcing. (M.B. 173)
- Teshuvas Maharam Lublin writes that when there are no *kohanim* present for *mussaf* the *shaliach tzibbur* does not recite ותערב. (M.B. 173)
- According to some a kohen may not be *mochel* and serve someone else unless he benefits from that service, e.g. if he is paid, but if he does not benefit it is prohibited since serving someone is demeaning for which a kohen may not be *mochel*. It is proper to be stringent, *l'chatchila*, about this matter. (M.B. 175)

Halacha Highlight

Utilizing a kohen

Rema Siman 128 Seif 45

אסור להשתמש בכהן אפילו בזמן הזה

It is prohibited to utilize a kohen even nowadays.

Haghos Mordechai (הגהות מרדכי גיטין פ"ה סי' תס"א) relates that it happened once that a kohen poured water on the hands of Rabbeinu Tam. A student was present and questioned the allowance of this practice since the Yerushalmi (Berachos 8:5) teaches that one who utilizes a kohen for personal use violates the prohibition of *me'ilah* (deriving personal benefit from sacred property). Rabbeinu Tam answered that *kohanim* nowadays are not sanctified. The Gemara (Zevachim 17) teaches that a kohen who is not wearing the priestly vestments is unfit to perform the service of the *Bais HaMikdash* since it is only when he is properly garbed that the *kehunah* is upon him. Accordingly, since *kohanim* nowadays do not wear the priestly vestments they do not have the *kehuna* upon them and thus it is permitted to utilize them for personal use. The student challenged this approach because it would mean that there would be no reason to, for example, call them for the first *aliyah* and Rabbeinu Tam was silenced by the question. Rabbeinu Patar who was present answered that although *kohanim* retain their sanctity, since they do not wear the priestly vestments they can waive their honor and serve others.

Rema (רמ"א או"ח סי' קכ"ח סע' מ"ה) records the position of Rabbeinu Patar and writes that it is prohibited to utilize a kohen even nowadays. One who utilizes a kohen is in violation of the prohibition of *me'ilah* unless the kohen waives the honor that is due to him. Birkei Yosef (ברכי יוסף שם ס"ק כ"ה ושיורי ברכה אות ד'), however, demonstrates that a majority of *Rishonim* disagree with Rabbeinu Patar and maintain that it is prohibited to utilize a kohen even if the kohen waives the honor that is due to him. Mishnah Berurah (משנה ברורה שם ס"ק קע"ה) records this stringent view and adds that according to this view the only allowance to utilize a kohen is if the kohen is paid or he receives some sort of benefit from the service, e.g. the kohen serving someone of stature. Mishnah Berurah concludes that one should, in the first place, follow this stringent view.

Stories to Share

The Power of Melody

ש"ע, ס' קכ"ח, מ"ה: "מאריכין בניגון..."

On today's amud we find that the kohanim sing a nigun when they reached the final word of each stanza of birchas kohanim. The power of a nigun is something with which one can transcend any hardship, overcome any difficulty. The well-known, moving rendition of אני מאמין was sung by its composer while hurtling toward Treblinka to his death, together with a train car filled with his fellow Jews.

The only son of the rebbe of the Warsaw ghetto, Rav Kalonymus Kalman Shapira hy"d, was brutally murdered on erev Shabbos, the second day of Sukkos. His body was brought to the rebbe's house on Shabbos morning, and Rav Shapira sang and taught Torah at his tisch just like always. The funeral was the next day.

The week of Chol HaMoed was shrouded in fear and mourning for the Jews of the ghetto, and by the time Simchas Torah came, not even a minyan had the courage or willingness to appear in the rebbe's beis medrash. The few bochurim and avreichim that were there felt stifled by the terror reigning outside…until Rav Shapira arrived. He opened the aron kodesh and began to sing Eishes Chayil to the famously moving Karliner melody, dwelling on it for over an hour. As tears of longing streamed down his face, his sweet voice filled with love touched the hearts of the men in the shul and transported them to a place high above the ghetto, where they felt pure unity with the One Above. "Could it be that he is in mourning?" they wondered. Such was the power of his joyous connection to Hashem, uplifted through the power of melody!

מובא בסוף ספר אש קודש, ע' 24-25