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 *amida* 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 *talit* while the priests/*cohanim* 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:

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

Birkat Cohanim: Priest/Cohen in the Room

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

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