

HILCHOS KERIAS HATORAH

by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

CONSECUTIVE ALIYOS FOR RELATIVES

In order to avoid ayin harah, a "bad omen", the gabbai does not call a father and a son or two brothers [who share a father] for consecutive aliyos.(1) Even if the parties involved are not concerned with ayin harah and wish to be called consecutively, it is not permitted.(2) Moreover, even if the gabbai mistakenly did call the relative for a consecutive aliyah, the one who was called should remain in his seat and not accept the aliyah(3). If, however, the mistake was realized only after he ascended the bimah, then he is not instructed to descend.(4)

L'chatchillah, even brothers who share only a mother, or even a grandfather and his grandson, should not be called for consecutive aliyos. If, however, there is a need to do so, or if - b'diavad - the call to ascend to the bimah was already made, it is permitted for them to accept the aliyah.(5) All other relatives may be called consecutively even l'chatchillah.

The consecutive aliyos restriction does not apply: If the consecutive aliyah is the maftir on a day when a second sefer Torah is read for maftir. e.g., on Yom Tov or Rosh Chodesh or when the Four Parshios are read.(6) If the maftir is read by a minor (one who is not yet bar mitzvah).(7) When the names of the olim are not used when they are called for an aliyah. While most Ashkanazic shuls today do use names when calling the olim, in some congregations no names are used for the shevii or acharon aliyos.(8) To hagbahah and gelilah, provided that they are not called by name.(9) If another person was called for his aliyah between them and that person happened not to be in shul or was unavailable to receive his aliyah.(10)

DURING KERIAS HaTORAH: SITTING or STANDING?

Although the ba'al koreh and the person receiving the aliyah must stand while reading from the Torah, the congregation is not required to stand. Indeed, there are three views in the poskim as to what is preferred: Some hold that it is preferable to stand while the Torah is being read, since Kerias ha-Torah is compared to Matan Torah at Har Sinai where everyone stood.(11) Others maintain that there is no preference and one is free to sit or stand as he wishes.(12) A third view holds that it is

preferable to sit while the Torah is being read.(13)

The basic halachah follows the middle view that there is no preference and one can choose his position. There are, however, some people who are stringent and insist on standing while the Torah is being read.

Most poskim agree with the following: A weak person who will find it difficult to concentrate should sit. Between aliyos there is no reason to stand. For Borchu and its response, everyone should stand,(14) but during the recital of the birchos ha-Torah themselves there is no obligation to stand. The practice in most congregations is that everyone stands while the Aseres ha-dibros and Shiras ha-yam are read.(15) As with all customs, one should not deviate from the custom of the shul where he is davening.

FOOTNOTES:

1 O.C. 141:6.

2 Mishnah Berurah 141:19. Aruch ha-Shulchan 141:8 maintains, however, that one who is unconcerned with ayin harah may do as he wishes.

3 Be'er Heitev 141:5; Sha'arei Efrayim 1:33.

4 Mishnah Berurah 141:18.

5 Sha'arei Efrayim 1:33.

6 Mishnah Berurah 141:20. Some poskim do not recommend relying on this leniency when no kaddish is recited between the aliyos, e.g., Chol ha-Moed Pesach (Sha'arei Efrayim 1:32), while others are not particular about that (Aruch ha-Shulchan 141:8). On Simchas Torah, however, all poskim are lenient about this; see Yechaveh Da'as 3:50.

7 Mishnah Berurah 141:20.

8 Mishnah Berurah 141:21.

9 Teshuvos Avnei Chefetz 16.

10 Sha'arei Efrayim 1:30.

11 Rama O.C. 146:4 as explained by Bach and Mishnah Berurah 19.

12 O.C. 146:6.

13 This is the view of the Arizal as understood by many of the latter authorities, see Chesed le-Alafim 135:14; S'dei Chemed (Beis, 29); Kaf ha-Chayim 146:20; Da'as Torah 146:4; Shulchan ha-Tahor 146:4. Note that this view has an early source, see Sefer ha-Machkim, pg. 15 and Teshuvos Rama mi-Pano 91.

14 See, however, Kaf ha-Chayim 146:20-21 and Halichos Shelomo 12, note 30, that the accepted practice is to remain seated even during Borchu.

15 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:22; Halichos Shelomo 12, note 30. See Yechaveh Da'as 6:8 for a dissenting opinion.

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