לד. פירוש "יהא שמה רבא מברך" היינו שיהיה שמו הגדול מבורך. ויש מהראשונים שמפרשים, שיהיה שמו של הקדוש ברוך הוא שלם, שנשבע הקדוש ברוך הוא שלא יהיו שמו וכסאו שלמים עד שימחה שמו של עמלק. וכן פירש רבינו האר"י. [הליכו"ע ח"א עמ' פב]

לה. בענית "יהא שמיה רבא מברך" לא יפסיק בין "יהא שמה" ל"רבא". [רמ"א ס"א] ומנהגינו שגם אין להפסיק בין תיבת "רבא" לתיבת "מברך", שפירושו, יהי שמו הגדול מבורך. [ראה בא"ח הי"א, הלכה ברורה עמ' רב בהערה]

ותיבת "שְׁמֵהּ" יאמר במפיק ה"א. וכן מנהגנו. [ראה הליכו"ע עמ' פג בהערה]

Meaning of *Yehe Shemeh rabba*

34) The simple meaning of the words *Yehe Shemeh rabba mevarakh* is, "His great Name should be blessed." According to some *Rishonim*, this response is based on the Midrash that teaches that the Blessed Holy One swore that part of His Name will remain withdrawn from this world due to the wickedness of Amalek. Only when the nation and influence of Amalek will be wiped out of existence will His Name and Throne be complete. The Arizal concurred with this interpretation.[418]

***Shemeh rabba mevarakh* without pausing**

35) When responding *Yehe Shemeh rabba mevarakh*, one must not pause between the words Shemeh and *rabba*, since according to the simple interpretation the word *rabba* is an adjective describing *Shemeh*. Likewise, we do not pause between the words *rabba* and *mevarakh* since our intention is to say, "His great Name should be blessed."[419] The final letter of the word *Shemeh* is a *mapik he*, meaning that we pronounce it as a consonant. This is the custom of Sefardic Jews.[420]

---

418. The Tosafot (to *Berakhot* 3a) and the *Arba'a Turim* (*Siman* 56) cited two interpretations for *Yehe Shemeh rabba mevarakh*. **1)** Rabbenu Yitzhak explained that it is a prayer for God's great Name to be blessed. This interpretation is supported by the Talmud's account of Eliyahu the prophet telling Ribbi Yose, "His great Name will be blessed." **2)** The *Mahzor Vitri* interpreted "His Name will become greater; blessed forever and ever." That is based on the teaching that at present, God's Name consists of the two letters *yod* and *he* (Yah); the letters *vav* and *he* withdrew from this world due to the wickedness of Amalek. We pray, "*Yehe Shemeh rabba*," for the day when the Name will be restored to its complete form. Likewise, God's Throne is incomplete and will remain so until Amalek has been vanquished from the world, which will occur simultaneously with the final Redemption of Yisrael. According to this interpretation, the phrase ends with the word *rabba*, and the word *mevarakh* begins another phrase.

The *Darkhe Moshe* (56:1) cited the *Or Zaruwa* (Vol. I, #97) ruling that one must not pause between the words *Shemeh* and *rabba*, but it is permissible to pause between *rabba* and *mevarakh*. The *Darkhe Moshe* added that according to Rabbenu Yitzhak one must not pause between the words *rabba* and *mevarakh*. According to *Mahzor Vitri*, the emphasis of the prayer is *rabba*, while according to Rabbenu Yitzhak the emphasis is *mevarakh*.

The *Ben Ish Hai* (preface to *parashat Vayehi*) cited the Arizal offering an interpretation that matches that of the *Mahzor Vitri*. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Halikhot Olam* Vol. I, page 82) commented that the Tosafot rejected this interpretation since it contradicts the Talmud in *Berakhot* 3a. In fact, in halakha 7, the *Ben Ish Hai* himself cited the interpretation of Rabbenu Yitzhak and ruled that one must not pause between the words *rabba* and *mevarakh*.

419. This issue depends on the two interpretations cited in the previous footnote. According to Rabbenu Yitzhak one must not pause between the words *rabba* and *mevarakh*. According to the *Mahzor Vitri*, the first phrase ends with the word *rabba*, and the word *mevarakh* begins another phrase. According to both, one must not pause between the words *Shemeh* and *rabba*.

420. The *Bayit Hadash* explained that this halakha depends on the two interpretations listed in the previous halakha. According to the *Mahzor Vitri*, the letter is a

לו. יאמר 'מְבָרַךְ' הבי"ת בקמ"ץ והרי"ש בפת"ח, שאז פירושו כאלו אומר מבורך. [באו"ח ויחי הי"א, משנ"ב סק"ב, כה"ח סקי"ד]

לז. הנוסח הנכון בעניית יהא שמה רבא: לעלם "ולעלמי" עלמיא, בתוספת וא"ו החיבור בתיבת "ולעלמי". ויש כ"ח אותיות עד תיבת "עלמיא", משום שתיבת "שְׁמֵה" רבא, חסרה בלא תוספת יו"ד. [הליכו"ע ח"א עמ' צד, יבי"א ח"ז סי' ז אות ז]

Mevarakh מְבָרַךְ

36) The word *mevarakh* is spelled מְבָרַךְ, with a *kamatz* under the *bet* and a *patah* under the *resh*. This is the Aramaic translation of the Hebrew מְבוֹרָךְ, which is the adjective "blessed."

Shemeh* without the letter *yod

37) The correct text for this response is *Yehe Shemeh rabba mevarakh le'alam ul'alme almaya* – יְהֵא שְׁמֵה רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלַם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא. The word *Shemeh* is spelled without a letter *yod*, and the next to last word begins with a connective letter *vav*. In this way the response contains a total of 28 letters.[421]

---

mapik he and must be pronounced, so that the person responding is saying, "The Name Yah will be magnified." According to Rabbenu Yitzhak, however, the word concludes with a regular letter *he* that is not to be pronounced. He ruled that one should pronounce the letter as a *mapik he* to satisfy both opinions.

The *Darkhe Moshe* (56:1), however, cited the *Aguda* (*Berakhot* 1:3) ruling that according to Rabbenu Yitzhak the word *Sheme* must be pronounced with a silent *he*, specifically so that it should not even suggest the interpretation of "the Name of Yah." A number of *Aharonim* (*Ture Zahav*, *Magen Avraham*, *Peri Hadash*) concurred with this opinion. The *Matte Yehuda*, however, demonstrated that according to the rules of Hebrew grammar, this word must be pronounced with a *mapik he* whether one follows Rabbenu Yitzhak's interpretation or that of the *Mahzor Vitri*. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Halikhot Olam* Vol. I, footnote on page 83) concurred with this, citing the verse (*Daniyel* 2:20) as proof. He testified that the custom of Sefardic Jews is to pronounce the word with a *mapik he*.

421. The *Od Yosef Hai* (*parashat Vayehi* halakha 9) ruled that the correct text is to pronounce the next to last word as *le'alme* without a connective letter *vav*. If we would add the connective letter *vav*, he explained, we would have a total of 29 letters, and we have been taught by the kabbalists that this response must consist of 28 letters. He added that this is the common custom. This is likewise the ruling of the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (56:13). These *Poskim* assumed that the word *Shemeh* is spelled with a letter *yod*.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (Vol. VII, #7:7) noted that this ruling concurs with the commentary of *Hatosafot* on the Torah (*Shemot* 20:1). Nevertheless, this runs counter to the ruling of Maran in the *Bet Yosef*. The *Bet Yosef* noted that the *Kol Bo* ruled that this response contains 28 letters, and that Harav Yitzhak Abohab ruled, based on this, that the next to last word must be pronounced *le'alme* without a connective letter *vav*. Maran disagreed with this, arguing that we have no right to change the text of our prayers based on a trivial matter such as the concept of 28 letters. All the older texts of the kaddish have the word *ul'alme* with a connective letter *vav*, and it is forbidden to change it. As for the issue of having 28 letters, we should simply deduct the letter *yod* from the word *Shemeh*. In *Daniyel* (2:20), we find the Aramaic word *Shemeh* spelled without a letter *yod*, and this proves that Maran's solution is correct.

Although Harav Shemuel Vital ruled to say *le'alme* without a connective letter *vav*, he ignored Maran's ruling in the *Bet Yosef*. Moreover, the Targum of Onkelos to *Shemot* (15:18) is *le'alam ul'alme almaya*, and so this must be the correct form. This is the text of kaddish found in the prayer books of Rav Sa'adya Ga'on, Rav Amram Ga'on, Rambam, the *Roke'ah*, the *Manhig*, and in a responsum of Rashb"a.

Of course, it is impossible to ignore the fact that according to *Mahzor Vitri*, cited in Tosafot to *Berakhot* 3a, the word *Shemeh* means "the Name of Yah" and therefore the word must be spelled with the letter *yod*. Nevertheless, the Tosafot rejected this interpretation and translated the word *Shemeh* as "His Name," adding that it is connected to the word *mevarakh* and therefore one must

לח. כשיאמר 'לעלם ולעלמי עלמיא', ימשוך מלת "יתברך" עם מלת "עלמיא", שלא יפסיק בין "עלמיא" למלת "יתברך". [באו"ח ויחי הי"א]

לט. יש לומר: לעילא "מן כל" ברכתא, ולא "מכל". [יבי"א שם] והאשכנזים כופלים בעשרת ימי תשובה 'לעילא ולעילא', ובימים אלו אין להם לומר רק, 'מכל' ברכתא, כדי שלא יהא בסך הכל רק כ"ח תיבות. [משנ"ב סוף סק"ב]

***Almaya yitbarakh* without pausing**

38) When reciting the response of *Yehe Shemeh rabba*, one should not pause between the word *almaya* and the word *yitbarakh*. These words should be pronounced as if they were part of one phrase although in reality the word *almaya* is the end of a sentence.[422]

Le'ela min kol

39) The correct text is *le'ela min kol* – לְעֵילָא מִן כָּל – and not *le'ela mikol*.[423] During the Ten Days of Teshuvah, Ashkenazic Jews recite the word *le'ela* twice

not pause between them. In practice, we follow this ruling, especially since it is the decision of Rama. Therefore, the spelling of the word *Shemeh* without a letter *yod* is unquestionably valid. [Besides, Rama insisted that as long as the word is pronounced with a *mapik he*, it suggests the interpretation of the *Mahzor Vitri* even without the letter *yod*, as explained in the previous footnote.]

The *Od Yosef Hai's* ruling concurs with that of Harav HIDA (*Kesher Godal* 8:16), the *Shalme Tzibbur* (page 81c), the *Kaf Hahayim* Palachi (13:17), and other *Aharonim*. Nevertheless, Maran the Rishon Letziyon insists that they were mistaken, and that they loyally followed the opinion of leading kabbalist Harav Shemuel Vital without examining the facts. The ruling of Maran in the *Bet Yosef* follows the traditional text of the kaddish, and there is no need to alter it. Harav Yaakov Rakah (*Sha'are Tefilla*, *Dine Hakaddish*, page 20a) demonstrated that the great majority of the *Rishonim* and *Aharonim* concurred with the ruling of Maran that the correct text is *ul'alme almaya*, and that the word *Shemeh* is spelled without the letter *yod*. Based on this ruling, Maran the Rishon Letziyon instructed his son Harav Yitzhak to use this text when publishing his prayer book *Hazon Ovadya*.

In responsa *Yabia Omer* (Vol. VIII, #11:10), Maran the Rishon Letziyon noted that the *Me'orot* (commentary to *Berakhot*, page 39) cited both these opinions and concluded that most communities follow the opinion to spell the word *Shemeh* without the letter *yod* and to say *le'alam ul'alme almaya*.

The prayer book *Ish Matzli'ah* uses the text of *le'alme almaya*, but the *Ale Hadas* (page 117) states that we cannot verify which text was customary in Tunis. It is likely that some people used one while others used the other. The *Yafe Lalev* (*Siman* 56) concludes his discussion on this subject while leaning toward the text of *le'alme almaya*. See more about this in *Yosef Hayim* Mizrahi (page 48).

Custom of Aleppo

The responsa *Mehkere Aress* (Vol. VI, #40) testified that most people in Aleppo used the *Bet Oved* prayer book, in which kaddish is printed with the text of *le'alam le'alme almaya*. This text appears as well in the prayer books published by Harav Avraham Hamway, and it concurs with the ruling of Harav Yeshayahu Dayan, *Av Bet Din* of Aleppo.

According to the testimony of Moshe Mishan, a young man in Aleppo began using the text of *ul'alme almaya* in kaddish, and the *Av Bet Din*, Harav Moshe Mizrahi, protested vehemently that one must not change the established traditions.

Despite all this, the popular prayer book *Kol Yaakob* used by Syrian Jews in the United States has the text of *ul'alme almaya*. Apparently, this is an oversight.

422. This is the ruling of the *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Vayehi* halakha 11). Above in the footnote to halakha 8, it was pointed out that the ruling in *Od Yosef Hai* is to pause between these two phrases, but that we follow the ruling stated here.

423. Harav Shemuel Vital cited the *Sha'ar Hakavanot* (page 15b) stating that there are 28 words beginning with *Yehe Shemeh* until *da'amiran be'alma*, and he complained that he counted only 27 words. To reconcile this problem, he suggested that the following word *ve'imru* is included in the 28 words. Harav Shemuel insisted that the problem cannot be solved by dividing the word *mikol* into the two words *min kol*, for that is incorrect Hebrew and it even changes the words' intent. When we say *mikol*, we mean "from all [of them]." When