

BirkasKohanim.com

Make Sure You Fulfill The Mitzvah

Approved by HaRav Yitzchak Yosef and HaRav Hershel Schachter, *shalita*



1. The Kohanim must wash their hands to the wrists (even on Yom Kippur and Tisha B'Av) and move towards the Duchan by the end of Retzeh. The Shaliach Tzibbur should ensure they have done so before finishing Retzeh.
2. The Kohanim must stand facing the Aron Kodesh with their Tallitot over their heads, until the Shaliach Tzibbur calls out "Kohanim!" The Minhag is that they raise their hands to shoulder height even before they start the Beracha.
3. The Kohanim must turn to the right while saying the Beracha so that they finish saying "באהבה" while facing the Tzibbur. Some have the custom to turn while saying "וצונו," while others only turn at "באהבה." They turn again to the right after the Shaliach Tzibbur starts Sim Shalom; then they may put their hands down.
4. An Ashkenazi Shaliach Tzibbur reading out of a Siddur may answer Amen to the Pesukim of Birkat Kohanim; a Sephardi one may not.
5. **Min HaTorah**, Birkat Kohanim must be said in Hebrew, out loud, standing, and with one's hands raised at or above shoulder height while saying the words. *Therefore, one who shuckles must ensure that his hands do not fall below shoulder height!* Any Kohen who cannot fulfill these requirements may not participate.
6. If a Kohen gets too tired, he may briefly rest his hands in between words, as long as he raises them up again before saying the next word.
7. There are various customs regarding how to spread one's *fingers*. One should follow his family custom.
8. The Shaliach Tzibbur should wait for the Kohanim to finish saying the previous word and the Tzibbur to answer Amen, before beginning the next word.
9. The Kohanim must be vigilant to stay in sync, to say each word together in unison, starting each word after the Shaliach Tzibbur finishes saying it and not elongating the words more than the other Kohanim.
10. While saying the words ending in a *Chaf Sofit* and "Shalom," the Kohanim turn to their left and right to spread out the Beracha to those on their sides.
11. In order to receive the Beracha, the Tzibbur, including children who go under their father's Tallit, should stand, silently facing the Kohanim. There are different customs about saying Pesukim, and one should ask his Posek.

Based on Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 128), Mishnah Berurah, and contemporary Poskim.

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