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By the Hakham  
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## When a Kohen Cannot Go to the Torah, & Not Sending a Lewi

If the Shamash/Gabbai calls up the Kohen when the Kohen is in a place in the prayer where he is unable to go up, the Shamash calls up someone else instead, because we do not place a burden on the congregation by having them wait till the Kohen is ready to go up. We are also not concerned that it is like the case of someone who is called up to the Torah and refuses to go. In our case, the Kohen is in the middle of his prayers and is not permitted to go to the Torah and everyone sees that it is so.

If there is no Kohen and a Yisrael goes up instead, a Lewi may not go up after him because people will assume that the Yisrael who went up first was actually a Kohen. Even though the Hazzan will have said, "Bimqom Kohen" (in place of a Kohen), latecomers will not have heard it.

There are various reasons why those who hold that a Lewi may not go up to the Torah in place of a Kohen when there is no Kohen present (as is the prevalent Sephardi custom), are of that opinion. The Mor Uqsi'ah gives a Kabbalistic reason for it. He states that Kohen is Hesed, Lewi is Geburah and Yisrael is Tifereth and we do not wish to begin with Geburah.

(See Sh. 'A 135:6 with Rama.  
Mishnah Berurah ibid 23.  
Kaf HaChayyim ibid, 40)



## Toldoth: Comprehending Holding Esau's Heel

וַאֲחֵרֵי־כֵן יֵצֵא אָחִיו וְיָדוּ אֶחָזֶת בְּעֶקֶב עֶשָׂו וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב "And after that, his brother emerged, holding onto Esau's heel, and he called his name Jacob" (Bereshith 25:26).

Ya'aqob Abinu 'a"h, (Jacob) holding 'Esau's heel has two aspects to it.

- 1) If the Jewish people (Heaven forbid) sin, they will become subjugated to 'Esau and will hold his heel, to put shoes on him, just like servants put shoes on the feet of their master.
- 2) On the other hand, if the Jewish people follow the right path, they will hold the heel of the horse of 'Esau, which will cause the rider to fall. This is in keeping with the blessing given to Dan, where he was likened to a serpent who bites the horse's heel and causes the rider to fall off backwards.

"His name was called Ya'aqob", according to the simple meaning of the text, because he held onto 'Esau's heel to attempt to stop him from being born before him. However there is a hint in the name Ya'aqob, which is an acronym in Hebrew for 'Ya'aseh 'Aşmo Qadam Beberiah' (Make himself first in Creation).

Our Rabbis of blessed memory tell us that insects and reptiles were created before man (who was created on the sixth day). The angels, however, were created before all the other creatures. The message contained here is that if a person sins, he will be told, "Who are you to sin? Even the small mosquito was created before you!". However, if he does not sin, he is likened to the angels who were created first, before any other creature.

(See Barukh T'a'am, Parashath Toldoth)



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## Washing and Dressing - the Right Order

When one washes one's hands, the right hand should be washed first. When washing one's entire body, the head should be washed before the other parts of the body. When getting dressed, a man must cover his head first, (a Kippah [skull cap] is sufficient), before wearing the rest of his clothes.

The Rama states that one must not walk barefoot. This is in accordance with the teachings of the Gemara that a man must sell all he possesses (lit. sell the beams of his house) in order to buy shoes for his feet (Mas. Shabbath 129a). (See also A Torah Minute™ vol., 1, *Wearing Shoes and Socks* and *Wearing Shoes and Socks - part II*)

(See Ben Ish Hai, 1st year, Parashath Wayyishlah, Oth 17,18. Maghen Abraham, 2:4-6. Rama 2:6)



## Barekh 'Aleinu (Ṭal Umaṭar) According to the Solar Calendar

Even though we say Mashib Haruwaḥ Umorid Haggeshem on Shemini 'Aṣereth, we do not say Barekh 'Alenu (Wethen Ṭal Umaṭar in Ashkenazi Nusah) till later. Outside the Land of Israel, it is said for the first time on the 4th, 5th or even 6th of December. People often ask why this was tied to the secular and not the Hebrew calendar.

The answer is that we make our requests for rain sixty days after the equinox. Since the equinox's calculation is based on the sun, it is calculated according to the solar calendar. As we know, the Jewish calendar is both lunar as well as solar based.

In the Land of Israel, Barekh 'Aleinu is said from the seventh of Ḥeshwan. The reason for this is that the Ḥakhamim, z"l, wanted those who went on the Pilgrimage to Jerusalem on Sukkoth, to have enough time to return home before the rains started.

(See Maamar Mordekhai [Eliyahu], Hilkhoth Ḥaggim 56:5-6)

## Women's Corner - by Rabbanith Ruth Menashe 'a"h

### We Can Change the Course of Nature

*And Yiṣ-haq prayed to G-d, opposite his wife, because she was barren.* (Bereshith 25:21). Ribqa Immenu (Rebecca), and Yiṣ-haq Abinu, (Isaac) 'a"h, were unable to have children for 20 years. The verse that recounts the fact that Ribqa Immenu (Rebecca), 'a"h, was barren, first tells us that Yiṣ-haq Abinu, (Isaac) 'a"h, prayed and after that it mentions the reason for his prayer – his childless wife.

Rabbenu Baḥye poses the following question: wouldn't it have been more logical to first state that Ribqa was barren and then mention Yiṣ-haq Abinu's prayer? After all, logically, we would assume that the reason that Yiṣ-haq Abinu, 'a"h, had to pray was on account of her being barren. In other words, the course of events was that first she was barren and then he prayed.

The answer is fascinating; the fact that his prayer is mentioned first comes to teach us, that his prayer was the cause of the fact that she was barren. It is not as we would ordinarily assume, that the fact that she was barren was the catalyst for the prayer.

(To be continued)