WHEN STANDING IS APPROPRIATE IN PRAYER

by Menachem Raab

During the recitation of various prayers it is customary and sometimes *halakhicly* obligatory to stand. Worshipers who recite the prayers regularly are familiar with the general practices of when to stand and when not to stand. There are certain prayers, however, that are not strictly defined as to what the practice should be. There are also many prayers for which the reason for standing may not be clear to the worshiper. The intention of this article is to define the various practices and to explain the reasons wherever possible.

The purpose of this writing is not to explain different customs regarding prayers and religious rites. Explanations are offered only when it may help to understand the reason for the requirement to stand.

It is necessary in the outset to elucidate the purpose for standing. There is no one reason that can satisfy all the different times that one has to stand. At times the compelling factor is that one has to imagine himself standing before the Almighty. Other times one stands to add emphasis to the prayer being recited. Sometimes standing is a sign of respect or special awe for what is taking place when the prayer is recited. An attempt will be made to indicate the reason at every occasion.

When one is required to stand, he should not lean on a table, a piece of furniture or on another person. He may, however, stand free style, that is, at ease. On certain occasions he must stand with his feet together. At times, while he is standing he must face the East, which means facing Jerusalem. Of course, in countries east, north or south of Israel he does not face east but rather towards Israel. In Israel itself, he faces in the direction of Jerusalem. These various requirements will be noted when discussing the respective prayers.

According to the Arukh Hashulhan² the only time it is obligatory to stand during prayer is when reciting the Amidah, Kedushah, Kaddish and Barekhu. The acceptable practice in most synagogues adds many more occasions.

1. PRELIMINARY SERVICE AND PESUKE DEZIMRAH

When one puts on the *tallit* he must do so standing. This, according to the *Mishnah Berurah*,³ is derived by comparing this *mitzvah* to that of bringing the *Omer* that had to be performed while standing. When the *berakhah* for the *tzitzit* is recited, it must also be done standing. Whenever a *berakhah* is recited for the performance of a *mitzvah*, the reciter should

stand.⁴ In both of these matters, the donning of the *tallit* and the recitation of the *berakhah*, if one performed them not standing he has, nevertheless, fulfilled his obligation.

There are varying opinions pertaining to standing when putting on tefillin. According to the Rema,⁵ there is an opinion that the shel yad (tefillin of the hand) should be put on while seated and the shel rosh (tefillin of the head) while standing. This practice, however, he says is not followed in most of our countries (meaning Eastern European). The practice rather, he says, is to stand when putting on both of them.

Although not mentioned anywhere among the codifiers, it is customary among the Ashkenazic Jews to stand when reciting the early morning *berakhot* known as the *Birkhot Hashahar*. No obvious reason can be given for this practice. It may be suggested that the reason is based on the statement in the *Talmud Yerushalmi*⁷ that all *berakhot* should be recited while standing.

The Kaddish is a prayer that is said often during the services in the synagogue. At all times it should be said while standing. The Kaddish, incidentally, is never recited without a minyan of ten men. There are varying opinions as to whether the worshipers who hear the Kaddish being said need stand as well. The Rema⁸ maintains that it is proper to stand upon hearing the Kaddish. According to the Maharil⁹ standing is required until after the response of yehey shme rabba, etc. According to the Elya Rabbah, one is required to stand until the amen following yitbarakh.

The Maharil would not necessarily stand for Kaddish unless he happened to be standing when the Kaddish was started. The Taz is of the same opinion. The $Ari\ z$ " was accustomed to stand during Kaddish after the Amidah and for Titkabel. 11

Maimonides in his Code¹² tells us that the Sages praised any individual who recited daily psalms from the Book of *Tehillim*.¹³ It has become the practice to do so before starting the principal part of the morning service. *Berakhot* have been created to be recited preceding and following these psalms. This particular section of the morning service is known as the *Pesuke DeZimrah* or the Verses of Praise. The *berakhah* that precedes it is called *Barukh She'amar*. This name comes from the opening words of this *berakhah*. This *berakhah* is not found in the Talmud. When reciting *Barukh She'amar* the worshiper stands¹⁴. This praise was composed by the Men of the Great Assembly in accordance with a note that fell from heaven upon which the text was found written, it contained eighty-seven words, and they instructed to recite it standing.

Psalm 100, *Mizmor Letodah*, known as the Thanksgiving Psalm is recited during the weekday¹⁵ services. The *Kitzur Shulhan Arukh*¹⁶ says it should be said standing for it is recited in place of the Thanksgiving Offering brought in the Temple in Jerusalem. When sacrifices were brought

the donor was required to stand. According to the *Shulhan Arukh*¹⁷ it is to be recited melodiously, "for all songs in the future will be abolished except for this one."

On *Shabbat* and on holidays a number of psalms are added to this section of *Pesuke DeZimrah*. These psalms make reference to the Torah and to creation. They are appropriate because the Torah was given on *Shabbat* and, of course, *Shabbat* also represents the culmination of creation. Ramong these additions, Psalms 135 and 136 are recited. These two psalms are called by the Sages of the Talmud *Hallel Hagadol* or the Great Praise. When reciting these two psalms it is customary to stand. Ramong

The Magen Avraham²¹ brings an opinion that the verse Hashem Melekh Hashem Malakh (that is recited in the collection of verses starting with the words Yehi Khevod) should be said on Shabbat and holidays standing.

Vayevarekh David quoted from Chronicles should also be said standing.²² According to the Magen Avraham²³ one should remain standing until after the words Attah Hu Hashem Ha'Elokim.

According to the Gaon of Vilna, one may remain seated during the entire *Pesuke DeZimrah* until the *Kaddish* preceding *Barekhu*.²⁴

The Az Yashir, which is the song that Moshe and the Children of Israel sang at the Red Sea after the deliverance from the Egyptians, 25 is recited daily. The Arukh Hashulhan says it should be recited standing.

The Pesuke DeZimrah, or this section that consists of the biblical verses, concludes with a berakhah known as Yishtabah. The name comes from the first word of this berakhah. The Rema²⁷ states that this berakhah should be said while standing. The Mekhaber, or Rabbi Joseph Caro the author of the Shulhan Arukh mentions only that the Sheli'ah Tzibbur, or the Hazzan, stands when reciting this berakhah.²⁸ The Taz²⁹ states in the name of his father-in-law the Bah, that the reason the Hazzan is required to stand is because immediately following this berakhah he has to recite the Kaddish. So that there be no delay between the berakhah and the Kaddish he stands for the berakhah. The Taz points out that according to this reasoning the average worshiper, that is, not the Hazzan, would not have to stand. He indicates, however, that this is not so since Rabbi Joseph Caro himself in his work Bet Yosef states that everyone should stand. The Arukh Hashulhan³⁰ quotes an opinion that Yishtabah should be said specifically while seated for Kabbalistic reasons.

On *Shabbat* and holidays, immediately after the recitation of the *Az Yashir*, a special prayer known as *Nishmat*³¹ is added. The Talmudic Sages ³² call this *Birkat Hashir*, the "Benediction of the Song". *Tosafot*³³ states that it is, indeed, an extension of the *Yishtabah*.³⁴

Among hasidic Jews there is a custom to recite Shir Hama'alot, psalm 130, after Yishtabah during the Ten Days of Penitence that begin with

Rosh Hashanah and end with Yom Kippur.³⁵ Some Ashkenazic congregations have adopted this custom. The Ark is opened and the psalm is recited aloud responsively with the *Hazzan*. The practice is to stand during its rendition. Standing for this psalm is probably due to the fact that the Ark is open and perhaps also because one is already standing for *Yishtabah* and will have to stand for *Barekhu*, so he remains standing for this psalm as well.

2. THE SHEMA

The next part of the morning service is known as *Birkhot Keri'at Shema* or the "Blessings of *Shema*". The main part of this section is the recitation of the *Shema*. It is accompanied by three *berakhot* and begins with *Barekhu* or a call by the *Hazzan* to bless *Hashem*. The congregation responds with "Blessed is *Hashem*, the blessed One, for all eternity." During this call and response the congregation stands. According to Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik³⁷ the congregation should remain standing until the *Hazzan* himself concludes the response as well.

During the first of the *berakhot* of *Shema*, the passage from Isaiah,³⁸ *Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh*, etc. (Holy, Holy, Holy ...) is recited. This is known as the *Kedushah* when recited during the repetition of the *Amidah*, and is then said standing. Here, however, it is incorrect to stand up for its recitation.³⁹

In reciting the *Shema* it is not necessary to stand. In fact, the *Shulhan Arukh*⁴⁰ states that, "One who desires to be more stringent and stand up when he is already seated to recite the *Shema* standing, is called a transgressor." This does not infer that the *Shema* may not be said while standing. In the Talmud⁴¹ we learn, "Bet Hillel say that one may recite the *Shema* standing, one may recite it sitting, one may recite it reclining, one may recite it walking on the road, one may recite it at one's work." What the *halakhah* opposes is someone who is sitting and specifically stands up to recite the *Shema*.

The Zohar⁴² maintains that one must remain seated from Yotzer Or (the first berakhah after Barekhu) until Tehillot (the last berakhah before the Amidah).

3. THE AMIDAH

The core prayer of every service is the *Amidah*. The *Amidah* is often called the *Shemoneh Esreh*.⁴³ The word *Amidah* means standing. The name, obviously, comes from the fact that the prayer has to be recited while standing. It is also referred to in rabbinic literature as the *Tefillah* that simply means "prayer".

It is only natural that one should stand when saying the *Amidah* for it is a time of supplication. It is a time when the worshiper stands before his Maker and prays for his needs. It is, however, not sufficient to merely stand for the *Amidah*. The *halakhah* states⁴⁴ that one should stand with his feet

together as if they were one, reminiscent of the way the angels in heaven appear. It is also customary before starting the *Amidah*, to take three steps backward and then three forward, seemingly, as one approaches a king. If one should happen to be in a precarious situation where it would be difficult for him to stand, he is permitted to recite the *Amidah* while seated. A sick person confined to bed, may recite the *Amidah* even while lying on his side in bed. An elderly person who cannot stand may recite the *Amidah* while seated.

In the beginning and end of two *berakhot* in the *Amidah* the worshiper must bow down. These *berakhot* are the first one, known as *Avot*, and the eighteenth, known as *Hoda'ah* (*Modim*). The exact procedure is for one to bend the knees when reciting the word *Barukh* then straightening the knees and bowing the upper part of the torso when saying the word *Attah*. He then immediately straightens his body and continues with the words that follow. When reciting the opening words of the *Modim berakhah*, he need not bend the knees but merely bows and stands erect after the first five words. The words of the *Modim berakhah*, the need not bend the knees but merely bows and stands erect after the first five words.

At the conclusion of the *Amidah*, the worshiper again takes three steps backward⁵² and remains standing. The *Bet Yosef*³³ gives different reasons for stepping back. In one he suggests that during the *Amidah* the worshiper was standing in the holy presence of the Almighty. He must now step back, withdrawing, as it were, from this holy site. In taking these steps backwards the worshiper should be bowed down and not be reciting any words. When he finishes taking these steps he then turns his body (not his feet) to the left still bowing and recites the words oseh shalom bimromav, then turns to the right and recites hu ya'aseh shalom alenu, then faces the front and recites ve'al kol yisrael ve'imru amen.⁵⁴ The halakhah states that if one concludes his *Amidah* and another worshiper is still reciting his *Amidah*, then he should not take the three steps backward but should remain standing in his place. He backs up only after the second worshiper has concluded his recitation.⁵⁵

The Hazzan then repeats the Amidah. When the Hazzan reaches the third berakhah, the congregation joins in what is known as the Kedushah. At this point the worshipers move forward again and assume the same position they maintained during the recitation of the Amidah. When the Kedushah is concluded one is permitted to be seated. Some people follow the practice of remaining standing until the Hazzan concludes the entire Amidah,⁵⁶ and some remain standing until the conclusion of the third berakhah.

When the *Hazzan* reaches the *berakhah* of *Modim* the congregation recites a special prayer known as *Modim DeRabbanan*. This is composed of several rabbinic prayers. The congregant reciting the first few words of this prayer should bow as he does when reciting *Modim* in the original *Amidah*.⁵⁷

During the morning *Tefillah*, when the *Hazzan* reaches the repetition of the last *berakhah* that speaks of peace, the *Birkat Kohanim* set (also known as *Nesi'at Kapayim* - "Priestly Benediction") is added. In most synagogues in Israel the *Kohanim* actually ascend the *bimah* (platform before the Ark) at this time and recite the words enjoined by the Torah. Outside Israel this practice is followed only during holidays. During all other morning prayers the *Hazzan* makes reference to this Priestly Benediction and quotes the words the *Kohanim* recite for this blessing. When the *Kohanim* actually perform this *mitzvah*, they should be standing and the congregation should be standing facing them.

4. TAHANUN

On most days, following the *Amidah*, *Tahanun* is said. *Tahanun* is a prayer of supplication wherein one asks for pardon and compassion. It is said seated but in a prostrate position, that is, the worshiper rests his face on his arm.⁶² This symbolizes submission and utter humility before God. Because one takes this position for this supplication it is known as *Nefilat Apayim* ("falling on one's face"). Upon reaching the words *va'anahnu lo neda mah na'aseh* ("As for us, we know not what to do…"),⁶³ it is customary to say the first two words seated and to stand up for the next two words.⁶⁴ This procedure is generally practiced by the *Sheli'ah Tzibbur* as well.⁶⁵

On Mondays and Thursdays an extended *Tahanun* is said. This is known as *Vehu Rahum* ("And He is merciful") from the first words of the prayer and it is recited standing until the part of *Tahanun* is reached and is said in the manner previously explained. It is customary among the Ashkenazic *hasidim* (Sephardim) and by most congregations in the State of Israel that the Thirteen Attributes of the Almighty are recited before *Tahanun*. This is said standing.

5. HALLEL

During special occasions the *Amidah* is followed with the *Hallel*. These occasions are *Rosh Hodesh*, *Hanukkah*, and the Intermediate Days of *Sukkot* and *Pesah*. The *Hallel* consists of psalms 113 to 117. They are preceded and followed by a *berakhah*. During the recitation of the *Hallel*, the worshiper should remain standing. Hallel is considered testimony to the wondrous works of the Almighty and when offering testimony the witnesses, according to the *halakhah*, must be standing. Another reason proffered is based on the verse in the psalms which states, "Give praise, O ye servants of the Lord. Ye that stand in the house of the Lord ..." The Hebrew word for 'give praise', *Hallelu*, comes from the same root as the word *Hallel* and the verse states that they who give praise are standing.

6. THE TORAH READING

The service then continues with the Torah reading on Mondays and Thursdays as well as on special occasions. These special occasions are: *Rosh Hodesh* (the beginning of the new month in the Jewish calendar), weekday holidays (*Hanukkah*, *Purim*), and fast days (Fast of Gedaliah, Tenth of *Tevet*, Fast of Esther, Seventeenth of *Tammuz*, Ninth of *Av*). Certainly on *Shabbat* and Jewish holidays the Torah is read. During many of these instances there may be other prayers and services before the actual reading of the Torah.

When the Torah is removed from the Ark, the congregation should be standing. One should always stand in the presence of a Torah when it is being carried. This *halakhah* does not apply if the Torah is on the *bimah* or if it is stationary, that is, if it is lying on the reader's table or if it is being held by someone who is standing or seated. The Reader and the person honored with the *aliyah* (going up to the Torah) must be standing.

The worshiper called to the Torah for an *aliyah* recites the *Barekhu* followed by a *berakhah* for the reading of the Torah. When he says the *Barekhu*, and during the congregational response to *Barekhu*, everyone should stand.⁷³ Some are of the opinion that one should remain standing during the recitation of the entire *berakhah*.⁷⁴

There are differences of opinion concerning the need for the congregation to stand during the reading of the Torah. The author of the *Shulhan Arukh*⁷⁵ says it is not necessary to stand. The *Rema*, however, says there are people who are more stringent and stand. There are times, nevertheless, when the custom to stand for the reading of certain portions is universal. When the *Az Yashir*⁷⁶ (the song sang by Moses and the Israelites) is read, it is the practice in all synagogues to stand. Similarly when the Ten Commandments⁷⁷ are read the congregation stands.⁷⁸

When the reading of the Torah is over, the Torah is raised from the reader's table and the script is shown to the congregation. It is proper to stand at this time and also to slightly bow towards the Torah upon seeing the script. Of course, when the Torah is returned to the Ark one must remain standing as explained above. Evo

At the conclusion of the service *Alenu* is said while standing.⁸¹ In *Pirke d'Rabbi Eliezer* the reason given for standing is that this particular prayer contains exceptionally great praise of the Almighty.⁸² Additional prayers and psalms are said at this part of the service. The customs vary from place to place and in accord with different traditions. After some of these prayers the *Kaddish* is recited. As was explained previously,⁸³ the one reciting the *Kaddish* stands and it is the practice among many Jews that even those who hear the *Kaddish* stand.

7. THE OMER

Beginning with the second night of *Pesah* and for forty-nine nights the days are counted.⁸⁴ This is known as the counting of the *Omer*. The counting should be said while standing.⁸⁵

8. SHABBAT

Before the commencement of the *Shabbat*, candles are lit in the home to brighten the atmosphere and to cast a peaceful aura upon the household. It is usually the woman of the house who lights the candles. She should be standing while reciting the *berakhah* for this ritual since this is a *berakhah* for the performance of a *mitzvah*.⁸⁶

On Friday evening a special service known as *Kabbalat Shabbat* is held. This service, as the name implies, is the welcoming of *Shabbat*. One of the psalms recited as part of this service is *Mizmor LeDavid*, psalm 29. This psalm has deep interpretive significance and is, therefore, said standing.⁸⁷ Another reason given for standing during this psalm is that reference is made to the Almighty eighteen times in this psalm and the talmudic Sages⁸⁸ find an allusion to the eighteen *berakhot* of the *Amidah* in this. Hence, since this psalm is associated with the *Amidah* it should be said standing.⁸⁹ According to the *Ari z"l* one should stand throughout the entire *Kabbalat Shabbat*.⁹⁰

This is followed by what is known as the prayer of Rabbi Nehunya Ben Hakaneh. This is also said standing since it has deep Kabbalistic implications.

The Sages of the Talmud used a metaphor describing *Shabbat* as a queen and the Jewish people go out on Friday evening to greet her. During the *Kabbalat Shabbat*, a special hymn known as *Lekhah Dodi* expressing this thought is recited. When the last verse in this hymn is said the congregation rises and faces the back towards the doorway as if going to greet the *Shabbat* Queen as she comes. At the conclusion of the verse the worshiper turns to his normal position. Some worshipers have the custom of standing throughout this entire hymn.

During the Ma'ariv (night service) of Erev Shabbat, it is customary to stand at the berakhah of Hashkivenu when reaching the words ufros alenu. This is based on the teaching of the Sages in the Talmud that on Shabbat a Jew acquires a Neshamah Yeterah, an additional soul. The belief is that this soul arrives at the time of the recitation of this passage.⁹³ Obviously, this only applies to Shabbat but not to holidays when there is no Neshamah Yeterah.

At the conclusion of the Amidah the entire congregation recites together the biblical passage Vayekhulu. Hese verses speak of the completion of the act of creation and how the Almighty rested on Shabbat and blessed and sanctified it. By reciting this passage on Friday night, it is as if the worshiper attests to the fact that the world was created by the Almighty. Since in Jewish law, when a witness offers testimony, he must be standing at the time, the worshiper also stands when reciting this passage. He remains standing for the next prayer Magen Avot until the berakhah is concluded since this berakhah takes the place of the repetition of the Amidah.

9. KIDDUSH

The Shulhan Arukh% refers to the aged custom of making Kiddush in the synagogue on Friday night. This practice is mentioned in the Talmud. It was done in the days of the Sages for guests who ate in the synagogue. Today, however, it has no meaning and so the Shulhan Arukh suggests that it be discontinued. Although, most synagogues in Israel do not make Kiddush Friday night, outside Israel it is done. The Rema states that when it is recited in the synagogue the congregants should be standing. The Kiddush is made in the synagogue during all holidays and the same rules apply.

At the *Shabbat* meal, the *Kiddush* is recited before any food is consumed. There are various customs related to sitting or standing during the recitation of the *Kiddush*. The *Shulhan Arukh*⁹⁹ states that *Vayekhulu*, the opening paragraph of the *Kiddush*, should be recited standing. The *Rema*¹⁰⁰ comments that one may also stand for the recitation of the rest of the *Kiddush*, although it is preferable to sit.¹⁰¹ He does add, however, that the custom is to sit even when reciting *Vayekhulu*. If a holiday falls on *Shabbat*, the same rules apply, although some have different customs on *Pesah* during the *Seder* and all of *Sukkot*, when they will sit.¹⁰²

10. BIRKAT HAHODESH

On Shabbat preceding each new Jewish month, during the Shaharit (morning service), after the reading of the Torah and before it is returned to the Ark, the coming new month is announced with a prayer that it should be a healthy and prosperous month. This is known as Birkat Hahodesh. During this proclamation of the new month all should be standing. The Magen Avraham states that although Birkat Hahodesh is not the ancient practice of Kiddush Hahodesh where the rabbis proclaimed the new month, nevertheless, the practice is to stand during the Birkat Hahodesh similar to the practice of the rabbis during the Kiddush Hahodesh. 103

On Shabbat and holidays in many synagogues towards the end of the Musaf service it is a practice to recite responsively the hymn known as

An'im Zemirot. When this is said the Ark is open and the congregation, therefore, stands 104

11. CONCLUDING THE SABBATH

At the conclusion of the Ma'ariv service after Shabbat ends, the verse Vihi No'am from psalm 90:17 is recited and is followed by psalm 91, Yoshev Beseter. The last verse of this psalm beginning with the words orekh yamim is to be repeated and is to be followed by Ve'attah Kadosh. The verse Vihi No'am should be said standing.¹⁰⁵

12. KIDDUSH LEVANAH

After the appearance of the new moon¹⁰⁶ in the beginning of every Jewish month, a special prayer is recited outdoors, usually following the *Ma'ariv* service on *Shabbat* night. This ritual is called *Kiddush Levanah*, the "sanctification of the moon". This service is based on a statement made by Rabbi Ishmael that, "... had Israel merited no other privilege than to greet the presence of their Heavenly Father once a month, it would have been sufficient." To this Abbaye said, "Therefore, we must recite it standing." This ritual is usually recited on *Shabbat* night, although it may be done on any day of the week.¹⁰⁸ The implication is that we must stand when greeting our Heavenly Father.

At the end of *Shabbat* and holidays the *Havdalah* is recited over a cup of wine. *Tosafot*¹⁰⁹ maintains that the *Havdalah* should be said sitting. The *Bet Yosef*¹¹⁰ maintains that it should be said standing. The *Bet Yosef* claims that the *Havdalah* is our way of parting with the Almighty, King of the Universe, and it is only fitting to be standing for this send-off. The general practice is to stand.

13. ROSH HASHANAH AND SELIHOT

At least four days before Rosh Hashanah¹¹¹ a special service known as *Selihot* is said daily prior to the regular *Shaharit*. It is preferable to stand throughout the *Selihot* service.¹¹² If this is too difficult, one should stand at least during the recitation of the passage known as *El Melekh Yoshev* and the Thirteen Attributes.¹¹³ During the recitation of certain *pizmonim* or hymns the Ark is opened and it is, therefore, customary to stand.¹¹⁴

Many prayers are added on holidays and it is appropriate to stand during some of them. The purpose for standing during most of them is to give them added significance. At times the Ark is opened to give them even greater status. Thus on Rosh Hashanah, after the recitation of the *Amidah* during *Ma'ariv*, in numerous synagogues psalm 24, *LeDavid Mizmor*, is said verse by verse with the *Hazzan*. The Ark is opened during the recitation of this psalm and the congregation stands. It is customary during the High Holy Days and on other occasions to stand whenever the Ark is open. This is not obligatory and is only done out of respect.

When the *Hazzan* concludes the repetition of the *Amidah* in the *Shaharit* service *Avinu Malkenu*, Our Father Our King, is said. This prayer has its origin in the Talmud¹¹⁷ where we are told that in a time of dire need for rain, the leading rabbis stood up before the Ark and offered their petitions. They were not granted their request until Rabbi Akiva stood up and petitioned with the words of *Avinu Malkenu*, enumerating the various pleas. He was answered. Probably because Rabbi Akiva stood up to recite this prayer it is customary today for worshipers to stand. ¹¹⁸ *Avinu Malkenu* is said a number of times during the High Holy Days and during the Ten Days of Penitence (*Aseret Yemey Teshuvah*). Whenever it is said, one should be standing.

After the Torah Reading the Shofar is blown. During the recitation of the berakhot for the Shofar and during the blowing of the Shofar, one should stand. 119 Generally, when a berakhah is said for the performance of a mitzvah, it should be said standing. The sounding of the Shofar at this point in the service is referred to by the rabbis as the "Sitting Sounding" (Tekiyot DeMeyushav). This is in contrast to the sounding during the Amidah that is referred to as the "Standing Sounding" (Tekiyot DeMe'umad). The latter acquires its name from the fact that it is performed during the Amidah that is recited standing while the former is performed before the Amidah when it is still not obligatory to stand. 120

In the repetition of the *Musaf Amidah* many hymns and prayers are added. Usually the Ark is opened for the most significant ones. As explained before, when the Ark is open the congregation customarily stands although it is not obligatory. When the *Shofar* is blown during the *Amidah*, the congregation stands.

14. YOM KIPPUR

The Yom Kippur service begins with the trecitation of *Kol Nidre*. This proclamation is an act of annulment of vows made unwittingly. Since annulment of vows requires an act of a *Bet Din* (Rabbinic Court), the procedures of a court must be followed. At a court procedure, the litigants were required to stand. Thus the congregation stands when the *Kol Nidre* is proclaimed. To add to the sanctity of the service the Torah scrolls are removed from the Ark and held at the sides of the *Hazzan*. As previously mentioned when the Torah is held or carried anyone within eye sight is obligated to stand.

As on Rosh Hashanah, many hymns and prayers are added after the *Amidah* in the evening and during the repetition of the *Amidah* in the morning. For many of these passages the Ark is opened and the congregation stands.

During Yom Kippur the *Vidui* (Confessional) is recited a number of times. It is said during the *Amidah* and then said along with the *Hazzan*

when he repeats the *Amidah*. There are two forms. One is a shorter version and is known as *Ashamnu* (we have become guilty) and the other is the longer version known as *Al Het* (for the sin...). Whenever these forms of the *Vidui* are said the worshiper stands.¹²² It is also proper to stand in a bowed position as a sign of greater supplication.¹²³

The Yom Kippur day ends with the Ne'ilah service. Whereas most people do not stand during the Hazzan's repetition of the Amidah for all services, it is customary that for the repetition of the Ne'ilah Amidah everyone remains standing. This is so, of course, because the Ark is kept open during the entire Ne'ilah service.

15. SUKKOT

The Sukkot services follow the appropriate prayers of Shabbat and other holidays with the Hallel included in the Shaharit. In most Ashkenazic synagogues, following Musaf a special service called Hoshanot is added. 124 The Ark is opened and a Torah is removed and brought to the bimah (reading platform). The worshipers walk around the bimah with their Lulav and Etrog reciting the words of petition before the Almighty. Since the Torah is out, even the worshipers who are not walking around with the Lulav should also stand. The Hoshanot service is held every day of Sukkot until the last day of the Intermediate Days of the holiday known as Hoshanah Rabbah.

16. SHEMINI ATZERET AND SIMHAT TORAH

On Shemini Atzeret when the Hazzan begins the repetition of the Musaf Amidah, the Ark is opened and a special prayer for rain known as Geshem is said. 125 Since the Ark is open, the congregation remains standing from the time the Hazzan begins the repetition until the Kedushah.

On Simhat Torah the worshipers march around the bimah with the Torah scrolls. This ritual is known as the Hakkafot. Based on the rule previously enunciated concerning respect for the Torah, everyone should stand throughout the Hakkafot.

17. PESAH

At the Seder on Pesah night the Hallel is recited. Although whenever Hallel is said one is required to stand, when recited during the Seder it is said sitting since the entire Seder is conducted while sitting around the table. The Bet Yosef suggests that since we divide the Hallel in two during the Seder, one part before the meal and the second half after the meal, it would be too troublesome to require that one stand. He also says that since the Seder practices attest to our freedom it is improper to require that one should have to stand up in the middle of the Seder. 126

On the first day of *Pesah*, a special prayer is said asking that the crops derive the maximum benefits from the dew that falls daily. This

conforms with the prayer of *Geshem* for rain we recite on *Shemini Atzeret*. The prayer for dew is known as *Tal*. The same procedure is followed for *Tal* as was followed for *Geshem*. It is proper to stand during this prayer.

18. HANUKKAH AND PURIM

When the candles are lit on *Hanukkah*, everyone should be standing. This conforms with what was stated above that one should stand when reciting *berakhot* for the performance of a *mitzvah*. 127

The reader of the *Megillah* (Book of Esther) for the congregation in the synagogue should be standing.¹²⁸ This is done out of respect for the congregation. The congregation may be sitting. When read in private, however, the reader also may sit if he so desires. The recitation of the three *berakhot* that are said before the reading of the *Megillah* must be said standing.¹²⁹ The congregation should also stand for the *berakhot*.¹³⁰

19. FAST DAYS

Throughout the year when a fast day occurs, certain prayers are added to the service. *Selihot* are said and *Avinu Malkenu* is recited. These prayers have been explained above and the same regulations apply.

20. THE LIFE CYCLE

In the life cycle of the Jew there are numerous occasions that call for special rituals that are associated with prayers or *berakhot*. The customs vary from country to country and from sect to sect. Of course, within each country and within each sect there are also variances of opinions. These differences of opinions affect the customs of whether one should stand or sit when they are performed. Some of these practices will now be explained.

The halakhah states that there are four individuals who must praise the Almighty for having saved them. They are: one who has crossed an ocean, one who has traversed a desert or wilderness, one who was seriously ill and recovered, and one who was imprisoned and was freed. They all recite a berakhah of thanks to the Almighty for His deliverance. This berakhah is known as Birkat Hagomel (...Who bestowed kindness...) and is to be said in the presence of a minyan. According to Maimonides¹³¹ this berakhah should be said standing. The reasoning given for Maimonides' assertion is based on the verse that states: "... and praise Him in the seat of the elders" (psalm 107:32) which implies that this praise is to be given in the presence of the elders. The psalmist, however, uses the expression 'in the seat of the elders', which implies that the elders are seated and the one offering the praise is standing.¹³²

A wedding ceremony should be performed in the presence of a *minyan*.¹³³ The ceremony actually consists of two independent parts. The first part is known as *Kiddushin* or *Erusin* and is the betrothal. The second

part that requires the *Huppah* is called *Nesu'in*. Although both parts call for the audience to stand when they are taking place, in practice this is rarely carried out. There are many different reasons given for the need to stand during a wedding ceremony.¹³⁴ Not the least important among them is the fact that the *Hatan* or groom is likened to a king and all should stand for a king. For this same reason it is the practice at a wedding ceremony when the *Hatan* (and also the *Kallah* or bride who is likened to a queen) walks down the aisle during the procession the people stand up as he passes. Perhaps this is a compromise for not standing as required throughout the entire ceremony.

For an entire week after the wedding ceremony it is a custom that at every meal where the bride and groom are present and there is someone there who had not attended the wedding or any of the previous meals, the seven *Berakhot* of the *Nesu'in*, which were said under the *Huppah* during the wedding, are repeated at the conclusion of the Grace After Meals. ¹³⁵ This is commonly referred to as the *Sheva Berakhot* because *sheva* means seven and there are seven *berakhot* recited. It is not necessary to stand when the *Berakhot* of *Nesu'in* are said on these occasions. ¹³⁶

It is a biblical¹³⁷ commandment for a father to circumcise his son on the eighth day after his birth. Every effort should be made to perform this ritual in the presence of ten men.¹³⁸ The child's father and the *Mohel* performing the circumcision should stand during the ceremony.¹³⁹ It is likewise customary for everyone present to stand from the time the baby is brought into the room and remain standing until the conclusion of the ritual.¹⁴⁰ The *Arukh Hashulhan*¹⁴¹ says that the main reason for standing is due to the great significance of this important *mitzvah*. To bring a Jewish soul under the wing of the Almighty is similar to greeting the presence of the Almighty. This certainly calls for standing. He also finds an allusion to this in the passage in the Bible that reads: "... and all the people stood to the covenant (*Brit*)."¹⁴²

The talmudic Sages decreed that upon hearing of the death of a close relative, for one that a person should sit *Shivah*, or about the death of a highly important and respected individual, one must tear his garment a few inches. This is known as *keri'ah*, a Hebrew word that means "tearing". The *Shulhan Arukh*¹⁴³ states that this should be done standing. This is derived from the *Book of Job* where we read when Job mourned for his children, "Then Job arose, and rent his mantle...". (Job 1:20) The *Rema*¹⁴⁴ adds that if one should rend his garment while sitting, he must rise up and rend his garment once more.

Regardless of whether one stands or sits during a prayer, a significant aspect is his devotion and *kavanah*. Prayer is basically *Avodah Shebalev*, or the devotion of the heart. If one prays to the Almighty with piety and meaningful intent, his prayers are heard and hopefully will be answered for the good.

FOOTNOTES

- 1. See Shulhan Arukh, 94:8 and Mishnah Berurah sub no. 22.
- 2. OH 51:8.
- 3. Chap. 8 sub no. 2.
- 4. Bet Yosef, OH 8:1. Although reference is made here to the Yerushalmi and other Rishonim also refer to this Yerushalmi, no one annotates exactly where it may be found. For a full discussion of this rule see She'elot Uteshuvot Yehave Da'at Vol. 5, chap. 4, sub v. Vekhen Matzati.
- 5. OH, 25:11.
- 6. See Tefillah KeHilkhatah, Yitzchak Yaakov Fuchs, Jerusalem 1989, p. 174.
- 7. This statement is reported by the *Bet Yosef* (OH 8:1) and many other codifiers. They all qualify this rule to refer to *berakhot* of *mitzvot* only. See note no. 4 above.
- 8. OH 56:1.
- 9. Hilkhot Tefillah.
- 10. OH 56 sub no. 3.
- 11. See OH 53:1 and Mishnah Berurah 56 sub no. 7.
- 12. Laws of Tefillah, 7:12.
- 13. Shabbat 118b.
- 14. Magen Avraham and Taz on OH 51:1. The reason given here in the text is that of the Taz who attributes this Kabbalistic explanation to the Tola'at Ya'akov in the name of Or Zaru'a.
- 15. This psalm is not said on Shabbat and certain holidays and on the eve of Yom Kippur and Passover because on these days this particular offering was not brought.
- 16. 14:4.
- 17. OH 51:9
- 18. Out of respect for the holidays these psalms are added then also although they may not have any direct relation with the holiday.
- 19. Pes. 118a. The reason proffered for this name is "... because the Holy One, blessed be He, sits in the heights of the universe and distributes food to all creatures." Psalm 136:25 states: "Who giveth food to all flesh for His mercy endureth forever."
- Perhaps the reason is similar to that of the regular Hallel which is discused later. See below, Section 5 HALLEL.
- 21. OH 51 sub no. 7. This writer knows of no place where this is practiced. It is possible he is referring to this verse recited by Ashkenazic hasidim (Sephardim) before the berakhah of Barukh She'amar.
- 22. Rema OH 51:7
- 23. OH 51 sub. no. 9.
- 24. Ma'aseh Rav, 27.
- 25. Ex. 14:30 15:19.
- 26. OH 51:8.
- 27. OH 51:7.
- 28. OH 53:1.
- 29. In loco sub no. 1.
- 30. OH 51:8.
- 31. The name comes from the first word of this prayer.
- 32. Pes. 118a.
- 33. Ibid. sub v. Rabbi Yohanan Amar.
- 34. Since, indeed, this is an extension of Yishtabah it would appear that if one stands for Yishtabah he should also stand for Nishmat. This is not common practice.
- 35. Magen Avraham, 54 sub no. 2 in the name of the Ari z"l. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik has a problem with the recitation of this psalm. It is halakhicly incorrect to make any verbal utterance between Yishtabah and Kaddish. He, therefore, used to recite it before Yishtabah during weekdays and before Nishmat on Shabbat and holidays. See Nefesh Harav, Rabbi Hershel Schachter, Jerusalem, 1994, p. 203 par. 6-7.
- 36. Barekhu is considered a Davar ShebeKedushah, a sacred act, and should be recited standing. See Rema, OH 56:1.
- 37. Nefesh Harav, p. 117 sub no. 3. The Rav maintains that Barekhu is a Davar ShebeKedushah (a hallowed prayer) and as such one must stand during its recitation. This would thus negate the practice that some worshipers have of bowing from their seats when responding to Barekhu.
- 38. 6:3

- 39. Mishnah Berurah, 59 sub no. 12. See also Be'er Hetev here sub no. 3.
- 40. OH 63:2.
- 41. Ber. 11a.
- 42. See Arukh Hashulhan, 51:8.
- 43. This name, which means eighteen, is derived from the fact that originally the prayer had eighteen berakhot when recited during the weekdays. It now has nineteen.
- 44. Shulhan Arukh, OH 95:1.
- 45. See Ezekiel 1:7.
- 46. Rema, OH 95:1. The Elya Rabbah 95:3 says it is not necessary to take the three steps backward unless he is standing near a wall. The Mishnah Berurah 95 sub no. 3 agrees but states the custom is to take the three steps backwards.
- 47. The example given by the Shulhan Arukh is if he is on a boat or wagon. OH 94:4.
- 48. OH 94:6.
- 49. Mishnah Berurah, 94 sub no. 20.
- 50. OH 113:1.
- 51. Mishnah Berurah 113 sub no. 12.
- 52. Shulhan Arukh, OH 123:1.
- 53. OH 123 (in the middle).
- 54. OH 123:1.
- 55. Shulhan Arukh OH 102:5. This is an extension of the law which prohibits one from walking in front of one reciting the Amidah. Actually, you may not even sit in front of him.
- 56. Rema OH 124:4.
- 57. OH 127:1. There are different customs in following this requirement. Some bow at the end of this prayer as well and others bow through the recitation of the entire prayer. These customs are brought by the Shulhan Arukh and the Rema on this ruling. For additional customs see Tefillah Kehilkhatah p. 279 par. 64 and footnote 156. Although some worshipers are accustomed to stand during Modim DeRabbanan, this practice is not called for by any of the codifiers.
- 58. See Numb. 6:22-27.
- 59. Rema OH 128:44.
- 60. OH 128:14.
- 61. OH 128:23. See Mishnah Berurah ibid. sub no. 89 where he states that one should not look directly at the hands of the Kohanim. Some worshipers follow an incorrect practice of turning their backs to the Kohanim during the Priestly Benediction, ostensibly to avoid looking at the hands of the Kohanim. This practice negates the real requirement that the Kohanim face the people and the people face the Kohanim during this Priestly Benediction.
- 62. There are some codifiers who maintain that one does not rest his face when praying in a room where there is no Torah scroll. See *Rema* OH 131:2 and *Mishnah Berurah* sub no. 11.
- 63. This implies that we beseeched God in every possible way that we know. We sat during our earlier prayers; we stood during the Amidah; and now we prostrated ourselves. See Tur OH 131 towards the end.
- 64. Mishnah Berurah 131 sub no. 9.
- 65. Arukh Hashulhan 131:5 in the name of Maimonides. He himself says that in his community the practice was for the Sheli'ah Tzibbur to recite the Tahanun standing at the lecturn.
- 66. Shulhan Arukh, OH 422:7.
- 67. Mishnah Berurah, 422 Sub no. 28.
- 68. Ibid.
- 69. Psalms 135:1-2.
- 70. Shulhan Arukh, YD 282:2.
- 71. Rema YD 242:18. The Taz in loco sub no. 13 states that if the Torah is in the Ark and the Ark is open one does not have to stand since that is considered a different domain. The practice, however, is to stand out of respect whenever the Ark is open. Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik maintains that even if someone is seated when holding the Torah, the congregation is obligated to stand. He, therefore, recommends to lay the Torah on the readers table after it is tied. See Nefesh Harav, p. 142.
- 72. Arukh Hashulhan OH 141 sub no. 2.
- 73. Taz, OH 146 sub no. 1, Mishnah Berurah, 146 sub no. 18. Arukh Hashulhan, 146 sub no. 8.
- 74. Magen Avraham, OH 146 sub no. 6.
- 75. OH, 146:4. See *Taz*, idem. The Gaon of Vilna in loco sub no. 4 brings proof from the *Talmud Yerushalmi* and *Bavli* that it is not necessary to stand. The *Mishnah Berurah* Sub no. 19 gives the reason for those who stand stating it is a remembrance of when the Jews were standing at Mt. Sinai receiving the Torah.
- 76. Ex. 15:1-21.

- 77. Ex. 20:1-14; Deut. 5:6-18. These portions are read during the regular reading on *Shabbat* of these two portions as well as the holiday of *Shavu'ot*.
- 78. There are different opinions concerning standing during the reading of these passages. For a discussion of this issue see *Yehaveh Da'at*, Part 1, chap. 28 (he quotes the opinion of Maimonides who forbids it) and *Igrot Mosheh* OH, Part 4, chap. 22.
- Arukh Hashulhan, OH 134:3.
- 80. Shulhan Arukh, YD 282:2.
- 81 Rema, OH 132:2 in the name of the Ari z"l.
- 82. See Otzer Hatefillot p. 448 in the commentary Besamim Rosh where this reason is given.
- See explanation on Kaddish above under Section 1, PRELIMINARY SERVICE AND PESUKE DEZIMRAH.
- 84. Lev. 23:15-16.
- 85. Shulhan Arukh, OH 489:1. For the reason see Be'er Hetev in loco sub no. 4.
- See above, beginning of Section 1, PRELIMINARY SERVICE AND PESUKE DEZIMRAH and note #4.
- Otzer Hatefillot, Ashkenaz, New York, 5706, in loc. See also Netiv Binah, Rabbi Issachar Jacobson, Tel Aviv, 1973, Vol. 2 p. 31.
- 88. Yer. Ber. 4:3.
- 89. See Gedalya Felder, Siddur Yesode Yeshurun, Messorah Publications, 5741, p. 261.
- 90. Ibid. p. 262.
- 91. Ibid. For another reason see below note #93.
- 92. Shab. 119a and Mishnah Berurah, 162 sub no. 10 and Be'er Hetev sub no. 5.
- 93. See Yesod Veshoresh Ha'avodah, Alexander Ziskind, Jerusalem, 5700, p. 166. Some maintain the acquisition of the Neshamah Yeterah takes place with the recitation of Mizmor LeDavid, psalm 29, before Lekhah Dodi in the Kabbalat Shabbat. According to them, that is the reason for standing when reciting that psalm.
- 94. Gen. 2:1-3.
- 95. Shulhan Arukh, OH 268:7. See Mishnah Berurah, in loco, sub no. 19.
- 96. OH 269:1.
- 97. Pes. 101a
- 98. OH 269:1. The Mishnah Berurah, in loco sub no. 6 quotes sources that this is a preventative to avoid weak knees!
- 99. OH 271:10. The Mishnah Berurah, in loco sub no. 45 offers the explanation that the Vayekhulu is testimony to the fact that the Almighty created the heavens and earth and testimony is always given by the witness standing.
- 100. OH 271:10. See Mishnah Berurah, in loco sub no. 46 for the explanation of Rema's reasoning.
- 101. For the opinion of other codifiers and for additional reasons for standing or sitting see Arukh Hashulhan OH 271:24.
- 102. See Arukh Hashulhan, OH 473:4 and 643:3.
- 103. Magan Avraham, OH 417:1.
- 104. The Gaon of Vilna is of the opinion that An'im Zemirot should be said only on holidays. See Ma'ase Rav 170.
- 105. Mishnah Berurah, 295 sub no. 1.
- 106. For the proper time to recite this prayer see Shulhan Arukh, OH 426:2-4.
- 107. San. 42a.
- 108. On Shabbat eve and on the holiday the service is to be avoided if possible. See Rema OH, 426:2 and Magen Avraham, in loco sub no. 7; see Mishnah Berurah, sub no. 12.
- 109. Berakhot 43a sub v. Ho'il.
- 110. Bet Yosef 396 sub v. VeNer. See also Arukh Hashulhan, OH 295:2 and 473:4.
- 111. Shulhan Arukh, 581:1. The exact number of days before Rosh Hashanah depends on what day of the week the holy day occurs. The Sephardic Jews begin saying Selihot on Rosh Hodesh Elul.
- 112. Matteh Ephraim 581:18.
- 113. Ex. 34:6-7.
- 114. See Nefesh Harav, ibid, p. 209, par. 22.
- 115. Although the custom of saying this psalm on Rosh Hashanah is widespread among the Ashkenazic synagogues, it is in reality only a Sephardic practice. See Mahzor Leyamim Nora'im, Daniel Goldschmit, Koren, Jerusalem, 5730, p. 12.
- 116. Taz, YD 242 sub no. 13.
- 117. Tan. 25b.
- 118. Another explanation may simply be as stated above. This is a significant prayer and the Ark is opened when it is recited. Hence, the congregation stands.

- 119. Shulhan Arukh, OH 585:1 and Mishnah Berurah in loco sub no. 1.
- 120. The *Mishnah Berurah*, 592 sub no. 2 gives the reason for calling these blasts *Tekiyot DeMe'umad* in that it is obligatory to stand for them. He does, however, state that if one does not stand, he, nevertheless, has fulfilled the *mitzyah* of *Shofar*.
- 121. See Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol. 10 p. 1166, sub v. Kol Nidre.
- 122. Shulhan Arukh, OH 607:3.
- 123. Mishnah Berurah, 607 sub no. 10.
- 124. In most Sephardic synagogues and in some Ashkenazic this service is added after Shaharit.
- 125. In Israel this prayer is said before the congregation recites the silent Musaf Amidah.
- 126. Bet Yosef, 422 at the end.
- 127. See above Section 1 PRELIMINARY SERVICE AND PESUKE DEZIMRAH. Also note #4.
- 128. Shulhan Arukh, OH 690:1.
- 129. Mishnah Berurah, 690 sub no. 1. See above Section 1 PRELIMINARY SERVICE AND PESUKE DEZIMRAH, also note #4. There is an opposite opinion. See Peney Yehoshu'a, Megillah 21a. He maintains that one has to stand when reciting the berakhot only if one has to stand during the performance of the mitzvah. This is not required here.
- 130. Sha'ar Hatziyun in Mishnah Berurah, 690 sub no. 1.
- 131. Laws of Berakhot, 10:8.
- 132. Bayit Hadash on the Tur Chap. 219 (in the beginning).
- 133. Shulhan Arukh, EH 34:4.
- 134. A lengthy discussion of this appears in Yabi'a Omer of Rabbi Ovadya Yosef, Even Ha'ezer Vol. 6, Chap. 8, par. 2. For the berakhot of Nesu'in see Be'er Hetev EH 62 sub no. 1.
- 135. Shulhan Arukh, EH 62:4.
- 136. Yabi'a Omer, ibid.
- 137. Gen. 21:4 and Lev. 12:3.
- 138. Shulhan Arukh, YD 265:6.
- 139. Rema, YD 26:1.
- 140. Rema, ibid. and Mahzor Vitri par. 505. The Gaon of Vilna says this is only a stringent observance and is based on the talmudic passage in Tractate Shab. 137b which states: "... the father of the infant recites ... those standing there exclaim ...". Since reference is made to those standing he deduces that the people in attendance should stand. See Be'ur Hagra, YD 265 sub no. 5.
- 141. YD, 265:14.
- 142. Kings II, 23:3.
- 143. YD 340:1. See also M.K. 20b.
- 144. YD, ibid.

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