

# 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 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.