

TALMUD TORAH 6:7

by Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom

7. When the *Hakham* enters, everyone who is within 4 Amot of him stands in his presence. One may sit or stand until he enters and sits in his place. Regarding the sons of *Hakhamim* and *Talmidei Hakhamim* (lit. "students of *Hakhamim*") - if the public has need of them, they jump over the heads of the people and enter to get to their place. It is not praiseworthy for *Talmidei Hakhamim* to enter at the end. If he went out by necessity, he returns to his place. Regarding the sons of *Hakhamim*; if they are capable of listening [to the lesson], they turn their faces towards their fathers; if they are incapable of listening, they turn their faces towards the people.

Q1: Again, we have the "4 Amot rule" - why the repetition?

YE: See answer to Q2 above.

Q2: How are *Talmidei Hakhamim* defined here?

YE: Here, they must be understood as direct students of the *Hakham* in question (parallel to his sons).

Q3: Why are the sons of *Hakhamim* accorded any special treatment?

YE: According to Rashi (BT Horayot 13b s.v. Senifin) it is a form of honor for their fathers.

Q4: What sort of need would the public have for the sons of *Hakhamim*?

YE: The simplest understanding would be that their input is needed for the session of the Beit-Din. Alternatively, they could be physically assisting their fathers/teachers.

Q5: For what sort of need do they leave that they may return to their places?

YE: From the *sugya* in Horayot, it is the "call of nature".

Q6: What value is there to have the sons of the *Hakhamim* to sit facing the people?

YE: They are considered "snifin" (branches) of the father - it may also be a way of admitting that this child is not a member of the "listening/learning" audience, rather is only there as a form of honor to his father.

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