AMIDA: READER'S REPETITION: PRIESTLY BLESSING (BIRKAT COHANIM)

Birkat Cohanim: Pausing in Private Amida

When the priests/cohanim begin the Priestly Blessing (birkat cohanim), you must pause when saying your private anida and wait until they finish before continuing your praying.

Birkat Cohanim: Seeing Each Other

A *cohen*/priest does not need to see the congregants and they do not need to see him during birkat *cohanim*. Birkat *cohanim* is effective even if you are outside the *synagogue* when you hear it. But if you are at the front of the *synagogue* such that you would be behind the *cohanim* when they turn to face the congregation and say the blessing, you should move far enough so the *cohanim* will be facing you during the blessing.

Birkat Cohanim: Looking at Priests'/Cohanim's Hands

No one should look at the priests'/*cohanim*'s hands while the *cohanim* say the Priestly Blessing (*birkat cohanim*).

Birkat Cohanim: Talit over Child's Head

It is a custom for fathers to cover their sons' heads with their <u>talit</u> while the priests/<u>cohanim</u> bless the congregation.

REASON So the boys do not to look at the Divine Presence (shechina) present at the priests'/cohanim's

fingertips at that time.

NOTE The priests'/cohanim's hands should be covered by a talit anyway.

NOTE This custom applies to ANYTIME the priests/cohanim say birkat cohanim, whether on:

- <u>Jewish festivals</u> (the only time the priests/<u>cohanim</u> say this blessing outside of <u>Eretz</u> <u>Yisrael</u>), or
- Daily (as is done in *Eretz Yisrael*).

Birkat Cohanim: Priest/Cohen in the Room

If a priest/<u>cohen</u> is in the room during the Priestly Blessing (<u>birkat cohanim</u>), he must bless the non-<u>cohanim</u>. If he will not say the blessing, he must leave the room immediately after <u>modim</u>.