

הגבהה

As we proceed through our study of the סידור, what subject should follow בריך שמייה?

The answer is הגבהה.

ספר כלבו סימן כ' ד"ה ואחר מוציאין-ואחר מוציאין ספר תורה וקורין בה ג' בפרשת השבוע, כי כן תקן להם עזרא לישראל שיהיו קורין בתורה בשני ובחמישי כדי שלא יהיו עומדים שלשה ימים בלא תורה, שכל העומד שלשה ימים בלא תורה אויבים נופלים עליו שנאמר (שמות טו, כב) וילכו שלשת ימים במדבר ולא מצאו מים, ואין מים אלא תורה שנאמר (ישעיה נה, א) הוי כל צמא לכו למים, וכתוב בתריה (שמות יז, ח) ויבא עמלק וילחם עם ישראל. ופותח החזן בעצמו ספר תורה ואומר גדלו, ונהגו הצבור לומר פסוק של גדולה בלחש, גדול ה' ומהולל מאד, גדול אתה וכו' ואחר כך רוממו ה' א-להינו ומשתחוים נוכח הארון. כתוב במסכת סופרים כשיהיה החזן על המגדל פותח הספר ומראה הכתב לאנשים ולנשים, ואז היו כלם אומרים וזאת התורה אשר שם וכו' מכאן מנהג הנשים שדוחקות עצמן לראות ספר ואינן יודעות על מה.

The following is what is written in מסכת סופרים:

מסכתות קטנות מסכת סופרים פרק יד' הלכה ח'-מיד גולל ספר תורה עד שלשה דפין, ומגביהו ומראה פני כתיבתו לעם העומדים לימינו ולשמאלו, ומחזירו לפניו ולאחריו, שמצוה לכל אנשים ונשים לראות הכתוב ולכרוע ולומר, וזאת התורה אשר שם משה לפני בני ישראל, ועוד אומר, תורת י-י תמימה משיבת נפש עדות י-י נאמנה מחכימת פתי, פקודי י-י ישרים משמחי לב מצות י-י ברה מאירת עינים, יראת י-י טהורה עומדת לעד משפטי י-י אמת צדקו יחדיו, הנחמדים מזהב ומפז רב ומתוקים מדבש ונופת צופים.

Today, Sephardim follow מסכת סופרים and perform הגבהה before קריאת התורה.

Ashkenazim perform הגבהה after קריאת התורה. The difference is found as follows:

שולחן ערוך אורח חיים סימן קלד' סעיף ב'-מראה פני כתיבת ספר תורה לעם העומדים לימינו ולשמאלו, ומחזירו לפניו ולאחריו, שמצוה על כל אנשים ונשים לראות הכתב ולכרוע, ולומר: וזאת התורה וכו' תורת ה' תמימה וכו'. *הנהגה*: ונהגו לעשות כן אחר שקראו בתורה, אבל כשמוציאין אותו אומר השליח ציבור גדלו והקהל אומרים רוממו כו' אב הרחמים הוא ירחם עם עמוסים וכו'; וי"א לומר על הכל יתגדל (מ"ס פי"ג וטור ומהרי"ל) וכן נוהגים ביו"ט ובשבת.

Why do Ashkenazim not follow מסכת סופרים and perform הגבהה after קריאת התורה?

שו"ת יביע אומר חלק ז' - או"ח סימן טז ד"ה ב) ומעתה-וכ' הרב החבי"ב בשו"ת כנה"ג (שם הגב"י אות ב) שמנהג נכון הוא, מפני שהמון העם הושבים שראיית הספר תורה עדיפא מן הקריאה, ולכן כדי שיתעכבו בבית הכנסת כדי לראות הספר תורה יקראו בו תחלה, ואחר כך יעשו הגבהה להראות לעם כתב הספר תורה. ע"ש.

1. Rabbi Ovadia Yossef.

The רמב"ן finds a פסוק in the תורה that may be a basis for performing הגבהה:

רמב"ן דברים פרק כז' פסוק כו' – אשר לא יקים את דברי התורה הזאת – ואמרו על דרך אגדה, זה החזן, שאינו מקים ספרי התורה להעמידן בתקנן שלא יפלו. ולי נראה, על החזן שאינו מקים ספר תורה על הצבור להראות פני כתיבתו לכול, כמו שמפורש במסכת סופרים (יד יד) שמגביהין אותו ומראה פני כתיבתו לעם העומדים לימינו ולשמאלו ומחזירו לפניו ולאחריו, שמצוה לכל אנשים והנשים לראות הכתוב ולכרוע ולומר וזאת התורה אשר שם משה וגו' (לעיל ד מד), וכן נוהגין.

A Kabbalistic reason is provided for performing הגבהה:

שו"ת יביע אומר חלק ז' – או"ח סימן טז ד"ה א) עיקר – ובשער הכוונות (דף מח ע"ד) כתב, ענין פתיחת התיק של ספר תורה לעיני כל העם, הוא כדי שיתגלה הארת התורה שכתובה בתוכו לחזן אל כל הקהל, ועל ידי הסתכלות האדם מקרוב כל כך שיוכל לקרוא את האותיות היטב, על ידי זה נמשך אור גדול על האדם. ושכן היה נוהג האר"י ז"ל.

Rabbi Ovadia Yossef explains other practices that surround הגבהה:

- 1) וע"ע בשו"ת הלכות קטנות ח"ב (סימן רנה) שכתב, נוהגים פה עה"ק ירושלים תוב"ב שמקיפים בספר תורה פתוח בכל שטח בית הכנסת להראות את העם את כתב ספר התורה, מפני שבית הכנסת הגדול הוא ארוך וצר, וכשהוא מלא מהעולים לרגל ישארו הרבה שלא יראו כתב הס"ת, ולא די במה שייגביהו ס"ת בתיבה, לכך הוצרכו להוליכו ולסבבו גם בעזרה כדי שהרואים יזכו לחזות בנועם ה', ושכולם יראו ראש הפרשה.
- 2) והנאון ר' אברהם פלאנאי בספר פדה את אברהם (מע' ה אות ט) הביא מ"ש הרב נאות דשא, שבשעת הגבהת ספר התורה צריך לפקוח את עיניו ולהביט באותיות שבו, עד שיראה תיבה המתחילה אות ראשונה של שמו, כגון ששמו אברהם, יהיה צופה ומביט בס"ת עד שיראה תיבה המתחילה אות א', וכן כיוצא בזה.

According to Rabbi Yossef, some follow the practice of performing הגבהה both before and after קריאת התורה in order to fulfill both the Ashkenazic and Sephardic practice:

והנה פה עה"ק ירושלים ת"ו ובשאר ערי הארץ המנהג פשוט בכל בתי הכנסת שגם אחר קריאת התורה מחזירים ספר התורה להיכל כשהוא פתוח לעיני כל העם.

One troublesome aspect to the manner in which Ashkenazim perform הגבהה is that they recite more than is provided by מסכת סופרים:

ערוך השולחן אורח חיים סימן קלד' סעיף ג' – ופלא שאנו אומרים וזאת התורה וגו' על פי ה' ביד משה וכן נדפס בסידורים; וקשה טובא, חדא דאין זה פסוק בשום מקום דוואת התורה הוא בואתחנן [דברים ד, מד] ועל פי ה' ביד משה² הוא סוף פסוק בבהעלתך [במדבר י, יג] במסעות. ועוד דבמסכת סופרים אינו כן.

Query: Is the difference in Ashkenazic and Sephardic practice related at all to the manner in which the scroll of the ספר תורה is stored according to each tradition?

2. There is disagreement as to the פסוק from which these words are taken. The סדור הגר"א points to the following:

במדבר ט', כג – על פי ה' יחנו ועל פי ה' יסעו את משמרת ה' שמרו על פי ה' ביד משה.

TRANSLATION OF SOURCES

ספר כלבו סימן כ' ד"ה ואחר מוציאין -Then we remove the Sefer Torah and three read from the Parsha of the week. Ezra instituted for the Jewish People that they should read the Torah on Mondays and Thursdays so that three days do not pass without the People hearing the words of the Torah. Ezra feared that if they were not to hear Torah for three days, the enemies of the Jewish People would attack them as it is written: (Shemos 15, 22) they traveled for three days in the desert and did not find water. The word "water" in that verse represents Torah as it is written: (Yeshayahu 55, 1) all who are thirsty go to the water. In the section after (Shemos 17, 8) we find: Amalek came and waged war on the Jewish People. The prayer leader himself opens the Torah scroll and says: Gadlu. Those assembled there say silently a verse that speaks of the greatness of G-d: Gadol Hashem Oo'Mihulal Mi'Od, Gadol Ata etc. And then they say: Romimu Hashem Elokeinu and bow towards the ark. It is written in Maseches Sofrim that when the prayer leader is on the platform he should open the Torah Scroll and show the letters of the Torah to the men and women. Those congregated then say: V'Zos Ha'Torah Asher Som etc. This is the origin of the practice by women to try very hard to see the letters of the Torah and they do not know why they do so.

מסכתות קטנות מסכת סופרים פרק יד' הלכה ח' -Immediately the prayer leader rolls out the Torah so that three columns are visible. He raises the Torah and allows those assembled to his right and left to see the letters and then returns to allow those in front and in back of him to see the letters because it is a mitzvah for all men and all women to see the letters and to bow towards the Torah and to say: V'Zos Hatorah . . . and also Toras Hashem Temima . . . Pikudei Hashem Yisharim . . . Yiras Hashem Tihora . . . Ha'Nechemadim Mi'Zahav Oo'Mi'Paz . . .

שולחן ערוך אורח חיים סימן קלד' סעיף ב' -The prayer leader shows the letters of the Torah to those standing to his right and to his left and then returns to show the letters to those in front and in back of him because it is a Mitzvah for all men and all women to see the letters of the Torah and to bow and to say: V'Zos Ha'Torah etc.; Toras Hashem Temima. **Ramah:** It is our practice to do so after reading from the Torah. When the Torah is removed from the ark, the prayer leader says: Gadlu and the congregation answers: Romimu etc. Av Ha'Rachamim Hu Yirachem Am Amusim etc. and some say that the congregation should say: Al Ha'Kol Yisgadal; that is our practice on Yom Tov and Shabbos.

רמב"ן דברים פרק כז' פסוק כו' - אשר לא יקים את דברי התורה הזאת -They explained by way of Aggadah- this represents the prayer leader who is not careful to stand up the Torah scrolls in the proper manner to assure that the Torah scrolls do not fall down. To me it appears that the words are a reference to a prayer leader who fails to lift the Torah in a way that allows those assembled to see the words of the Torah. He should follow that which is provided for in Maseches Sofrim (14, 14) that the prayer leader is to lift the Torah and show the lettering to those assembled to his right and left and to then turn to show those in front and in back of

him. The reason to do so is that it is a mitzvah for all women and men to see the lettering and to bow down and to say: V'Zos Ha'Torah Asher Som Moshe etc. and that is how we conduct ourselves.

The dear Rabbi wrote in his book: *Shiyurei Knesses Ha'Gidolah*, that it is the proper practice to raise the Torah after reading from the Torah because the majority of people think that seeing the letters of the Torah is more important than listening to the words being read. Those congregated will wait only to see the letters when the Torah is raised. They therefore read from the Torah first and then they raise the Torah in order to show those congregated the lettering of the Torah.

In the book *Sha'Ar Ha'Kavanot* it is written that the Torah Scroll is opened in front of the eyes of those assembled in order to reveal the illumination of the words of the Torah written there to those assembled. By the person looking at the letters up close, so close that he can read the letters clearly, the illumination penetrates the person. This how the Ari would conduct himself.

1. Check in the book *Responsa Hilchos Ketanos* who wrote that it was the practice in Yerushalayim that they would walk in every corner of the synagogue with the Torah open to show those assembled the lettering of the Torah Scroll. This was done because although the synagogue building was large, it was long and narrow. When the synagogue was full with those who travelled to Yerushalayim for the Holidays, many would be unable to see the lettering of the Torah. This was a concern because it was not enough just to see that the Torah was lifted. As a result they would carry the Torah Scroll around the synagogue even in the courtyard so that all could see it and benefit from its illumination and all could see the place of the week's reading.

2. The Gaon, Rav Avrohom Palagi in his book: *Padah Es Avrohom* quoted from Rabbi Na'os Desheh that during the lifting of the Torah one has to open one's eyes and look at the letters contained therein until he sees the letter in which his name begins. For example, if someone's name is Avrohom, he should look at the letters until he finds a word that begins with the letter: aleph. People with other names should act similarly.

Here in the Holy City of Yerushalayim and in other cities in Israel, the basic custom is that after they read from the Torah, they return the Sefer Torah to its place while carrying it in an open position for all to see its lettering.

It is surprising that it is our practice to recite the verse: V'Zos Ha'Torah etc. Al Pi Hashem Bi'Yad Moshe and so it is written in Siddurim. It is particularly problematic because the words are not found together as a verse anywhere in Tanach. The words: V'Zos Ha'Torah are taken from a verse found in Devarim 4, 44 while the words: Al Pi Hashem Bi'Yad Moshe are found at the end of a verse in Bamidbar 10, 13, concerning the various stops the Jews made in the Desert. In addition, *Maseches Sofrim* does not provide that these two verses should be combined.

SUPPLEMENT

A Tribute To Rabbi Isaiah Wohlgemuth, זצ"ל, creator of the course in Beurei Hatefila at Maimonides School, Brookline, MA, who passed away this week.

In His Own Words

Pages 8-10 of the Introduction to his book, A Guide to Jewish Prayer

Some thirty years ago the principal of Maimonides School in Boston, Rabbi Moses J. Cohen, זצ"ל, asked me to develop and teach a course on prayer. We called it Be'urei Hatefilah, or "Explanations of the Prayers." It was to be taught from eighth to twelfth grades. For the senior class I outlined a special program that was a comprehensive review of the entire course. The students were also asked to present a term paper on a subject of their choice.

It is amazing how often former students, sometimes those who graduated more than a generation ago, come to me to discuss a detail they remember from the course. Some made it a ritual to go over their notes with their families. They often assure me that of all their religious studies, Be'urei Hatefilah was the one that helped them the most in life. It made the hours spent in shul more meaningful, and helped them establish a more intimate relationship with the Almighty.

Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik (the Rav), זצ"ל, enthusiastically endorsed the course and stated that no student could graduate from Maimonides School without passing it. The Rav encouraged me to discuss with him any problems that might arise in teaching this course. I took ample advantage of his invitation to consult him. I usually asked him questions in the morning when I had the privilege to drive him to and from shul. The Rav's interpretations thus became a major part of my understanding of prayer.

Why was the Rav so interested in Be'urei Hatefilah? Most likely it was because his soul thirsted for closeness to G-d, ה', (Hashem). On one occasion, when he resumed teaching his classes at Maimonides after serious abdominal surgery, he expressed his frustration with many of our brothers and sisters who go into surgery without a last minute appeal to G-d to crown the effort of the surgeon with success.

"It is the gentiles," the doctors told him, "who muster all their feelings to get G-d's assistance in their difficult ordeal."

“What a disgrace!” the Rav explained. “We Jews, who taught the world to pray, have forgotten this art. For this reason,” he explained, “I shall dedicate my Saturday evening classes to relearning the true meaning of prayer.” It was indeed a year of great discoveries and spiritual heights.

The Rav often visited the classes in religious subjects. The Rav did not attend these classes to criticize the instructors but rather to determine the academic standing of that particular class. One day I prepared a test for my senior students, and the Rav entered the class to listen to the lesson. I quickly explained the situation to him. “Just give me a copy of the test,” the Rav said, and left the room. A few weeks later he called me and said, “By the way, I gave your test to my senior Rabbinical students. None of them could answer all the questions. It is a good course.”

Naturally, I read and studied all books and sources on prayer that were available to me. The German Jewish movement, the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, consistently dealt with this crucial subject. The study of prayer started in Germany in the nineteenth century as a result of the development of the Reform and Conservative movements, which started during this period. As these movements appeared on the stage of Jewish history, they promoted the study of prayer. On the one hand, Reform and Conservative Jews wanted to show that our prayers were not always a part of our heritage; what was not original could be eliminated. They disliked long prayers, as well as prayers in Hebrew; they preferred sermons. Thus they attempted to demonstrate that their reforms were legitimate.

On the other hand, the Orthodox college tried to show that every element of the traditional prayer service was essential, that we have no right to institute changes or omissions. Great scholars appeared in Germany to grapple with this subject. We no longer know the first names of these men, but their family names were Berliner, Landshut and Sachs; they were all strictly Orthodox. One of the last scholars in Germany was the late Dr. Ismar Elbogen. Although he was a Reform scholar, he was always fair and thorough when he transmitted the Orthodox point of view. His contributions were based on the works of many scholars and are now available in an excellent Hebrew translation, **התפילה בישראל** (Hatefilah B’Yisrael)³. Rav Soloveitchik said to me, “Read his books. Study his books. He is very traditional in his approach. He is very clever and he made very valuable contributions to the study of prayer.” Yitzhak Baer was another early German-Jewish Orthodox scholar. His classic commentary on the prayers, **עבודת ישראל** (Avodas Yisroel), is an important work.

This book, *A Guide to Jewish Prayer*, is an outgrowth of my Be’urei Hatefilah course and is meant to be a companion volume to the Siddur, or prayer book. The systematic reading of this volume, and an occasional review of it, should keep the meaning of the prayers fresh in the mind of the reader.

It is now available in English through the Jewish Publication Society.

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