
Honouring the Mitzvah of Leining

ברכות דף ח'. ושלחן ערוך סימן קמ"ו [עפ"י פסקי מ"ב]

Is one permitted to leave the shul during leining?

Once the ספר תורה has been opened, it is forbidden to go out, even if there are still 10 men in the shul and he himself has already heard the leining earlier. If absolutely necessary, one may leave between עליות, as long as 10 men remain [and, unless he has already heard the leining, he intends to return immediately]. However, if this happens on a regular basis, it is seen as a dishonour to the תורה.

As for what is considered the conclusion of the leining, whilst the פרי חדש leans towards permitting one to leave even before the last ברכה has been recited, the מטה יהודה argues.

Can one speak during leining?

Once leining has commenced – some say once the ספר תורה has been opened in order to make the first ברכה – until the end, including between עליות, it is forbidden to speak to others. The ביאור הלכה concludes the סימן with harsh words for people who disgrace the תורה in this fashion and warns of the many איסורים that are often contravened, in the process.

Can one learn during leining?

The סוטה in גמרא indicates that this is forbidden, seemingly even between עליות, for worry that one may continue even into the actual reading; even if he himself has already heard the התורה. קריאת התורה. This applies even to paskening a הלכה, unless it cannot wait until later, or it is a matter of withholding another from doing an איסור and one can't hint; in these cases, one should respond short and to the point.

However, the ב"ח allows learning between עליות, especially nowadays with the מי שברך that they make. Nonetheless, the אלי רבה warns that one should not learn together with another person; to pasken a הלכה, however, is fine.

Are there any exceptions?

Based on רב ששת, who turned his face away and learned, there are a number of opinions on this matter:

1. The הלכות גדולות writes that if there are ten people without him, he may learn.
2. תוספות, amongst others, adds further that he must learn quietly, so as not to disturb others.
3. The רבינו יונה writes that it is dependent on his turning away – clear for all to see – and beginning to learn before the leining starts. Otherwise, it is forbidden, without exception.
4. The רבינו יונה also quotes an opinion that רב ששת was different because he was blind and therefore exempt from leining. [According to this, perhaps one who has already heard קריאת התורה would be permitted. On the other hand, unlike רב ששת, it is not evident and clear to all that he is exempt. Anyhow, this opinion is not quoted in the שלחן ערוך.]
5. The רי"ף writes that only one for whom the תורה is his 'vocation', is there is a היתר. The אלי"ה writes that nowadays, no one fits into the category of יתורתו אומנותו for this purpose. Accordingly, there would no היתר to learn.

What about reading along for the sake of שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום?

The שלחן ערוך permits it. The מגן אברהם quotes the תרומת הדשן that this is even when he is needed to make up the מנין; even if he is not actually reading the exact same words as the בעל קריאה, since he is reading the same ענין, one need not worry. The ביאור הלכה strongly questions this and seemingly argues that if he is the tenth man, then it is forbidden. When it comes to פרשת זכור and seemingly פרשת פרה too, one should just listen and be מכוין to the קריאת התורה.

However, the שלחן ערוך concludes that one who is a מדקדק בדבריו will always just listen to the בעל קריאה. The פרי חדש goes further and actually forbids reading along. This position is shared by others, such as the שלי"ה הקדוש and the Vilna Gaon.

On the other hand the מטה משה, along with others, says one *should* read along, in order to ensure that he keeps concentration. [Accordingly, it would seem, however, that he must actually keep in time with the בעל קריאה.]

Is the הפטרה any different?

No; the same הלכות apply.

Must one stand during leining?

Although the מהר"ם used to stand during the leining and the ט"ז writes that everyone should follow his practice, the בית יוסף, the פרי חדש and the Vilna Gaon all write that one need not do so. The ב"ח adds that even the מהר"ם did so only as a הידור; in the same fashion that כלל ישראל stood at הר סיני. Subsequently, שיערי אפרים writes, one who is weak and will be unable to concentrate, should definitely sit.

Between עליות, without doubt, one may sit. However, for ברכו and answering גוי המבורך וגוי, one *must* stand.

Must one stand when a ספר תורה is being carried?

Yes; until it reaches its place, or it goes out of his range of vision. Note that leaning heavily against something else, is Halchically considered to be sitting. So too, at the time of הגבהה, since the whole purpose is to show the congregation the תורה, one must stand, even if the ספר תורה is technically in a different domain.

However, if the חזן is standing still with it in one place, such as for הזכרת נשמות, the פרי מגדים is lenient. Subsequently, when the ארון הקודש is open, although the מנהג העולם is to stand, one is not actually obligated to do so.

שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום

ברכות דף ח' - ח': ושלחן ערוך סימן רפ"ה [עפ"י פסקי מ"ב]

רמב"ם הלכות תפלה פרק יג הלכה כה

אע"פ שאדם שומע כל התורה כולה בכל שבת בצבור, חייב לקרות לעצמו בכל שבוע ושבוע סדר של אותה שבת שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום. ופסוק שאין בו תרגום, קוראהו שלש פעמים עד שישלים פרשיותיו עם הצבור.

What is the time for שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום?

Although the פרי מגדים mentions the opinion that one has to wait for Sunday, as is actually suggested too by the לשון of the שלחן ערוך, the משנה ברורה paskens that following the leining at שבת מנחה, one may begin the next week's סדרה. [Other ספרים, such as the קיצור שולחן ערוך, stick to the לשון of the שלחן ערוך, making no mention of starting from מנחה on שבת.]

When it comes to פרשת בראשית, one must wait for the leining of פרשת בראשית. [According to those who are מחמיר for the above mentioned opinion, one must wait until מוצאי שבת.] Parshas וזאת הברכה should ideally be done on הושענא רבה, but if necessary can still be completed on שמיני עצרת or שמחת תורה before the leining of וזאת הברכה. [See חוט שני that if need be, it can be done until the end of שמחת תורה. As to whether one can already begin from the previous Sunday, there is a dispute in the פוסקים. Likewise, some are lenient in the case where the Shabbos leining is interrupted, due to יום טוב or חול המועד, to allow one to start from the time the סדרה is leined at the first מנחה; others write that one must wait until the week it will actually be read.]

Some, such as the Vilna Gaon, would divide the סדרה, doing a section each day and finish it on ערב שבת. Others advise that the ideal is to do the whole סדרה in one go, on ערב שבת.

What is the latest time to complete the סדרה?

If one has not yet completed the סדרה, he should try to do on שבת morning before going to shul for leining. Otherwise, he should endeavour to complete it before the day-time סעודה, for worry that as a result of the big and long סעודה, one may fail to do it before מנחה. However, this should not come at the expense of delaying the meal beyond חצות or keeping hungry family and guests waiting. Rather, he should then see to complete the סדרה before מנחה time. If even that proves too difficult, he still has up until, but not including, Wednesday. Otherwise, he should ensure to 'pay up his debt' by פרשה and fill in the blanks in his own time, or he should go in order from where he is up to, this is a matter of much debate in the פוסקים.]

What is the proper procedure for **שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום**?

לכתחילה, one should read the **תרגום** only after the second reading of the **מקרא**; not like those who say that it is fine, at least **בדיעבד**, to sandwich it *between* the two times **מקרא**. [However, in **ארחות** **רבינו**, the **חזון איש** is reported to have followed this latter **מהלך**.] One should follow through the **סדרה** in the right order. Although it is best to sing the words with the **נגינות**, the **פרי מגדים** is **מדייק** that it is not imperative. [The **ט"ז** mentions that ideally, a person should read at least once from a **ספר תורה**. Practically, it isn't so simple.]

As to how much **מקרא** to read before filling in the **תרגום**, some do one **פסוק** at a time; others take a whole **פרשה**, whether **פתוחה** or **סתומה**, in one go. [The **שלייה הקדוש**, quoting the **מחצית השקל**, notes that according to this practice, even if the break is in the middle of a **פסוק**, such as in **פרשת פינחס**, one interjects there and then. However, in the **עשרת הדברות**, the **כף החיים** rules to follow the **החתון** and not break in the middle of the **פסוקים**.] The **משנה ברורה** rules that one can do as he pleases. [In fact, there are yet other ways to do it, such as the Steipler's practice to read the whole **סדרה** twice, before doing the **תרגום**.] After the final bit of **תרגום**, one should read the last **פסוק** again, so as to finish with **מקרא**.

Can one interrupt in the middle?

Although it is commendable to go through the whole **סדרה** in one go, one is permitted to talk between one **ענין** and the next, such as at a **פתוחה** or **סתומה**. In the middle of an **ענין**, however, the **שער הציון** rules that it is forbidden.

What does one do where there is no **תרגום**?

In accordance with **רש"י**, one should read the **מקרא** a third time. Some are **מחמיר**, where it exists, to read the **תרגום ירושלמי** instead, as is the opinion of **תוספות**.

Is there an alternative for one who doesn't understand the **תרגום**?

Another language is of no use, since the **תרגום** is more than just a translation. However, as ruled by the **רא"ש**, one could replace the **תרגום** with **רש"י**; namely, twice **מקרא** followed by the **רש"י**. Where there is no **רש"י**, one should read the **פסוק** a third time. In fact, since **רש"י** has more than the **תרגום**, but does not deal with every **פסוק** as does the **תרגום**, a **ירא שמים** will read both the **תרגום** and **רש"י**. For one who can't learn **רש"י**, a good **פירוש** [not just a translation], is fine.

Can one fulfil one of the times **מקרא** when hearing **קריאת התורה**?

Ideally, one should not rely on what one hears from the בעל קריאה, since it is בדיעבד, and according to others even בדיעבד does not work. [Is this because the מצוה of קריאת התורה is to *hear*, not to read and thus, we do not have the mechanism of 'ישומע כעונה'? What do you think?] However, for those who read along with the בעל קריאה from a חומש, it most definitely does count. [See 'Honouring the Mitzvah of Leining' as to whether one should do this.]

Does one have to read שנים מקרא for the leining of יום טוב or the ד' פרשיות?

There are two reasons found for the מצוה of מקרא שנים. The רבינו חננאל is quoted to explain that in this fashion, one prepares for the upcoming week's leining. However, the majority explanation is that in this manner, one will complete the whole תורה himself.

Accordingly, the reasoning of the רבינו חננאל would hold that one would have to read שנים מקרא for whatever is being leined that week. However, the majority opinion would reason that since the individual completes the whole תורה anyway, there is no need to do it for the יום טוב leining or פרשת זכור and the alike. This is the decision of the ערוך שלחן too.

What about the הפטרה?

Once again, it would seem to depend on the above מחלוקת; namely, according to the רבינו חננאל, one should have to prepare the הפטרה too. Following the other reason, however, clearly a person is not going to complete the whole of נביאים anyway.

Although strictly speaking we follow the second reason and subsequently there is no obligation to read through the הפטרה, the מנהג, as quoted by the רמ"א, is for one to do so. The מגן אברהם explains that here, there is a practical rationale behind the מנהג; namely, unlike קריאת התורה, one may well be called upon to lein the הפטרה and needs to be prepared.

Following this line of reasoning, it follows that one reads whatever הפטרה is actually going to be leined that week; for example, on פרשת זכור, the הפטרה for פרשת זכור. One last point: Although the מגן אברהם writes that one should actually read the תרגום of the הפטרה, the שער הציון notes that this is not our practice.