

Halachos of Reading the Shem Hashem

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Adapted from a shiur by Rav Chaim Weg on *Parshas Shemos*

זה שמי לעלם וזה זכרי לדור דור (שמות ה:)

According to *Pesachim* 50a, the word לעלם is written without the vav to show that the *Shem HaMeforash* (YKVK) is not pronounced, and the word זכרי refers to how we read the *Shem*, as Ad- nai, the *Shem Adnus*.

Does reading the *Shem Adnus* have the halachic status of having read the *Shem Hameforash*, or do we not read the *Shem HaMeforash* at all, and the *Shem Adnus* is simply a replacement? There are two *nafka minas* for this:

- If a *baal korei* read Hashem's name without looking inside at the word (which is usually required).
- If wax drips from an old chandelier and falls on the Shem Hashem.

This question is subject to a *machlokes*:

- Brisker Rav (Shemos here and in Devarim 4) – It is considered reading the actual Shem, and it must be read inside, and the Torah is *pasul* if it is covered.
  - Although the Rambam cites a *machlokes* whether one is *chayav* for cursing Hashem using the *Shem Adnus*, both opinions agree with his approach.
- Igros Moshe – it is a *machlokes rishonim* whether one must read the *Shem*

Must a regular case of *kri/kesiv* be read inside in the Torah?

- Brisker Rav above and *Pri Megadim* (O.C. 141) – No
- Igros Moshe (and possibly *Mishna Berura*, who doesn't cite the above *Pri Megadim*) – Yes

Is the word אהיה considered one of the *Shemos Hashem*?

- *Shulchan Aruch* – Cites two opinions as to whether it is or not.
- *Onkelos* (according to *Emes L'yaakov*) – Seems to hold it is *kodesh*
- *Targum* cited by Ramban – Seems to hold it is not *kodesh*

Is the word אשר within the phrase אהיה אשר אהיה also *kodesh*?

- *Onkelos* – Seems it is
- Gra (according to the *sefer Mishchas Shemen*) – No