

שבת ON עליות לתורה THE SEVEN

Why do we call seven people to read from the תורה on שבת (עליות 7)?

תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף כא' עמ' א' – משנה. הקורא את המגילה עומד ויושב. קראה אחד, קראוה שנים – יצאו. מקום שנהגו לברך – יברך. ושלא לברך – לא יברך. בשני וחמישי, בשבת במנחה – קורין שלשה, אין פוחתין מהן ואין מוסיפין עליהן, ואין מפטירין בנביא. הפותח והחותם בתורה – מברך לפניו ולאחריה. בראשי חדשים ובחולו של מועד – קורין ארבעה, אין פוחתין מהן ואין מוסיפין עליהן, ואין מפטירין בנביא. הפותח והחותם בתורה – מברך לפניו ולאחריה. זה הכלל: כל שיש בו מוסף ואינו יום טוב – קורין ארבעה. ביום טוב חמשה. ביום הכפורים – ששה, בשבת – שבעה. אין פוחתין מהן, אבל מוסיפין עליהן, ומפטירין בנביא. הפותח והחותם בתורה – מברך לפניו ולאחריה.

Translation: Mishnah. He who reads Megilas Esther may do so either standing or sitting. Whether one reads the Megilah alone or two read it together, the congregation fulfills its obligation. In places where it is the custom to say a Bracha before reading the Megilah, it should be said, and where it is not the custom, it need not be said. On Mondays and Thursdays and on Shabbos at Mincha, three read from the Torah, not more nor less, nor is a Haftarah read from a Prophet. The one who reads first in the Torah and the one who reads last make respectively a Bracha before reading and after. On New Moons and on the intermediate days of Yom Tov four read, not more nor less, and there is no Haftarah from a Prophet. The one who reads first and the one who reads last in the Torah makes a Bracha before and after. This is the general rule: on any day which has a Mussaf and is not a Yom Tov, four read; on a Yom Tov, five read; on Yom Kippur, six read; on Shabbos, seven read; this number may not be diminished but may be added to and a Haftarah is read from a Prophet. The one who reads first and the one who reads last in the Torah recite a Bracha, before and after.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף כב' עמ' ב' – בראשי חדשים ומועד קורין ארבעה? סימנא בעלמא יהיב, דלא תימא יום טוב וחולו של מועד כי הדדי נינהו, כל דטפי ליה מילתא מחבריה – טפי ליה גברא יתירא. הלכך, בראש חודש ומועד דאיכא קרבן מוסף – קורין ארבעה, ביום טוב דאסור בעשיית מלאכה – חמשה, ביום הכפורים דענוש כרת – ששה. שבת דאיכא איסור סקילה – שבעה.

Translation: On New Moons and the Intermediate Days four read? The Mishnah is merely giving an indication that you should not say that Yom Tov and the intermediate days have the same rule. You should take this as a general principle; when a day has a distinguishing feature, it causes that an additional person reads from the Torah. Hence on a New Moon and the intermediate days of a Yom Tov, because an additional sacrifice is brought (Korban Mussaf), four read; on Yom Tov, on which, in addition, work is prohibited, five read; on Yom Kippur, on which, in addition, there is a penalty of Kares, six read; and on Sabbath, on which a person is subject to the penalty of stoning, seven read.

The number of people called to read from the תורה (עליות) on a given day is an important

part of the מצוה as Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, זצ"ל, explains in the following תשובה:

שׁו"ת אנרות משה אורה חיים חלק ב סימן עב-בטעו בזמן היותו בן י"ג שנה ולמדוהו לקרא הסדרא דשבת הקודם אם יש להקל שיהיה מקרא בעבור כ"ד מרחשון תרצ"ט. לחכם אחד.

Translation: In a case where a family erred in calculating when a boy would reach the age of 13 and the family arranged that he be taught to read the Parsha that preceded his 13th birthday, is there a way to act in a lenient manner that would allow the boy to read from the Torah before he becomes 13 years of age? 24th of Mar-Cheshvan 5699:

הנה המג"א סימן רפ"ב סק"ו הביא מכנה"ג שקטן אינו יכול להיות מקרא. והקשה הפמ"ג הא קטן עולה למנין ז' אף שבזמנם היה העולה עצמו הקורא, וחזינן שמוציא. ואם כן יכול להיות גם מקרא לעולים אחרים, שהטעם הוא משום דגם חיוב הגדול הוא רק דרבנן. ונשאר בערך עיון, והתיר מחמת זה בשעת הדחק שאין שם גדול שיכול להקריא. וכן כתב במשב"ז סק"ג עיי"ש, ועיין בלב"ש שכתב דהא דקטן עולה שבגמרא היינו במקום שהשליח ציבור קורא, ולא נכון כלל דבזמן הגמרא לא היה כלל דבר כזה, כמפורש בתוספות מגילה דף כ"א. ורק בזמן הגאונים התקינו שהשליח ציבור יקריא שלא לבייש מי שאינו יודע לקרות או מטעם שכתב הרא"ש דאין הכל בקיאין בטעמי הקריאה, ויש שידמו שיודעין, וכשלא יקראוהו, אתי לאנצויי עיי"ש.

Translation: The Magen Avrohom in Siman 282, sub-section 6, quoted the book: Knesses Ha'Gidola in holding that a minor may not act as the Torah reader. The Pri Migadim challenged his holding by pointing to a Gemara which provides that a minor may be among the seven called to read from the Torah on Shabbos even though in the time of the Gemara, each one called to the Torah read for himself. That Gemara can be interpreted as holding that a minor may be the person whose act causes others to fulfill their obligation to hear the Torah reading. Based on that Gemara the minor should also be allowed to act as reader for someone being called to the Torah since the Mitzvah of hearing the Torah being read, as important as it is, represents a rule instituted by our Sages. The Pri Migadem admitted that he could not explain the position of the Magen Avrohom. As a result, he held that a minor is permitted to read from the Torah in a situation where no adult is available to read from the Torah. So too wrote the Mishbatzos Zabav in Siman 103, check there. See also the Levush who wrote that the reason that the Gemara provided that a minor could read from the Torah was because at that time, they had already started to use a Torah reader for each Aliya. I believe that the Levush was incorrect in his understanding of the Gemara. At the time of the Gemara it was still customary not to employ a Torah reader for the Aliyos as Tosafos points out in Megilah Daf 21. Only at the time of the Gaonim did they institute the practice of using a Torah reader in order not to embarrass those who did not know how to read or because of the reason provided by the Rosh, that many at that time were unfamiliar with the notes necessary for the Torah reading. Despite not knowing how to read, some insisted on reading and when they were not allowed to read, an argument would ensue.

אבל הנכון לע"ד לתרין דברי המג"א דהא מוכרחין לומר שאין קריאת התורה כמו קריאת מגילה וברכת המזון וכדומה שמה שיצאו האחרים בשמיעתם מחיוב הקריאה והברכה שלהם הוא מדין שומע כעונה, דהא אדרבה כשיקרא בעצמו שהוא העונה כל הפרשה לא

להבין את התפלה

יצא דהא צריך דוקא מספר קרואים חלוקים לפי הימים ונמצא שעיקר הדין אינו שיהיה עונה אלא דוקא שישמע איך שמספר אנשים קורין התורה. ולכן מסתבר שאין צורך כלל שהקורא יתכוין להוציא את הצבור בקריאתו וגם אין צורך שיוכל להוציא אותם, דהא השמיעה איך שקורין האחרים הוא שמיעה של כל אחד מהצבור בעצמו ואין צורך להוציא אותם בהקריאה . . .

Translation: Instead it appears to me that the proper way to explain the position of the Magen Avrohom is to distinguish the reading of the Torah from reading Megilas Esther or reciting Birkas Hamazone and other similar activities. For those Mitzvos, a person may listen to others recite the words and fulfill his obligation to read and to recite a Bracha based on the rule that a listener can fulfill his obligation by answering amen and listening. However concerning Kriyas Ha'Torah, even if he were to read the whole Parsha from the Sefer Torah by himself, he would not fulfill his obligation for the Mitzvah of Kriyas Ha'Torah because the reading needs to be from a Sefer Torah that is read by a certain number of individuals who are called to read from the Torah. The essence of fulfilling the Mitzvah of Kriyas Ha'Torah lies not in the fact that one fulfills his obligation by answering amen to the Bracha made by others. One fulfills one's obligation by listening how a number of individuals read from the Torah. As a result, the person called to the Torah does not have to have in mind that he is helping those who are present fulfill their obligation by answering "Amen" to his Bracha. Likewise the person called to the Torah does not have to have the capacity to help others fulfill their obligation. That is because the Mitzvah of Kriyas Ha'Torah is fulfilled by those congregated listening as the people called to the Torah read from the Torah. The person reading does not have to have in mind that he is trying to help others fulfill their obligation by his reading . . .

שו"ת אגרות משה אורח חיים חלק ב' סימן עב'—יצא לן שאף בשופר מה שצריך התוקע לכוין להוציא אינו מדין שהתוקע מוציאו אלא משום שצריך שישמע קול תקיעה של מצוה השייך לו וטעם זה לא שייך בקה"ת שהדין הוא דוקא לשמוע קריאת אחרים כשקורין בצבור לא שייך שיצטרך המקרא להוציאו דהא זה ששומע איך שהאחרים קורין עושה בעצמו דהרי שומע בעצמו ועושה כל המצוה שעליו. ולכן ניהא בפשיטות מה שגם קמן עולה ויוצאין בקריאתו וכן אשה אף אם פטורה מקה"ת ולא היה בכחה להוציא אחרים במצוה אחרת כה"ג, משום דהא אין השומעין צריכין להוציא מהקורא אלא ששמיעתן הקריאה היא המצוה וזה עושים השומעין בעצמן. אבל יקשה איך יכולין להקרות כנהוג שהש"צ קורא לכל הקרואים הא צריך לשמע קריאה דמספר אנשים והרי אינו קורא אלא אחד ונמצא ששומעין רק קריאת אחד, ואף שיקרא בלחש אינו כלום דהא צריך לשמוע קריאת מספר אנשים כשקורין להשמיע לצבור ולא כשקורין בלחש שאין זה קריאה דצבור, וכל הברכה שמברכין אף שכבר ברכו בשחר ברכות התורה הוא על מצוה זו דקריאה זו של השמעה בצבור וזה הרי עושה רק אחד והוא גם שלא מהעולין שלא בדרך כלל.

Translation: (Rabbi Feinstein spent some time discussing how the Mitzvah of Shofar blowing is fulfilled). The conclusion we can draw concerning Shofar blowing is that the person blowing Shofar is not performing a physical act as representative of those present. (Those congregated can hear the Shofar on their own and do not need a representative for that purpose). Rather he has to have in mind that he is blowing the Shofar for

the purpose of fulfilling a Mitzvah (and not for musical purposes) and that he is doing so for those present as well. That thought process is not necessary concerning the Mitzvah of Kriyas Ha'Torah. The Mitzvah of Kriyas Ha'Torah is fulfilled by those present listening to those called to read. Those called to read do not have to have in mind that they are helping others fulfill the Mitzvah of Kriyas Ha'Torah. Based on that explanation of Kriyas Ha'Torah, we can understand why the Gemara said that a minor can be called to read from the Torah and those congregated can fulfill their obligation by listening to him. And we can understand why a woman could read from the Torah even though she is not obligated to listen to Kriyas Ha'Torah and does not have the power to help others fulfill a Mitzvah when she is not obligated to perform that Mitzvah. The Mitzvah of Kriyas Ha'Torah is different in that way because those congregated are not fulfilling their Mitzvah because she is performing the Mitzvah on their behalf. Rather they are fulfilling the Mitzvah on their own by listening to her. She can be the vehicle by which those congregated can fulfill their Mitzvah. You may be wondering how we fulfill our obligation to hear Kriyas Ha'Torah today when the Torah is read by a Torah reader, particularly if the obligation is to hear a certain number of people read. How do we reach that goal when one person reads the entire Parsha? Even if the one called to the Torah reads along quietly with the Torah reader that does not help fulfill the Mitzvah since those congregated need to clearly hear the one called to read the Torah. Reading quietly is not considered reading for the congregation. You may further ask: if the one called to read does not read, why does he recite a Bracha that he already recited as part of Birchos Ha'Shachar? You cannot say that he is reciting the Bracha because he is reading since he is not planning on reading. Another person is reading. Moreover, the one reading is not one of the persons called to read and he has not recited a Bracha before reading.

ולכן מוכרחין לומר דנחשב שהעולה המברך הוא הקורא המשמיע להצבור והוא מדין שליחות דהמקרא הוא שלוחו להשמיע לצבור. וכיון שהוא מדין שליחות אין קטן יכול להקריא לעולין האחרים משום שקטן לא נעשה שליח שאינו בדין שליחות כמו לכל דיני התורה ויתחשב שהוא רק קריאתו דהקטן ולא קריאת מספר הקרואים העולין, ובקריאת האחד הרי אין יוצאין ידי קריאת התורה, וגם הא קריאתו היא בלא ברכה דהא אחרים ברכו ולא הקטן הקורא, וגם אולי ברכתם דעולין היא לבטלה כיון דכל ברכתם עתה הוא רק על קה"ת שבצבור דהא כבר ברכו התורה בשחרית וכיון שהקריאה לא נחשב שהוא שלהם לא שייך שיברכו אף שקראו בלחש. ולכן אף שקטן כשעולה בעצמו יכול לקרא פרשתו בעצמו ויוצאין בזה הצבור מ"מ להיות מקרא לקרואים אחרים אינו יכול כדסובר המג"א בשם כנה"ג וכן לא יוכל קורא גדול לקרא עבור קטן העולה שקטן אינו בדין שליחות גם לעשות שליח עבורו אך אולי נחשב זה זכות וזכין לקטן אבל להיות מקרא שהוא שליח ודאי אינו יכול. ולכן אף בשעת הדחק אין להקל לפי זה כי טעמם מוכרח וטעם הפמ"ג ועוד אחרונים המקילין בשעת הדחק תמוה וצ"ע. אבל מכל מקום לדינא אם הוא צער גדול להבר מצוה ומשפחתו ורוצה כתר"ה להקל כהפמ"ג ודעימיה אין למחות בידו.

Translation: Therefore we must say that today, the person called to the Torah is deemed to be the reader through whom those congregated fulfill their obligation of hearing Kriyas Ha'Torah, based on the rule of agency. In other words, the reader is the agent for the one called to the Torah. The one called to the Torah is deemed to be the vehicle through whom those congregated fulfill their obligation to hear Kriyas Ha'Torah through the act of his agent. Since the relationship between the one called to the Torah and the reader is one

of agency, the reader cannot be a minor since he lacks the capacity to act as an agent for an adult, just as a minor cannot act as agent for an adult concerning the fulfillment of other Mitzvos. If a minor were to read the Torah on behalf of an adult, the minor's reading would not be considered the type of reading by which others can fulfill their obligation. His reading would be deemed to be his reading for himself only. Despite seven people being called to the Torah, his reading of the Parsha would be deemed to be the reading of one person and not the reading of seven people which is required on Shabbos. The Brachos made by those who would be called to the Torah would not under those circumstances serve any purpose and would be deemed Brachos recited in vain, particularly since they were already recited as part of Birchos Ha'Shachar and they were recited again only for the purpose of fulfilling the Mitzvah of Kriyas Ha'Torah. In addition even if the adults recited the reading quietly along with the reader that would not change the result. So while it was possible during the time of a Gemara that a minor could be called to the Torah and read a portion and be the vehicle by which those congregated fulfilled their obligation to hear Kriyas Ha'Torah, that is no longer the case when he would be trying to act as an agent for adults who are called to the Torah. A minor cannot act as an agent for an adult concerning Kriyas Ha'Torah and that is why the Magen Avrohom said that a minor may not be a Torah Reader and by the same token, an adult Torah reader cannot be agent for a child because the minor lacks the capacity to appoint an agent. Some may argue that an adult can be an agent for a child because in doing so the adult is bringing merit to the child. However, the child can certainly not be the reader and in doing so, be an agent for an adult. Therefore even in a moment of difficulty, no one should act leniently concerning this matter because the rationale for prohibiting a minor to act as Torah reader is solid. The opinion of the Pri Migadim and other Acharonim who allow minors to read if no one else is available is quite astonishing and needs further analysis. However, if prohibiting the child in this case from reading from the Torah will cause great distress to the boy and his family and the family would like to rely on the opinions of the Pri Migadim and those who agree with him, no one should criticize them for doing so.

From the above **תשובה** by Rabbi Feinstein, we can glean several rules concerning **קריאת התורה**:

1. The **מצוה** of **קריאת התורה** is performed by those present listening to the **תורה** reading and not by the one called to the Torah or by the Torah reader.
2. The **מצוה** requires that the congregation hear three men read from the **תורה** on Mondays, Thursdays and **שבת** at **מנחה**, four men read from the **תורה** on **ראש חודש**; five men read from the **תורה** on **יום טוב**; six men read from the **תורה** on **יום כיפור** and seven men read from the **תורה** on **שבת**.
3. The following **גמרא** no longer has precedent value since the person called to the **תורה** does not also read for the congregation:

תנו רבנן: הכל עולין למנין שבעה, ואפילו קטן ואפילו אשה. אבל אמרו חכמים: אשה לא תקרא בתורה, מפני כבוד צבור.

Translation: All can be called to be one of the seven people who read from the Torah on Shabbos, even

minors and even women but our Sages maintained that a woman may not read from the Torah out of respect for the congregation.

4. Today, any analysis as to the ability of minors or women to act as Torah Readers or to be called to the תורה begins by asking whether minors or women have the capacity to act as agents for an adult male.

5. At the time of the נמרא, minors and women could be called to the תורה and read from the תורה because they were merely acting as the vehicles by which those present were fulfilling their obligation to fulfill the מצוה of קריאת התורה. They were not fulfilling the מצוה on behalf of those present.

All the rules that we gleaned from the תשובה of Rabbi Feinstein can be explained based on our understanding of קריאת התורה; i.e. that the one receiving an עליה is being מקבל the תורה on behalf of his group of Jews; i.e. the כהנים for the כהנים; the לויים for the לויים and the ישראלים for the ישראלים. The מצוה of קריאת התורה is fulfilled when those present acknowledge that they are joining in with the קבלת התורה by answering אמן to the ברכות and by listening to the תורה reading. If those congregated do not listen to the reading, they are sending the opposite message; that they are not in fact accepting what is being read.

The holding of the נמרא that women and minors can read from the תורה was limited to שבת when seven people were called to the תורה. It was further limited to minors and women receiving some but not all the עליות reserved for ישראלים. Why could women and minors receive any עליות? Because they too were present at הר סיני. They too participated in קבלת התורה. They too could be מקבל the תורה today on behalf of others. That was the rule when they read for themselves. However, once חז"ל introduced the use of a תורה reader, a new issue arose, that of an agency relationship. To fully understand the issue, let us ask one more question about the original procedure. Why were women and minors not permitted to receive all the עליות reserved for ישראלים? Because their acceptance of the תורה was not the same as the acceptance of the תורה by adult males. Women and minors were not obligated in all the מצוות. In particular, women were exempt from מצוות שהזמן גרמא; timebound מצוות. For that reason, women cannot act as agents for men during קריאת התורה and men cannot act as agents for women during קריאת התורה. Their responsibility for performing מצוות is not the same. Since their obligation to perform מצוות are not equal, their ability to be מקבל התורה for each other is directly affected.