

THE PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM ROADMAP TO PRAYER PROJECT

# The Roadmap to Prayer

## Lesson 27

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Lesson

# 27

## Krias HaTorah

### The Significance of Krias HaTorah

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt"l* rules that if one is faced with a choice of either attending *Krias HaTorah* with a *Minyan* or davening *Shemoneh Esrei* with a *Minyan*, one must attend the *Minyan* for *Krias HaTorah* even if doing so will forfeit his chance to daven with a *Minyan*.

On the other hand, one who is in the middle of praying *Shemoneh Esrei* may not stop to listen to *Krias HaTorah*, even though one does stop to listen to *Kedusha* in the middle of *Shemoneh Esrei*. This is because *Krias HaTorah* is a lengthier interruption than stopping just for *Kedusha*.

Rav Shlomo Zalman *zt"l* concludes that in such a case, one does not have to seek out another *Minyan* where he can hear *Krias HaTorah*. If he still wishes to do so, he will be considered praiseworthy.

### Holding onto the Torah

It is customary for the *Oleh* to hold the 2 poles of the *Sefer Torah* when reciting the *brochos*. This custom is based on a number of sources. Firstly, the Tur<sup>2</sup> finds a source in the *Gemara* in *Sukkah*<sup>3</sup> that mentions that one who reads from the Torah would hold the *Sefer Torah* in his hands. The *Levush* finds a different source where *Hashem* warns *Yehoshua* (Joshua) not to remove this *Sefer Torah* from his lips. Since the verse refers to the Torah he is learning as "this" *Sefer Torah* it implies that he was holding it while learning. There is also a verse (*pasuk*) which reads *Eitz Chayim hee le'machzikim bah<sup>4</sup>* (It is a tree of life for those who hold onto it). In fact, we refer to the poles that

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<sup>1</sup> In truth, this opinion is disputed by *Minchas Yitzchok* Volume 7:6 (*Ishei Yisrael* 12:15)

<sup>2</sup> End of *Simon* 139

<sup>3</sup> *Daf* 41b

<sup>4</sup> *Mishlei* 3:18

the *Sefer Torah* is scrolled onto as *Atzei Chayim* (Trees of Life). Holding an object of a *Mitzvah* shows that one treasures it and holds it dear. In the case of a *Sefer Torah* it also symbolizes our connection to the true life-force; the Torah. *Ki heim Chayeinu ve'orech yameinu*<sup>5</sup> (for it is the source of our life and the length of our days).

Since the *Oleh* stands to the right of the *Ba'al Koreh*, when the *Ba'al Koreh* begins to read, the *Oleh* lets go of the left pole with his left hand and continues to hold the other pole with his right hand. After the *Aliyah* is completed, the *Oleh* takes hold again of the pole with his left hand, rolls the *Sefer Torah* closed and recites the closing *bracha* with both hands holding the *Sefer Torah*.

Amongst *Sephardim*, the custom is for the *Oleh* to hold onto the top of the poles of the *Sefer Torah* from inside its holder, with a silk garment that is spread across the *Sefer Torah*. After the *Bracha* is recited, the *Oleh* holds onto the side of the holder with his right hand and with his *Tallis*, during the reading. Afterwards, he holds back onto the *Sefer Torah* as he did at the beginning to recite the closing *bracha*.

#### Touching and Kissing the Words of the Torah

Besides for holding the *Sefer Torah* by the *Atzei Chayim* the custom is also to touch the words in the *Sefer Torah* where the *Aliyah* begins<sup>6</sup> with a *Tallis* or some other garment before reciting the opening *bracha*. He then kisses the *Sefer Torah* with his *Tallis* or some other garment after the completion of the reading for his *Aliyah* before the closing *bracha*. In this case one can touch with his *Tallis* on any part of the *Sefer Torah* or after rolling it closed<sup>7</sup>

#### The Meaning of Birchas HaTorah for an Aliyah

The essence of *Birchos HaTorah* for public Torah readings is derived from a verse in *Parshas Ha'azinu* where *Moshe Rabbeinu* told *Bnei Yisrael* before reading the *Shira* of *Ha'azinu* (Words of Torah which are like song) that after he recites the blessing, they should all respond *Amen*; *באמן*; *אתם הבו גודל לאלהינו* *בברכה*, *אתם הבו גודל לאלהינו באמן*, when I call *Hashem's Name* in a *bracha* everyone should respond *Amen*. The point of the *mitzvah* is that whenever we read from the Torah in public, we should express our gratitude to *Hashem* for choosing us from amongst the nations and giving us His Torah that

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<sup>5</sup> Recited in the second *bracha* by *Tefillas Ma'ariv* - based on verse *Devarim* 30:20 *Ki hu chayecha ve'orech yamecha*.

<sup>6</sup> Some have a custom to touch with their *Tallis* both where the *Aliyah* begins and ends

<sup>7</sup> *Si'ach Tefilla* 14:7

teaches us the proper path to follow in life. We do this when we recite the blessing of *Asher bachar banu* which expresses our gratitude to *Hashem* for singling us out and choosing us to receive His Torah. The Tur<sup>8</sup> notes that during this *bracha* one should recall how *Hashem* gave us the Torah at *Har Sinai* (Mount Sinai) through fire, lightning and thunder. One should also contemplate that the Torah is His most cherished teaching and it is our source of life.

The congregants should be careful to answer *Amen* to the *bracha* of the *Oleh* only after he has completed the *bracha* fully. Likewise, the *Ba'al Koreh* should commence reading from the Torah only after everyone finished answering *Amen*. This includes waiting for those who may draw out the word when answering *Amen*, since the *Ba'al Koreh* must be careful that everyone should hear his entire reading<sup>9</sup>.

### Mistakes in the Bracha

There are 3 articles that the *Oleh* recites by an *Aliyah*. *Borchu*, *Asher bachar banu* ... and *Asher nassan lanu* ... It is common that the *Oleh* occasionally confuses the opening *bracha* of *Asher bachar banu* with the closing *bracha* of *Asher nassan lanu*. If this happens and one realizes his mistake before ending the *bracha*, then one simply goes back to the words *Asher bachar banu* and recites the *bracha* as usual without starting over from the beginning *Baruch atta Hashem*. If one said the entire *bracha* before realizing the mistake, then the *Ba'al Koreh* reads the *Aliyah* after the *bracha* and the *Oleh* just says the *bracha* *Asher bachar banu* after the *Aliyah*. If one realizes his mistake at the closing *Baruch atta Hashem* before saying the words *Nossein HaTorah*, he should just complete the *bracha*. In such instances, one just recites the *bracha* *Asher bachar banu* after the reading. If one repeated the same *bracha* at the end of the reading instead of the *bracha* of *Asher nassan lanu* ... if one realizes this at the end by *Baruch atta Hashem* before saying the words *Nossein HaTorah*, one should just continue by saying *Elokeinu melech ha'olam Asher nassan lanu* ... Otherwise, one is required to repeat the correct *bracha* of *Asher nassan lanu* ... from the beginning *Baruch atta Hashem*<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> *Simon* 47

<sup>9</sup> *Aruch Hashulchan* 141: 8

<sup>10</sup> *Mishna Berura* 139:15

The Proper Way	Acceptable Be'dieved (post facto)	To fix the mistake	To fix the mistake	To fix the mistake	To fix the mistake
<i>Borchu</i>	<i>Borchu</i>	<i>Borchu</i>	<i>Borchu</i>	<i>Borchu</i>	<i>Borchu</i>
<i>Asher bachar banu</i>	<i>Asher nassan lanu</i>	<i>Asher nassan lanu</i> remembered before the closing of <i>Baruch atta Hashem</i> , go back and continue <i>Asher bachar banu</i>	<i>Asher nassan lanu</i> remembered right by the closing of <i>Baruch atta Hashem</i> , say the closing of <i>Asher nassan lanu</i>	<i>Asher bachar banu</i>	<i>Asher bachar banu</i>
<i>Krias HaTorah</i>	<i>Krias HaTorah</i>	<i>Krias HaTorah</i>	<i>Krias HaTorah</i>	<i>Krias HaTorah</i>	<i>Krias HaTorah</i>
<i>Asher nassan lanu</i>	<i>Asher bachar banu</i>	<i>Asher nassan lanu</i>	<i>Asher bachar banu</i>	<i>Asher bachar banu</i> remembered before the closing of <i>Baruch atta Hashem</i> , go back and continue <i>Asher nassan lanu</i>	<i>Asher bachar banu</i> remembered after saying <i>Baruch atta Hashem</i> of the closing <i>bracha</i> , he should say <i>Elokeinu Melech ha'olam Asher nassan lanu</i>

#### After the Aliyah: Remain Standing There

One should remain standing at the *Bimah* after his *Aliyah* is completed until at least the next person comes up to the *Sefer Torah* for the next *Aliyah*. Some wait until the next *Oleh* says *Borchu*<sup>12</sup>. The custom is however to remain at the *Bimah* until after the next *Aliyah* reading is complete. This is most likely only so that the *Oleh* does not miss any part of the next Torah reading<sup>13</sup>. Then one returns to his seat taking a longer route back to show that one is in no hurry to leave the *Sefer Torah*.

<sup>12</sup> *Aruch Hashulchan* 141:11

<sup>13</sup> *Siddur Vilna*

According to the *Gra*<sup>14</sup>, instead of taking the shortest route to take an *Aliyah*, he maintains that one should always go to the *Bimah* for his *Aliyah* from the right hand side and return from the other side back to one's seat.

And if the *Levi* walked in...

If the *Kohen* began the second *Aliyah* because there wasn't any *Levi* in shul, and then a *Levi* came in, if the *Kohen* only recited *Borchu*, the *Levi* should step up to the Torah and recite the *brochos*. The *Kohen* should just step aside as he has now completed his part in *Krias HaTorah*. If the situation arises with a *Yisrael* taking the first *Aliyah* because there was no *Kohen* at the time, if he started the *bracha* of *Asher bachar banu*, the *Kohen* does not receive his *Aliyah* any longer. If the *Yisrael* did not yet start the *bracha* itself, the *Kohen* should just step up to the Torah and take the *Aliyah*, while the *Yisrael* stands at his side and takes the *Aliyah* after the *Levi* in his usual position with the *Gabbai* announcing his name again.

Calling one that's in the middle of *Birchos Krias She'ma* for an *Aliyah*

If a *Kohen* is still in the middle of *Krias Shema*, the *Halacha* is that he isn't called to the Torah because it interrupts his prayer (davening). Nevertheless, if he was called by the *Gabbai* by name, he may take the *Aliyah* and he recites all the *brochos* but he is not allowed to read along with the *Ba'al Koreh*<sup>15</sup>. He's also not allowed to speak to the *Gabbai* to say a *Mi Sheberach* prayer for him. However, if the *Gabbai* initiates the prayer himself and asks him for his name, he may tell him as this interruption is for the honor of an individual which is permitted during the *Birchos Krias She'ma*.

According to Sephardic *poskim* one is not allowed to take the *Aliyah* when holding in the midst of *Birchos Krias She'ma*.

The above laws apply equally to a *Kohen* or any other individual called by name to take an *Aliyah* when holding in the midst of *Birchos Krias She'ma*.

The laws regarding calling someone for an *Aliyah* while holding in the midst of *Pesukei De'zimra* is as follows. If there are others who can take the *Aliyah*, then the *Gabbai* should not call someone in the middle of *Pesukei De'zimra*. If however, there is only one *Kohen* or just one *Levi* then he may call him for the *Aliyah*. In this case the *Oleh* is supposed to read along with the *Ba'al Koreh*. He just should refrain from speaking or asking the *Gabbai* for a *Mi Sheberach*.

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<sup>14</sup> 141:12

<sup>15</sup> *Mishna Berura* 66:26

## Reading with the Ba'al Koreh

In *Simon* 141 the Mechaber rules that the *Oleh* (the one who is called up to the Torah) should read along with the *Ba'al Koreh* in a quiet tone without saying it loud enough for even him to hear. The reason for this ruling is because the *Zohar* maintains that even the one receiving the *Aliyah* should be quiet and listen to the *Ba'al Koreh*. The Mechaber who maintains that the *Oleh* must read himself so as not to make his *bracha le'vatalah* (blessing in vain), explains that the *Zohar* really means that one should read along with the *Ba'al Koreh* in an inaudible tone. The *Darchei Moshe* maintains that one must read for himself in an audible tone except that the *Zohar* is warning that he should not read so loud that everyone can hear him, for that is what the *Ba'al Koreh* will be doing.

## The Principle of Shome'ah Ke'Oneh

There is a basic *Halachic* principle for one to be *yotzei* a *mitzvah* (fulfill his obligation) through another person that is called *Shome'ah Ke'oneh*. This literally means that by listening one is fulfilling the *mitzvah* as if he were reciting it himself. This is the principle for the *Halacha* how one commonly fulfills the *mitzvah* of *Kiddush* (Blessings over the wine) or *Lechem Mishna* (*Hamotzee* (The blessing of the Bread) on Shabbos recited over 2 *Challahs*) through others who do it on their behalf. Although the listeners themselves do not have wine in their hand for *Kiddush* nor 2 *Challahs* for *Lechem Mishna*, they are considered to be fulfilling their *mitzvah* obligation by listening to one who does. Likewise, by *Krias HaTorah*, if we assume that the obligation is upon each individual to read the Torah publicly<sup>16</sup>, it is sufficient that one person reads from the *Sefer Torah* and everyone else just listens. Accordingly, we would assume that this principle should apply equally to the *Oleh* (the one who was called up) that recites the *brochos*. If so, why is it necessary for the one who was called to the Torah (*the Oleh*) to personally read from the Torah along with the *Ba'al Koreh*?

As a matter of fact, one should not rely on the Torah reader (*Ba'al Koreh*) to read alone from the Torah since the one reciting the *brochos* for the *mitzvah* of *Krias HaTorah* should be the one reading. Perhaps we can compare this to one who recites *Kiddush* while another person holds a cup of wine. Alternatively, if we maintain that *Krias HaTorah* is not a personal obligation, *Shome'ah Ke'oneh* should not be necessary since listening is done on one's own... Therefore, one should be meticulous to read from the Torah along with the *Ba'al Koreh* when receiving an *Aliyah*.

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<sup>16</sup> See a discussion about this in Lesson 26

The Oleh: Shome'ah Ke'oneh or not?

The *Biur Halacha* writes that according to the Rama in *Simon* 139:3 a blind man can receive an *Aliyah* even though he obviously cannot see to read from the *Sefer Torah*, according to current custom that the *Ba'al Koreh* reads from the Torah for everyone to hear. Accordingly, one should be allowed to receive an *Aliyah* even if one doesn't read along with the *Ba'al Koreh*, no worse than a blind man. Accordingly, the Rama should have noted the same in *Simon* 141 where the *Halacha* states that the *Oleh* should read along with the *Ba'al Koreh* to avoid a *bracha le'vatalah* footnote The *Biur Halacha* suggests that perhaps the Rama does hold the same in this *Halacha* except that he didn't note it here since he already noted it above in *Simon* 139. The *Biur Halacha* prefers to say that indeed the Rama is stricter in *Simon* 141 in the case of an individual who is capable to see and read that if he doesn't, it is close to being a *bracha le'vatalah*. This is because he is no different than the rest of the listeners who cannot recite any *bracha* just for their listening experience. Rather, the reason the *Oleh* recites a *bracha* for the *Aliyah* is solely because he reads from the *Sefer Torah* himself at the time the Torah is read in public. Otherwise, anyone not reading cannot recite a *bracha*, except for the case of a blind person<sup>18</sup> who is allowed to receive an *Aliyah*, since otherwise he would never receive one, which inevitably will lead to bad feelings and quarreling. This ruling is supported by the *Gemara Yerushalmi*<sup>19</sup> (Jerusalem Talmud) that states that one can fulfill the *mitzvah* of reading the *Megillah* though *Shome'ah Ke'Oneh*. However, this principle does not necessarily apply to *Krias HaTorah* which is different in the nature of its obligation. By *Megillah* each individual is independently obligated to read the *Megillah*. Therefore, one who reads it aloud from a *Megillah* scroll is doing so to fulfill everyone's reading obligation through *Shome'ah Ke'oneh*. On the other hand, *Krias HaTorah* is a *listening experience*, not an individual's obligation to read from the Torah; therefore, the congregation fulfills their obligation by merely listening, without having to rely on the *Halachic* concept of *Shome'ah Ke'oneh*. The *Oleh* on the other hand is reciting the *bracha* because he is reading and not because he's listening; for that is the requirement of having a minimum of 3 – 7 readers on the days that we read from the Torah. Still, it can be argued according to the *Taz*, that the *Ba'al Koreh* is reading solely for the benefit of the *Oleh* not to embarrass one who cannot read, making it as if the *Oleh* himself is

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<sup>18</sup> An *am Ha'aretz* (ignoramus) who cannot read with the *Ba'al Koreh* is allowed to receive an *Aliyah* like a blind person

<sup>19</sup> *Megillah* 4:1

reading it aloud through the principle of *Shome'ah Ke'oneh*. However, the Rosh rejects this notion when he states clearly that the purpose of the *Ba'al Koreh* is for the congregants to hear *Krias HaTorah*. Thus, his role is just to read from the Torah aloud so that everyone else can listen. Therefore, according to the Rosh, the *Oleh* should only receive the *Aliyah* if he knows to read along.

According to the Mechaber, even a blind person cannot receive an *Aliyah* since one cannot read from the Torah without reading it from the *Sefer Torah*. According to this, one who doesn't read from the *Sefer Torah* should not receive an *Aliyah*. Anyone that cannot read on their own should at least try to read each word with the *Ba'al Koreh* repeating each word the *Ba'al Koreh* reads by looking at the word and repeating after him. However, if one received an *Aliyah* but did not read along with the *Ba'al Koreh*, although his *brochos* are wasted, the *Aliyah* does not have to be repeated since *b'dieved (post facto)* there are many *poskim* that consider it a valid *Aliyah*<sup>20</sup>.

The *Gabbai* should be alert to avoid getting into such situations and especially during the minimum required *Aliyas* of each particular occasion of *Krias HaTorah*.

### The Chatzi Kaddish after Krias HaTorah

Many times, mourners who are reciting *Kaddish* for parents wish to recite this additional *Kaddish* after the final *Aliyah* has been completed. It is possible to do so when *Kaddish* is recited immediately after *Krias HaTorah*. Sometimes though, this *Kaddish* is delayed until just before *Shemoneh Esrei*, as by Shabbos *Mincha* and; then it is definitely the *Chazzan* that recites it. However, in the former case where it can easily be recited by a mourner, the question arises if it may be done. The question is really more profound. If we consider this a bonafide mourner's *Kaddish*, then we should even allow a young mourner under *Bar Mitzvah* to recite it as well. The *Sefer Agudas Eizov Hamidbari*<sup>21</sup> proves that this *Kaddish* is not meant specifically to belong to the *Ba'al Koreh*; nor does it specifically belong to mourners. He proves this from the *Tashbatz*<sup>23</sup>. He writes that this *Kaddish* is only recited by someone over *Bar Mitzvah*. If this *Kaddish* would be a regular mourner's *Kaddish* it would be permitted

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<sup>20</sup> *Yalkut Yosef* 141:20

<sup>21</sup> Simon 7

<sup>23</sup> Volume 3 Simon 171

even for a minor to recite it. On the other hand, it is evident that the *Kaddish* doesn't automatically belong to *Ba'al Koreh*; otherwise, it should be obvious that a minor cannot be the one to recite this *Kaddish*. Therefore, we must interpret this *Kaddish* to be in memory of the deceased as an honor to them by the Public Torah Reading. The author writes that in order to avoid conflict as to which mourner recites this *Kaddish*, he would recite it himself and have in mind for it to be for whichever mourner deserves this *Kaddish*.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt"l* rules that in fact this *Kaddish* is for mourners except that he understands that this *Kaddish* is specifically for those who died and do not have anyone else to recite *Kaddish* on their behalf. For this reason, he maintains that the *Ba'al Koreh* should recite it for those people. It has nothing at all to do though with any of the mourners who are reciting *Kaddish* in *shul* for their parents. He concludes that if a mourner receives the final *Aliyah* just before *Kaddish*, he may request that they let him recite the *Kaddish* for the *Aliyah*.

### Birchas Hagomel

Someone who comes through a dangerous situation unharmed is required to recite the *bracha* of *Hagomel*. The Mechaber<sup>24</sup> writes that there are four individuals that are required to say the *bracha* of *Hagomel*. They are:

- § one who was sick,
- § one who was released from jail or captivity,
- § one traveled overseas and
- § one who traveled across the desert.

### The Nusach of the Bracha:

The *Mishna Berura*<sup>25</sup> explains the wording of the *bracha* - *Hagomel le'chayavim tovos* (Who grants those who are guilty, kindness) - to mean that although we may be guilty and undeserving of *Hashem's Divine Protection*; still *Hashem* protects us from danger.

The custom is that anyone that is required to recite *Birchas Hagomel* recites it after his *Aliyah* or after *Krias HaTorah*. Although the *bracha* is unrelated to *Krias HaTorah*, still

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<sup>24</sup> 219:1

<sup>25</sup> Simon 219 S"k 4

one recites it at this time because the *mitzvah* of *Hagomel* requires a *minyan* of men to be present and that there is at least 2 *Talmidei Chachamim* (Torah scholars) amongst them. *Krias HaTorah* is the most opportune time to find this combination.

### Hagbahah: Chabad Custom

Amongst certain *Chassidic* groups *Hagbahah* is practiced in a very unique way. It is performed at the end of *Krias HaTorah* by the *Magbiha* who raise the *Sefer Torah* and turns it to all directions for everyone to see it. Instead of sitting down and letting someone else roll it closed and tie it up, the *Magbiha* himself sets the *Sefer Torah* back down, rolls it up, then sits down and lets someone else tie it closed, and place its cover back on top of it. The reason for doing this is because the *Gemara* states that the one who rolls the *Sefer Torah* closed gets reward equal to everyone else who had *Aliyas*. Therefore, if he was given the honor of lifting it, he completes the *Mitzvah* by rolling it closed as well<sup>26</sup>.

According to *Sephardic* custom that *Hagbahah* is performed at the beginning of the *Kriah*, it's not necessary to be repeated. In fact, as we learned in the previous lesson from the Ramban, the primary function of *Hagbahah* was for everyone to see the Torah before reading from it. After the reading is complete, the holder is shut without further ceremony.

One should do *Hagbahah* by rotating and showing the writing of the *Sefer Torah* in all directions for everyone to see. For this reason, there is no point in doing this maneuver very quickly, not giving anyone time to see or read its words. *Chas ve'shalom* one does not want to be referred to as the "one who does not uphold the Torah".

### Pointing with one's Finger

There is a widespread custom of pointing in the direction of the *Sefer Torah* during *Hagbahah* which has recently been questioned about its veracity. Apparently, this *minhag* (custom) is not traced back very far. Some *sefarim* (Jewish books) attribute this custom to two sources. One is the sefer *Me'am Lo'ez*; the other is the famous *Halachist* and *Mekubal Rav* Chaim Palazzhi. These sources are disputed that the source given from *Me'am Lo'ez* is from a volume that was added recently to the set of *Me'am Lo'ez* by a recent author and there is no recorded source offered for the custom. Even the source from Rav Chaim Palazzhi can be refuted. The sefer *Si'ach*

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<sup>26</sup> *Aruch Hashulchan* 147:9

*Tefilla* argues that the *Medrash* cited by Rav Chaim Palazzhi just teaches us that although if one were to point one's finger at the king, he would be sentenced to death, *Hashem* overlooks this because of His great love for His people. It doesn't give reason that one should adapt such a practice, all it does is justify to continue doing it even though it may totally inappropriate. Therefore, he suggests that it is better not to do it just like it is inappropriate to point one's finger at a King.

### Gelilah

The common custom is to give youngsters an opportunity to do *Gelilah* (rolling the *Sefer Torah* closed and wrapping it up). The reason for this is for their *Chinuch* (training in *Mitzvos*)<sup>27</sup>.

### Yehi Ratzone Milifnei Avinu She'bashamayim ...

On Mondays and Thursdays after *Krias HaTorah*, we recite the prayers of *Yehi Ratzone milifnei* (May it be Your will ...) The reason why these prayers were placed here is because through the power of Torah, we can merit and become deserving of these *brochos*.

*Yehi Ratzone* prayers are only recited on the days we would recite *Tachanun*.

### Returning the Sefer Torah

There are 2 customs when to return the *Sefer Torah* to the *Aron Kodesh*. In Simon 249 the Tur says that the *Sefer Torah* is returned before the start of *Ashrei* and *U'vah le'Tziyone*. This is also what Rav Amram Gaon writes in his Siddur and it is the custom of *Nusach Ashkenaz*. The Tur brings that others do not replace the *Sefer Torah* to the *Aron Kodesh* until after completing *Ashrei* and *U'vah le'Tziyone* including *Kaddish Tiskabel* that comes after that. This is the custom of *Sephardim* and *Nusach Sefard*.

### Follow the Sefer Torah

The *Magbiha* (the one who picked up the *Sefer Torah* at the end of *Krias HaTorah* according to *Ashkenaz* and *Nusach Sefard*) and the *Gollel* (the one who rolls the *Sefer Torah* closed) should follow the *Sefer Torah* back to the *Aron Kodesh*<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> *Sha'arei Ephraim* 10:22

<sup>28</sup> *Mishna Berura* 149:8

## Questions:

- 1) If one has the choice to daven with a *Minyan* or to hear *Krias HaTorah* which one should he choose?
- 2) What are the poles of the *Sefer Torah* called and what is symbolized by holding onto it?
- 3) What is the main point and message of the *bracha* of *Asher bachar banu* that is recited at the beginning of an *Aliyah*?
- 4) What should one do if he recited the *bracha* of *Asher nassan lanu* first, before his *Aliyah*?
- 5) What should one do if he repeated the *bracha* of *Asher bachar banu* at the end of his *Aliyah*?
- 6) Why is it preferred that one stay at the *Bimah* until the completion of the next *Aliyah*? (2)
- 7) If the *Kohen* started to take the second *Aliyah* because there was no *Levi* in *shul* and then a *Levi* walks in, at what point does the *Kohen* let the *Levi* take over the *Aliyah*?
- 8) Can a *Kohen* be called for, or take an *Aliyah* when he's in the middle of *Birchos Krias She'ma* if he's the only *Kohen* available?
- 9) What should the *Oleh* do as far as reading along with the *Ba'al Koreh*?
- 10) Can a blind person receive an *Aliyah*?
- 11) Who should recite the *Chatzi Kaddish* after *Krias HaTorah*?
- 12) Why do we recite *Birchas Hagomel* by *Krias HaTorah*?

## Answers:

- 1) One should go to hear *Krias HaTorah* with a *Minyan* even though he will miss out on *Tefilla Be'Tzibbur*.
- 2) They are called *Atzei Chayim* (Trees of Life). Holding onto them is based on the *pasuk Eitz Chayim hee le'machzikim bah* (It is a tree of life for those who hold onto it).
- 3) The *bracha* gives praise to *Hashem* for choosing us to receive the Torah and making that our source of life.
- 4) He should recite the *bracha Asher bachar banu* after *Aliyah* (torah reading) is completed.
- 5) He must recite the *bracha of Asher nassan lanu etc.*
- 6) So that one does not act as though it is burdensome to receive an *Aliyah*. Once there, it's best not to leave until the end of the next *Aliyah* so that he shouldn't miss out on anything from *Krias HaTorah* while going back to his seat.
- 7) If the *Kohen* just said *Borchu*, then he lets the *Levi* take the *Aliyah*. If he already said the *bracha Asher bachar banu*, he doesn't give it over to the *Levi*.
- 8) It's best that the *Kohen* not be called for the *Aliyah*. If the *Gabbai* didn't realize and called the *Kohen* by name, the *Kohen* should take the *Aliyah*, but he should avoid talking or any other interruption. According to *Sephardim*, one may not interrupt *Birchos Krias She'ma* even to take an *Aliyah*.
- 9) According to the *Mechaber*, he reads along in an inaudible tone. According to the *Rama* he reads along verbally, pronouncing it loud enough to hear himself.
- 10) According to the *Rama*, we allow a blind person to receive an *Aliyah* since nowadays the *Ba'al Koreh* reads from the Torah for everyone.
- 11) The *Chatzi Kaddish* can be recited by a mourner, except that it may lead to quarreling as to which mourner recites it. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt"l* ruled that this *Kaddish* is really for those people that passed away without anyone saying *Kaddish* on their behalf, and it should be said by the *Ba'al Koreh*. However, if a mourner received the *Aliyah* just beforehand, he may recite the *Kaddish*.
- 12) Since *Birchas Hagomel* is supposed to be recited in front of a *Minyan* of men with 2 of them being *Talmidei Chachamim*. During *Krias HaTorah* is the most likely place to meet both these requirements.