

THE PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM ROADMAP TO PRAYER PROJECT

The Roadmap to Prayer

Lesson 23

© Pirchei Shoshanim 2005

This shiur may not be reproduced in any form without permission of the copyright holder

Rehov Kahanamin 54, Bnei Brac 03.616.6340
164 Village Path, Lakewood NJ 08701 732.370.3344 fax 1.877.Pirchei (732.367.8168)

Hallel

מקורות Background

Hallel consists of reciting verses of *Tehillim* written by *Dovid Hamelech*, starting from chapter 113 until the end of chapter 118¹. This *Hallel* is sometimes referred to as *Hallel HaMitzri* (the *Hallel* of Egypt).

מן הפסוק קראתי קה. ענני במרחב קה...
לא אמות כי אחיה. ואספר מעשי קה:
יסר יסרני קה. ולמנת לא נתנני:
אודך כי עניתני. ותהי לי לישועה: אודך כי עיתני. ותהי לי לישועה:
אבן מאסו הבונים. היתה לראש פנה: אבן מאסו הבונים.
היתה לראש פנה:
מאת השם היתה זאת. היא נפלאות בעינינו: מאת השם
היתה זאת. היא נפלאות בעינינו:
זה היום שש ה השם. נגילה ונשמחה בו: זה היום עשה השם.
נגילה ונשמחה בו:
אנא השם הושיעה נא. אנא השם הושיעה נא. אנא השם
הצליחה נא. אנא השם הצליחה נא:
ברך ה' בשם השם. ברכנוכם מבית השם: ב' רך ה' בשם
השם. ברכנוכם מבית השם:
קל השם ויאר לנו. אסרו חג בעבתיים. עד קרנות המזבח: קל
השם ויאר לנו. אסרו חג בעבתיים. עד קרנות המזבח:
קלי אתה ואודך. אלקי ארומקך: קלי אתה ואודך. אלקי
ארומקך:
הודו להשם כי טוב. כי לעולם חסדו: הודו להשם כי טוב.
כי לעולם חסדו:
ההלך השם אלקינו כל מעשיו וחסידיו וצדיקים עושי
וצונן ועמך בית ישראל כלם בנה יודו ויברכו וישבחו
ויפארו את שם כבודך. כי לך טוב להודות. ולשמך נעים
לומר. ומעולם ועד עולם אתה קל:
ברך אתה השם. מלך מהלל בתשבחות. אמן:

סדר הלל לראש חודש ולמועדים:
ברך אתה השם, אלקינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו
וצונו לגמור / לקרא את ההלל:
הללוקה. הללו עבדי השם. הללו את שם השם:
יהי שם השם מברך. מעתה ועד עולם...
מושיבי עקרת הבית אם הבנים שמו. ה הללוקה:
בצאת ישראל ממצרים. בית יעקב מעם לעז...
ההפכי הצור אגם מים. חלמיש למעיניו מים:
These verses are omitted on Rosh Chodesh, on Pesach Chol
HaMo'ed and last day(s) Yom Tov
לא לנו השם לא לנו. כי לשמך תן כבוד. על חסדך על
אמקך...
יראי השם בטחו ביהוה. עזרם ומגנם הוא:
השם זכרנו יברך. יברך את בית ישראל. יברך את בית
אחרון...
ואנחנו וברך קה מעתה ועד עולם הללוקה:
These verses are omitted on Rosh Chodesh, on Pesach Chol
HaMo'ed and last day(s) Yom Tov
אהבתי כי ישמע השם. את קולי תחנוני...
אני אמרתי בחפזי. כל האדם כזב:
מה אשיב להשם. כל תגמולוהי עלי...
ב' צרות את השם בתוכי ירושלים הללוקה:
הללו את השם כל גוים. שבחוהו כל האמים:
כי גבר עלינו חסדו ואמת השם לעולם הללוקה:
הודו להשם כי טוב. כי לעולם חסדו:
יאמר נא ישראל. כל עולם חסדו:
יאמרו נא בית אהרן. כי לעולם חסדו:
יאמרו נא יראי השם. כי לעולם חסדו:

¹ *Pesachim* 116b, *Megillah* 38b

² *Berachos* 56a

There are various opinions regarding when *Hallel* originated. Some say that the *Bnei Yisrael* (Israelites) recited it at the time of the *Exodus*, either at the time of the slaughtering of the *Korban Pesach* (Pascal Lamb) or at the time of *Krias Yam Suf*. For this reason *Hallel* is sometimes referred to as *Hallel HaMitzri*. Others say that *Yehoshua* and the *Bnei Yisrael* recited it in *Eretz Yisrael*. Some say that *Dovid Hamelech* was the first to recite it. The *sefer* (book) *Teshuvah Me'Ahavah* suggests that indeed there were many individuals who recited *Hallel* for miracles that saved them from impending dangers. The *Gemara*³ states that the Prophets (*Nevi'im*) instituted that we should recite *Hallel* whenever our nation is rescued from dangerous situations. Nevertheless, before *Dovid Hamelech* wrote these chapters of *Tehillim*, there wasn't any particular way to express our song of *Hallel*; we just sang praises in the best possible manner. What *Dovid Hamelech* accomplished was that he composed specific verses in *Tehillim* that can now be said as praise of *Hallel* at various junctures of the year, or when saved from dangerous situations. From then on, everyone would recite *Hallel* uniformly from the above-mentioned chapters of *Tehillim*.

The Days we recite the Complete Hallel

The *Gemara* in *Erechin*⁴ lists 18 days on which we recite the complete *Hallel*. On the rest of the days that we recite *Hallel*, we only recite a partial *Hallel* (*Chatzi Hallel*, lit. "Half -*Hallel*").

The following is a list of days on which we recite the entire *Hallel*:

- § *Sukkos* all seven days plus on *Shemini Atzeres* and in the Diaspora on *Simchas Torah* as well.

- § *Chanukah* all eight days

- § *Pesach* on the first night⁵ and day (in the Diaspora first two days).

- § *Shavuos* on the first day (in the Diaspora two days).

³ *Pesachim* 117a

⁴ *Daf* 10b

⁵ According to *Sephardic* custom and *Nusach Sefard*

This brings the total to 18 days (and in the Diaspora 21 days). On the rest of the days of *Pesach* we only recite partial Hallel.

אלו ימים שגומרים בהם את ההלל (בגולה):

The following days are the days that the complete *Hallel* is recited in the Diaspora:

2 days *Pesach*, 2 days *Shavuos*, 9 days *Sukkos/ Shemini Atzeres/ Simchas Torah* and 8 days *Chanukah*. The numerical equivalent in Hebrew spells the Hebrew word *Bebetach*, with security and trust in *Hashem*.

ב' ימים ראשונים של פסח, ב' ימים של שבועות. ט' ימים של חג הסוכות עם שמיני עצרת. ח' ימים דחנוכה, והסימן הוא בבט"ח:

During the intermediary days (*Chol HaMo'ed*) of *Pesach* as well as the final Yom Tov day of *Pesach*, we only recite partial Hallel.

According to the custom of *Sephardim* and *Nusach Sefard* although we do not recite a blessing on *Hallel* at the *Seder*, they do recite the complete *Hallel* with a *bracha* when it is recited in *shul*. According to the customs of *Ashkenaz*, *Hallel* is not recited at night in *shul*.

The "Brisker Rav": 2 Types of Hallel

The *Brisker Rav* explains the *Mitzvah* to recite *Hallel* in a unique way. He maintains that there are 2 distinct *Mitzvos* of *Hallel*. 1) To sing praise. This is the type of *Hallel* one sings whenever a special miracle occurs saving us from danger. This *Hallel* is a primary song of praise, thanking G-d for the miracle. This *Hallel* could theoretically be any expression and amount of praise thanking *Hashem* for the miracle. Accordingly it is possible to say that one may even recite a blessing for such a *Hallel* since it's not limited to any specific reading⁶. However, there is a second type of *Hallel*, which is specifically after *Dovid Hamelech* composed the chapters of *Tehillim*. 2) After *Dovid Hamelech* composed *Tehillim*, there is second *Mitzvah* of reciting *Hallel*. That *Mitzvah* is that on 18 (or 21) festival days of the year, one is required to recite the section of *Tehillim* from the above-mentioned portions of *Tehillim*. Accordingly, for the 18 days that we recite *Hallel* on festival days, the *bracha* is only when the

⁶ *Orach Chaim* 487: 4

⁷ *Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik zt"l*

⁸ The opinion of the *Mordechai*

defined amount of praise from *Tehillim* is said; hence the blessing of *Asher kidshanu be'mitzvosav ve'tzivanu Likro es Hahallel* (Who sanctified us and commanded us to read the *Hallel*). Now that *Dovid* composed these specific chapters in *Tehillim* Most opinions maintain that even when reciting *Hallel* for a miracle that *Hashem* performed for us, we must now recite *Hallel* specifically in the way *Dovid* composed it.

The Obligation to Recite Hallel

There are some opinions that maintain that the *Mitzvah* of reciting *Hallel* on the 18 festival days⁹ and on the night of *Pesach* (Passover)¹⁰ is a *Mitzvah De'Oraissa* (Torah command). Most *Rishonim* maintain that it is a *Mitzvah De'Rabbanan* (Rabbinic command)¹¹.

As mentioned before, there are 2 categories of reciting *Hallel*. One category is that whenever it is a festival, we recite *Hallel* because of the joy we experience at this time. Another category of *Hallel* is when the nation of *Bnei Yisrael* is saved from a danger we sing *Hallel* as praise. An example of this would be the recital of *Hallel* on the night of the *Seder*. Generally, we recite *Hallel* on a festival during the daytime; never at night. However, on the night of the *Seder* we recite *Hallel* because at this time we are to consider ourselves as one who is personally experiencing the Exodus as we say explicitly in the *Haggadah shel Pesach*. This *Hallel* is the second category of *Hallel* for being saved from danger.

Two Reasons for Chatzi Hallel on the remainder of Pesach

The *Gemara* in *Erechin* asks:

Why on *Pesach* do we only recite partial *Hallel* while on the Yom Tov of *Sukkos* we recite the entire *Hallel* every single day?

The *Gemara* answers:

On *Sukkos* we recite the entire *Hallel* since there was renewed *simcha* each day because of the different amount of *Korbanos* (sacrifices) that were offered every single day.

⁹ The 18 days are listed later on in the lesson

¹⁰ *Sefer Mitzvos Gedolos (Bahag) Mitzvah* 101-119

¹¹ See Rambam and Ramban in *Sefer Hamitzvos*

Also, the *Medrash* notes:

On the seventh day of *Pesach* we cannot bring ourselves to recite the entire *Hallel* since the *Mitzrim* (Egyptians) were drowned in the *Yam Suf* (Red Sea) on that very day.

Why isn't the first reason of the *Gemara* (*Korbanos*) sufficient to explain why on the rest of *Pesach* we do not recite the entire *Hallel*? Also, how does the second reason of the *Mitzrim* drowning on the seventh day exempt us from reciting the entire *Hallel* the rest of the days of *Pesach*?

The reason given by the *Medrash* is that on the seventh day of *Pesach*, the Egyptians (*Mitzrim*) drowned when G-d split the sea for the Jews and brought it back upon the advancing armies of the Egyptians, in their pursuit to recapture the Jews. Since this miracle involved the loss of life, albeit that the Egyptians deserved it, we cannot fully rejoice in the occasion since they too are creations of *Hashem*. Even though the Egyptians (*Mitzrim*) were a wicked nation of wicked people, it's still not proper that we sing an entire praise of *Hallel* to *Hashem* since He is saddened by people who do not live their lives properly and die without rectification of their sins. Nevertheless, from our standpoint, at least a partial *Hallel* is in place for us to recite to show our appreciation of the miracle and thank G-d for our salvation.

Since it is inappropriate for us to recite the complete *Hallel* on the seventh day which is a full-fledged *Yom Tov* day with all the laws of a regular *Yom Tov*, it is also inappropriate to recite the entire *Hallel* during the intermediary days (*Chol HaMo'ed*) of *Pesach* so it should not appear that the intermediary days have more significance than the *Yom Tov* of the seventh day *Pesach*¹².

The second reason is that a *Yom Tov* day that doesn't have special *Korbanos* is not considered to be a day of renewed rejoicing and we don't have to recite *Hallel* for this type of a festival *Yom Tov* day.

*Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l*¹³ elaborates on the 2 reasons mentioned for not obligating us to recite *Hallel* on the latter part of *Pesach*. He explains that on the seventh day of

¹² *Taz, Orach Chaim* 490: 3

¹³ *Mishnas Rav Aharon* beginning of Volume 3

Pesach we really should have had a double obligation to recite *Hallel*. One obligation stemming from the Yom Tov day itself; like any other Yom Tov on which we recite

*The Fundamental Difference
between Shira and Hallel*

Hallel. Additionally, we should have been obligated to recite *Hallel* on this day since we experienced the miraculous splitting of the *Yam Suf* sparing our lives from the advancing Egyptian armies. Nevertheless, we have neither an obligation on the

seventh day not because of the Yom Tov nor because of the miracle of the splitting of the sea. The Yom Tov itself doesn't obligate us to recite *Hallel* since it is not the caliber Yom Tov to require *Hallel*, since in the time of the *Beis Hamikdash* there wasn't a special *Korban* brought in particular for that day. Also, the miracle doesn't obligate us either because the miracle involved a loss of human life. *Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l* explains that although the *Bnei Yisrael* sang the *Shira* (song of praise) of *Az Yashir*, reciting *Hallel* is fundamentally different. *Shira* is a song of praise that internalizes the miraculous experience by using expressions in song, appreciating the specifics and the details of the miracle that *Hashem* has wrought for us. By performing this exercise, we internalize the lessons of the event and cherish it for a long time to come. Since *shira* is for our benefit, we are permitted to sing this praise even though it is at a time when there is a tremendous loss of human life.

The *Medrash* tells us also that at the time of the splitting of the sea, the administrating angels (*Malachim*) also wanted to sing G-d's praise. However, G-d answered them that they shouldn't, since the Egyptians were drowning in the sea. The difficulty with this is that the *Bnei Yisrael* did sing *shira* despite the fact that the Egyptians were dying, so why are the angels different? According to the above explanation, the difference is clear. The essential difference between humans and angels is that humans were given the option of exercising free choice; angels were not given the choice, as they recognize *Hashem's* existence and will clearly. Our free choice comes with the reality that we have an evil inclination that obscures the truth of G-d's existence and His continued involvement in the supervision of all aspects of creation. Therefore, when we humans experience special Divine intervention on our behalf, we must grab the opportunity to internalize the lesson that G-d runs all of creation and sing *shira*. That was the purpose of the song of *Az Yashir*. On the other hand, *Hallel* is just an expression of rejoicing and praise, which needs to be toned down when it involves human catastrophe.

Reciting Hallel According to its Order

What is the correct order for reading *Hallel*? *Hallel* consists of chapters 113 - 118 of the Book of *Tehillim*. On the days which we recite the entire *Hallel* we read all these chapters according to their order in *Tehillim*. To these chapters we add a *bracha* at its

opening and another at its closing. On a day that we recite only partial *Hallel*, we omit the first part of 115 and the first part of 116¹⁴.

In Orach Chaim Simon 488:1 we learn that we may not interrupt the reading of *Hallel* except according to *Bein Haperakim* (in between the Chapters) of *Krias She'ma*. The Rama adds that this applies only to days when the entire *Hallel* is recited. On days when only *Chatzi Hallel* (Half-Hallel) is recited, then it has *Halachic* interruption status like in Simon 422: 4 that it is the same as during *Pesukei De'zimra*.

The Mechaber writes in Simon 422: 2 - We recite *Chatzi Hallel* in private and in *tzibbur* (public). Some say to recite a *bracha* for *Chatzi Hallel* in *tzibbur* but not in private. Others say not to recite a *bracha* even in *tzibbur* (Rambam). Rama and others say that even in private we recite a *bracha*. Still one should try to recite it with the *tzibbur*. If one came to *shul* when the *tzibbur* was reciting *Hallel*, one should read *Hallel* first and then daven¹⁵. If one is in middle of *Pesukei De'zimra*, one should recite *Hallel* on *Rosh Chodesh* without reciting the beginning or ending *bracha*. This is because the *brochos* of *Baruch She'omar* and *Yishtabach* will serve their place.

When we recite *Hallel* it in its entirety¹⁶ there is a strict rule to follow. That means that we must recite *Hallel* according to the order of the verses (*Pesukim*) in *Hallel*. The *Gemara* in *Megillah*¹⁷ explains that the very first chapter of *Hallel* is teaching us this *Halacha*. The verse is *Mimizrach shemesh ad mevo'oh mehullal sheim Hashem* מִמִּזְרַח שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבוֹאוֹמְהוּלָל שֵׁם הַשֵּׁם (From the rising of the sun until its setting, praised it the Name of *Hashem*)¹⁸. The *Gemara* notes that according to nature the sun rises every single morning in the East and sets every evening in the West. It never happened that the sun should rise from the West and set in the East. Likewise, an individual should never recite *Hallel* out of its order in *Tehillim*.

¹⁴ Except for Rosh Chodesh according to the Rambam since we do not recite a *bracha* for a *Minhag*

¹⁵ *Mishna Berura* 422: 6

¹⁶ We will discuss later how to apply this rule to *Hallel* of *Rosh Chodesh*

¹⁷ *Daf* 17a

¹⁸ *Tehillim* 113: 2

Phraseology of the Blessing

There is also a question as to what should be the exact wording of the bracha?

The Maharam M'Rottenberg¹⁹ says that on the days when the entire Hallel is recited, one should recite a *bracha Baruch atta Hashem Elokeinu melech ha'olam Asher kidshanu be'mitzvosav ve'tzivanu Likro (to read) es Hahallel*. One should not recite a *bracha Asher kidshanu be'mitzvosav ve'tzivanu Ligmor (to complete) es Hahallel* in case one may accidentally skip a word, thereby rendering his blessing as a *bracha le'vatalah*. (A blessing made in vain)

The Rosh disagrees. He says that either way, the meaning of the *bracha* is for the "reading" of *Hallel* and not necessarily for its completion. Even if one said *Ligmor* (to complete) *es Hahallel*, and by mistake skipped something of *Hallel*, he is not considered to have recited a *bracha le'vatalah* (a wasteful blessing, saying *Hashem's Name* in vain).

The custom of *Ashkenazim* today is to say a uniform *bracha* for both when *Hallel* is recited in whole or in part. The *nusach* (version) of the blessing is *Likro* (to recite) *es Hahallel*.

The custom of *Sephardim* today is to recite *Ligmor es Hahallel*. A *bracha* is only recited when the complete *Hallel* is read. On the rest of the days when only partial *Hallel* is read, then it was read without a *bracha*; not even the *bracha Likro* (to recite) *es Hahallel*.

What is the source of the Custom of Reciting Hallel on Rosh Chodesh?

The *Shibalei Haleket* quotes the *Ge'onim* who explain the custom of reciting *Hallel* on *Rosh Chodesh*. It is based on the final chapter of *Tehilim* which says the word *Hallelu* 12 times²⁰. These 12 *Hallelus* correspond with the 12 months of the year. *David Hamelech* (King David) repeats the final *pasuk Kol haneshama tehallel kah Hallelukah* at

¹⁹ A *Rishon* (early commentator) quoted by the *Rosh*

²⁰ We should note that really, we do not recite *Hallel* on *Rosh Chodesh* of the month of *Tishrei*, which is the holiday of *Rosh Hashanah*. The *Gemara* in *Rosh Hashanah Daf 32b* questions why we don't recite *Hallel* then. The *Gemara* answers that since it is a day of judgment for all mankind, it would be inappropriate to recite *Hallel* when the fate of each individual is hanging in limbo. (See *Aruch Hashulchan* in note to 422: 6)

the end of the chapter. This final reference corresponds to a leap year when we have 13 months, and 13 *Rosh Chodesh* occurrences.

Hallel of Rosh Chodesh

The *Mitzvah* of reciting *Hallel* on *Rosh Chodesh* is disputed amongst the *Rishonim*. There are various opinions:

Some say that only a *Minyan* of people together are required to recite *Hallel* on *Rosh Chodesh*.

Others say the obligation is both for a *Minyan* as well as an individual, but without a *bracha*.

Rabbeinu Tam and the *Rosh* maintain that both an individual as well as a *Minyan* should recite it with a *bracha*.

The Rambam²¹ maintains that during the rest of the days of *Pesach* we recite only a partial *Hallel* and its law is the same as *Hallel* of *Rosh Chodesh*; one recites it without a *bracha*.

The Ramban's²² opinion is that unlike *Rosh Chodesh*, the *Hallel* of the rest of *Pesach* (Passover) is a *Rabbinic* institution, which requires a *bracha* like any *Mitzvah De'Rabbanan*...

Sephardic custom is not to recite a *bracha* for *Hallel* of *Rosh Chodesh*. *Ashkenazim* generally, do recite a *bracha* for *Hallel* on *Rosh Chodesh* although some do not. *Nusach Sefard* does recite a *bracha*. The *Gra* did not recite a *bracha* but he had in mind to fulfill it by listening from the *Shali'ach Tzibbur* (leader of the prayers). Rav Ovadiah Yosef *shlit"l* rules that *Sephardim* davening in an *Ashkenazi Minyan* should listen to the *bracha* of the *Shali'ach Tzibbur* but only answer *Amen* in their minds, not verbally.

²¹ Maimonides

²² Nachmanides

Rosh Chodesh: Commemorating the Exodus

The *She'lah Hakadosh* explains that we recite *Hallel* on *Rosh Chodesh* as a *zecher le'yetzias Mitzrayim* (a commemoration of the Exodus) since with the declaration of the new month we establish the dates for the festivals, which are themselves *zecher le'yetzias Mitzrayim*. Hence, we recite the *Hallel* that talks about *Yetzias Mitzrayim*²³.

The *Aruch Hashulchan*²⁴ writes that our custom of reciting *Hallel* on *Rosh Chodesh* is because *Rosh Chodesh* is declared on a day when the moon renews itself monthly after waning away on the previous month. This cycle of the month resembles *Klal Yisrael's* existence in *Galus*. *Klal Yisrael* faces many difficulties which diminish *Klal Yisrael's* stature amongst the nations. Nevertheless, *Hashem* gives *Klal Yisrael* opportunities to renew and rejuvenate themselves through *teshuvah* (repenting) and *ma'asim tovim* (good deeds). However, since reciting *Hallel* on *Rosh Chodesh* is only a custom, we leave out certain sections of *Hallel* and we recite *Hallel* only in part. We recite a *bracha* even for this abridged *Hallel* to note its importance so that people will continue reciting it dutifully. Otherwise, its recitation may seem optional similar to that of *Borchi Nafsh*²⁵ which we recite on *Rosh Chodesh* at the end of *Shacharis*, which many individuals end up omitting from the daily order of prayer. Therefore, it is important to follow the custom of reciting *Hallel* with a *bracha* even when reciting it in private.

Laws דינים

- § Women are not required to recite *Hallel*.
- § *Ashkenazic* women may recite *Hallel* with a *bracha*.
- § According to some *poskim*, *Sephardic* women may not recite *Hallel* with a *bracha*. Other *poskim* maintain that *Sephardic* women do recite *Hallel* with a *bracha*.
- § *Hallel* may be recited any time during the day.

²³ We can add that the order of the months begin with the month of Nissan, the month of the Exodus

²⁴ 422: 6

²⁵ Tehilim 104

§ *Hallel* should be recited while standing and not leaning heavily on a table or other object.

§ If *Hallel* was recited sitting, it need not be repeated.

Interruptions during Hallel

The Tur writes²⁶ that since *Hallel* is graced with a *bracha* at its beginning and another *bracha* at its conclusion, one is not allowed to interrupt in the middle of reciting *Hallel* only for those things one may interrupt when one is in the middle of a portion of *Krias She'ma*.

The *Abudraham* comes up with two possibilities regarding the status of the *brochos* for *Hallel*. He is bothered why the closing *bracha* of *Hallel* begins with *Yehallelucha etc.* and not with the usual opening of *Baruch atta Hashem*? To this he gives two possible answers. One is that we consider the *bracha* of *Yehallelucha* a *bracha ha'semucha le'chaverta*. That means that although *Yehallelucha* is not recited immediately after the *bracha* over *Hallel*, as there are many verses from *Tehillim* in-between, they are not considered an interruption at all. This is similar to the *brochos* of *Yishtabach* and *Baruch She'omar*. Another answer he gives is that since the *bracha* of *Yehallelucha* is a *bracha* of *Shevach* (praise), it is not required to open with a regular opening of *Baruch atta Hashem*. We find a similar *bracha* for rain that also begins with the words *Modim anachnu lach al kol tipah ve'tipah etc.* (We are grateful to you for every single drop) which has no opening *Baruch atta Hashem*.

The above-mentioned Tur on the subject of not talking during the recital of Hallel is apparently following the first explanation of the Abudraham that Yehallelucha is a continuation of the opening bracha of Hallel Bracha Ha'semucha Le'chaverta, which should not be separated through an interruption by talking. However, according to the latter explanation that exempts Yehallelucha from the usual opening blessing because it is a Birchas Hashevach, interruptions should be acceptable. Except that we can say that even according to that explanation, since Hallel is considered so worthy that it is enclosed with brochos, it is logical that we should not interrupt it with idle-talk.

²⁶ Simon 488

If one mistakenly omits something from Hallel

If someone made a mistake and left out a word or *pasuk* from *Hallel*, he must go back to that *pasuk* and recite *Hallel* from there on without interruption in the order of the verses (*Pesukim*). The *Biur Halacha*²⁷ argues that in the case of *Hallel* on *Rosh Chodesh* it should be obvious that there isn't any issue of a *bracha le'vatalah* (a wasteful blessing, saying *Hashem's Name* in vain) for omitting a word or a verse (*pasuk*), since the custom is to recite *Hallel* on *Rosh Chodesh* with a *bracha* even though *Hallel* of *Rosh Chodesh* leaves out two sections. However, if one recites the *pesukim* out of order, for example one reads a verse (*pasuk*), skips a *pasuk* and then reads the next verse (*pasuk*), if he would insert the verse (*pasuk*) that he missed right now and continue from the point he reached onward, the order of the verses (*Pesukim*) would be mixed up and it would render one's *bracha* to be *le'vatalah* (in vain) even for *Hallel* on *Rosh Chodesh*.

On other occasions that we recite only a partial *Hallel*, the *Halacha* is like on *Rosh Chodesh*. On the days that we recite the complete *Hallel*, if one omits a verse (*pasuk*) or word it will invalidate the entire *Hallel* if one does not correct himself²⁸.

Customs of Reciting Hallel

The sections of *Hallel* are read both by the *Chazzan* as well as by the congregation (*tzibbur*) section by section as indicated in *Siddurim* (prayer books).

Upon reaching the stanza of *Hodu La'Hashem*²⁹ there are four verses that end with the refrain of *Ki le'olam chasdo* **כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ**.

The custom is that the *Shali'ach Tzibbur* recites all the verses (*Pesukim*) out loud and the congregation responds with the entire sentence of *Hodu La'Hashem ki tov Ki le'olam chasdo*. The congregants themselves are supposed to listen to the *Chazzan* saying the next stanza and be *yotzei* through him by responding the refrain of *Hodu*. Nevertheless, there are congregations which first say the next phrase themselves just in case they miss out hearing the *Chazzan*.

²⁷ Simon 422: 6 *D'h Lemafrei'ah*

²⁸ Orach Chaim *Simon* 488:

²⁹ Tehillim 118

E.g. Chazzan: Hodu La'Hashem ki tov Ki le'olam chasdo

Congregation: Hodu La'Hashem ki tov Ki le'olam chasdo; Yomar nah Yisrael Ki le'olam chasdo.

Chazzan: Yomar nah Yisrael Ki le'olam chasdo.

Congregation: Hodu La'Hashem ki tov Ki le'olam chasdo; Yomru nah Beis Aharon Ki le'olam chasdo.

If someone is reciting *Hallel* in private, one should have two people listening to him recite *Hodu... Yomar ... Yomru ... Yomru ... Ki le'olam chasdo*. They would recite after him the refrain of *Hodu ...* after which they recite the following phrase just as they do in public. If this cannot be done, then the individual should just recite the four verses without repeating the refrain. This is also the custom at the *Seder* on the night of *Pesach*.

Later on there are numerous *pesukim* that are repeated twice starting with *Odecha Ki anisani* אֲדַעְךָ כִּי עֲנִיתָנִי. וְתַהֲי לִי לִישׁוּעָה: אֲדַעְךָ כִּי עֲנִיתָנִי. וְתַהֲי לִי לִישׁוּעָה: *anisani*

The Closing Bracha at the end of Hallel

וְהַלְלֵךְ הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ כָּל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וְחֻסֵּיךָ וְצַדִּיקִים עוֹשֵׂי רְצוֹנְךָ וְעַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּלָם בְּרִנָּה יוֹדוּ וְיִבְרְכוּ וְיִשְׁבְּחוּ וְיִפְאָרוּ אֶת שֵׁם כְּבוֹדְךָ. כִּי לָךְ טוֹב הַהוֹדוֹת. וְלִשְׁמַנְךָ נְעִים לְזַמְרָה. וּמַעוֹלָם וְעַד עוֹלָם אֲתַהַקֵּל:
בְּרַךְ אֶתְּהָ הַשֵּׁם, מֶלֶךְ מְהֻלָּל בְּתִשְׁבָּחוֹת. (אָמֵן):

At the end of *Hallel* we conclude it with a *bracha* of *Yehallelucha* as mentioned earlier. Afterwards, the *Chazzan* recites *Kaddish Shaleim* (i.e. the complete *Kaddish* with *Tiskabel*) since the *Kaddish* closes the *tefilla* of *Shacharis*. However, on *Chanukah* where there's no additional *Tefillas Mussaf* (*Mussaf* prayer), *Kaddish Tiskabel* is recited in its usual place after reciting *U'vah le'tziyone*. In the meantime, just *Chatzi Kaddish*³⁰ is recited after the closing of *Hallel*.

Hallel – The Song of the Soul

Reciting *Hallel* on festivals and momentous occasions brings with it sentiments of rejoicing and of song. When we daven in *shul* it is customary for the *Chazzan* to sing its words in a melodious tone and sing certain parts in familiar contemporary song. In fact, this is an age-old custom when reciting *Hallel* dating back to its origins. *Rabbeinu Yonah* writes that it is a prerequisite that a person recite *Hallel* in a disposition of happiness and gratitude. The *Gemara* in *Pesachim* writes how they used to recite *Hallel* on the *Seder* night of Passover and that the “roofs would burst” from

³⁰ Lit. “Half-Kaddish” i.e. no additions after *da'amiran be'alma ve'imru amen*

the sounds of singing of *Hallel*. Indeed, even today *Hallel* elicits much happiness and joy. Rav Shimshon Pinkus *zt"l* notes that the very name *Hallel* means excessive (wild) praise. The *pasuk* states *Velis'choke amarti meholal*³¹ ולשחוק אמרתי מהולל (I said of laughter, it is wild). This is the underlying theme for reciting *Hallel*.

However, if one carefully examines the selection of verses which constitute the major portion of *Hallel*, one will notice that there's not much rejoicing inherent in its words. True that from time to time *Hallel* mentions words of encouragement and even salvation, still those *pesukim* (verses) alone do not set the tone for the rest of *Hallel*. Rather we find such verses as *Tzara ve'yagon emtza uve'sheim Hashem ekrah* צרה ויגון אמצע ובשם ד' אקרא (...trouble and sorrow I would find. Then I would invoke the Name of Hashem...).³² Or, *Yassor yisrani Kah ve'lamo vess lo nesani* יסור יסרני קה ולמות לא נתני (*Hashem* has chastened me exceedingly, but he did not let me die)³³. These words at best encourage us to endure the pain and affliction that we may be suffering throughout or stay in *Galus* (exile) but by no means does it connote any kind of wild praise.

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch *zt"l* explains *Hallel* as follows. The various verses (*Pesukim*) that comprise *Hallel* are speaking of how *Hashem* provides for us and protects us in all situations that we are presented with in life. It conveys a feeling that we are never alone no matter how difficult life seems to be. *Hashem* is constantly monitoring our progress and keeping a watchful eye over us, especially in *Galus*. This secure feeling sustains us and gives us a sense of great pride as a nation of G-d's servants. It is true that we suffered a lot throughout our history, but it is also true that we continue our survival to this very day only through Divine Providence and *Hashem's* good grace. In fact, on *Rosh Chodesh* we recite *Hallel* not because of any special event or obligation, for it is recited only as an accepted custom. This custom is based on the original institution of reciting *Hallel* on days that we experienced miracles. The *Gemara* relates that there was once a book called *Megillas Ta'anis* that enumerated all the days of the years, which were celebrated like minor festivals by not allowing eulogies and with the recitation of *Hallel*. Eventually there were so many of these days that the *Chachamim* (sages) abolished them for there would be no day during the year that would not be considered a holiday. It turns out that our entire existence throughout the ages as a scattered nation amongst the nations of the world is all based on miracles. In fact, Rav Yaakov from Emden said that the

³¹ *Koheles* 2: 2

³² *Tehillim* 116:3, 4

³³ 118:18

continued existence of the Jewish nations amongst the nations is like the survival of a sheep amongst seventy wolves. This alone is testimony to G-d and His Divine Providence that protects us at all times. Nevertheless, it has become the custom for Jews to recite *Hallel* on each of the possible 2 days of *Rosh Chodesh*. The days we celebrate at the beginning of the waxing of the new moon are very appropriate times for celebrating our continued existence throughout history in which way we are very similar to the moon. In the prayers of *Kiddush Levana* (Sanctification Prayer of the New Moon) we compare the Jewish nation survival in exile to the waxing and the waning of the moon. Even after the moon has completely disappeared from sight, there is always hope for renewal and for salvation. Even when our lives seem so bleak and it looks like the nations are successfully wiping us from the face of the Earth, there is always hope and renewal not far behind, just like the moon reappears after disappearing at the end of each month. Even after we suffer defeats and experience weakening resolve in following Torah commands, in the end, we repent and mend our ways and *Hashem* once again restores our security and prosperity as a nation. This is the true joy of the Jewish nation that carries us through all of life's situations and circumstances. This is our true sense of security living amongst the nations of the world. This is what it means to celebrate "wildly" in the words of *Hallel*. We reserve expressing these feelings at the intervals like Rosh Chodesh and other festive occasions, points in time when we are more likely to be inspired with emotional praise. To recite *Hallel* daily with great joy would be totally implausible, since even if we live our lives in recognition of the fact that our total existence is guided by *Hashem*, we still could not express our emotions daily in song and rejoicing, since emotions usually only come from momentous and meaningful occasions.

Questions:

- 1) What does the word *Hallel* denote?
- 2) What is *Chatzi Hallel*?
- 3) During which Torah festival do we recite only *Chatzi Hallel*?
- 4) What two reasons are given by a *Gemara* and a *Medrash* for one of the above *Halachos*?
- 5) During which Rabbinic festival do we recite the complete *Hallel*?
- 6) What celebration is there on Rosh Chodesh that elicits us to sing the prayer of *Hallel*?
- 7) When does the strict law of treating *Hallel* like *bein haperakim* (between paragraphs) of *Krias She'ma* apply?
- 8) With regard to which *Hallel* is there a *machlokes* (argument) whether to recite it with a *bracha* or not.
- 9) What special law is there with regard to *Hallel* on Rosh Chodesh when one is in the middle of *Pesukei De'zimra*?
- 10) Do women recite *Hallel* with a *bracha*?
- 11) If someone omitted a *pasuk* or a word, what is the proper way to re-insert it into *Hallel*?
- 12) What are the two possible versions for a *bracha* over *Hallel* and who practices each version?

Answers:

- 1) It denotes excessive praise.
- 2) *Chatzi Hallel* is when parts of Hallel are omitted.(i.e. *Lo lanu* and *Ohavti*).
- 3) During the latter days of *Pesach*.
- 4) The *Gemara* says that we do not recite the complete *Hallel* on the latter days of *Pesach* because those days do not have any new *Korbanos*. The *Medrash* says that on the seventh day we cannot recite a complete *Hallel* because *Hashem* was saddened by the drowning of the Egyptians.
- 5) Chanukah.
- 6) The *She'lah* writes that it is the basis for all the festivals which are set according to the lunar months that are set by Rosh Chodesh. The Aruch Hashulchan writes that the cycle of the month resembles *Klal Yisrael's* existence in *Galus*. *Klal Yisrael* faces many difficulties which diminish *Klal Yisrael's* stature amongst the nations. Nevertheless, *Hashem* gives *Klal Yisrael* opportunities to renew and rejuvenate themselves through *teshuvah* (repenting) and *ma'asim tovim* (good deeds).
- 7) It applies only when a *bracha* is recited for *Hallel*. Otherwise it is the same as during *Pesukei De'zimra*.
- 8) It is about the *Hallel* of Rosh Chodesh. There is also an argument as to whether a *bracha* is recited for *Hallel* of the latter days of *Pesach*.
- 9) The law is not to recite a separate *bracha* since the *brachos* of *Pesukei De'zimra* count for *Hallel* as well.
- 10) Women may recite *Hallel* according to *Ashkenaz* and *Nusach Sefard*. There are differing opinions whether *Sephardic* women are allowed to recite a *bracha* over *Hallel*?
- 11) It should be recited and *Hallel* should be continued by repeating the *pesukim* from that point forward.
- 12) *Sephardim* say *Ligmor es Hahallel*. *Ashkenazim* and *Nusach Sefard* say *Likro es Hahallel*.