

## HISTORY OF THE PHRASE "BARUCH HU UVARUCH SHMO" (ברוך הוא וברוך שמו)

The following describes the history of the phrase "Baruch hu uvaruch shmo" ברוך הוא וברוך שמו (BHUS)

Most of the following information is obtained from **Yechaveh Da'at** (chelek 4, siman 9). Some information is from **Piskei T'shuvos** (chelek 1, siman 124, sif 9, page 515). And a little information is from **Aruch Hashulchan** (Orech Chaim, siman 124, sif 10).

The 4-word praise BHUS means "Blessed is He and blessed is name". It is derived from the 6-word praise "Baruch shem kvodo malchuso l'olam va'ed ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד (BSKMLV), which means "Blessed is the name of the honor of His kingdom for eternity".

Nowadays, we recite BSKMLV in 3 situations: (1) after reciting the sentence Shma Yisrael; (2) in the Yom Kippur Musaf service when prostrating; and (3) after accidentally reciting a bracha in vain (end of Tosfot, Mesechet Brachot 39a, divrai hamatchil בצר ליה שירעורא).

The earliest known recitation of BSKMLV occurred 2000 years ago, in the Temple during the Yom Kippur service in the Temple (but also during other Temple ceremonies). When the high priest called out Gd's magical real name (called shem hameforash), which has since been forgotten over the millenia, the Jews in the Temple responded by praising Gd with the 6-word phrase BSKMLV.

What is the source of the general concept of praising Gd in response to hearing His name? The Talmud provides two sources:

(1) One source is from the Torah pasuk "ki shem hashem akra havu godel lalokainu", in which Moses essentially instructs the Jews to praise Gd when he (Moses) calls out Gd's name. This is the source of the Jews in the Temple praising Gd with the 6-word praise upon hearing the high priest calling out Gd's name.

(2) The other source is from the phrase in the book of Mishlai (book of Proverbs) which says "zecher tzadik livracha", meaning "remember a tzadik for blessing". This phrase suggests we bless a tzadik when hearing the tzadik mentioned. Since the world's greatest tzadik is Gd, we should bless Gd when hearing Gd mentioned.

The 6-word phrase BSKMLV is not in the Bible. According to a legend recounted in the Talmud, this 6-word phrase was coined 3500 years ago by our forefather Jacob, whose nickname was Yisrael. According to that legend, Jacob's 12 sons expressed their loyalty to Gd by saying "Shma Yisroel....", and Jacob responded with BSKMLV. The Talmud explains that nowadays, in davening, we recite BSKMLV after Shma Yisrael because Jacob responded BSKMLV after Shma Yisrael.

About the year 1300, the **Rosh** coined a 4-word blessing "Baruch Hu Uvaruch Shmo" ברוך הוא וברוך שמו (BHUS), meaning "Blessed is He and blessed is His name". The Rosh's 4-word blessing is an abridged version of the 6-word blessing BSKMLV that the Jews in the Temple said when hearing Gd's name. The Rosh made it his personal habit to say BHUS whenever hearing a bracha being recited. The Rosh derived this habit from Moses' statement to praise Gd when hearing his Moses call Gd's name. This **Rosh** mentioned his new habit in his responsa (Shailot Uteshuvot LaRosh). The Rosh's son (**Baal Haturim**), wrote in his famous book, the **Tur Shulchan Aruch**, about his father's (the Rosh's) new habit. People read about this new habit, and it became very popular.

The **Shulchan Aruch** (siman 124, sif 5) guides us to recite the 4-word blessing upon hearing any bracha, except for a bracha we are intending to be yotsai with.

**Mishna Brura** advises that in repetition of Shmoneh Esrai, the chazan should pause after reciting Gd's name, and the congregants should recite BHUS quickly and quietly, so as to avoid drowning out the chazan's bracha.

HOWEVER, **Yechave Da'at**, **Piskei T'shuvos**, and **Aruch Hashulchan** question the advisability of saying BHUS, based on the following reasons:

1) BHUS is an interruption in a bracha. If you respond Amen after the chazan's bracha, it is as though you recited the bracha yourself. So the bracha you've interrupted by saying BHUS is your own.

2) Saying BHUS in the middle of chazan's bracha is redundant to the bracha. That because BHUS expresses the same concept as the bracha you are responding Amen to.

3) Saying BHUS might drown out the chazan's bracha, if you recite BHUS loud and slow and the chazan does not pause.

4) You might say that our custom of responding with the 4-word phrase is following Moses's instruction to praise Gd when hearing Gd's name called. However, this is not true for 2 answers:

A) Moses' instruction was to praise Gd when hearing Moses himself call Gd's name, not when hearing a chazan in the future call Gd's name.

B) **Rashi** (Meseches Brachos 21a) explains that when Moses instructed the Jews to respond to hearing Gd's name by praising Gd, Moses probably intended for the Jews to respond with "Amen" at the end of Moses' sentence. Not to respond with a 4-word blessing in the middle of Moses' sentence.

5) You might say that our custom of responding with the 4-word blessing to a bracha is emulating the Jews in the Temple responding with the 6-word blessing to hearing Gd's name. But this is not true. The Jews in the Temple were not responding to hearing Gd's common name (in a chazan's bracha) but instead in response to hearing Gd's magical name (shem hamforash).

6) You might say that our custom of responding with the 4-word phrase is following the **Rosh's** and **Tur's** suggestion. But this is not true. The Rosh's and the Tur's phraseology in describing the Rosh's habit appears to be only informative about what Rosh did and does not suggest that anyone else do it.

7) The **Vilna Gaon** advised against reciting BHUS in repetition of Shmoneh Esrai.

8) The **Zohar** (quoted by Vilna Gaon) teaches that during repetition of Shmoneh Esrai, the only thing the congregants should say is "amen". Which implies not saying BHUS.

9) **Shulchan Hatahor** (sif 7) recommends not saying BHUS in repetition of Shmoneh Esrai if you are paying attention and responding amen.

10) **Chazon Ish** (Dinim V'hanhagos Hachazon Ish, perek 4, os 28) did not say BHUS in repetition of Shmoneh Esrai.

11) **Aruch Hashulchan** appears to advise against saying BHUS to a bracha if you will say amen.

Therefore, Ovadia Yosef says, reciting BHUS is not a required part of davening but is instead mitzvah comment. If so, you may not recite BHUS in response to hearing a bracha if you are in a section of davening where mitzvah comment is prohibited – such as from Baruch She'amar till the end of Shmoneh Esrai.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

\* **Tur** - written by Yakov ben Asher, aka Ba'al ha-Turim, died year 1343

\* **Rosh** - Asher ben Jehiel Ashkenazi (1250-1327)

\* **Vilna Gaon** – Gaon MiVilna (1720-1797)

\* **Aruch HaShulchan** - Rabbi Yechezkel Michel Epstein (1829–1908)

\* **Piskei T'shuvot** – commentary on Mishna Brura by Simcha Ben Zion Rabinovicz (son of Admor of Biala) born 1935 in Poland, now living in Jerusalem

\* **Shulchan Hatahor** – by Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchok Kohn, born in Satmar and moved to Jerusalem, founded Rav Araleh hasidim, aka Toldos Aharon kehila, died 1946.