



ANSWERING AMEN

The Power of Amen

Chazal say that responding *Amen* to a *bracha* is more praiseworthy than reciting the *bracha*. The person saying the *bracha* is likened to the simple foot soldier who begins the battle, thus making it possible for the mighty warriors, those answering *Amen*, to come afterwards and bring victory.

The *Maharsha* explains that there are negative *malochim* who attempt to block *brachos* from coming down; saying a *bracha* creates good *malochim* to battle them. When one answers *Amen*, the battle is won.

(נזיר ס"ו ע"ב, מהרש"א שם, וראה לקו"ש חל"ה ע' 219)

It is obligatory to answer *Amen* when hearing another recite a *bracha*, even when one's own obligation is not being discharged by that *bracha*. The word must be pronounced correctly, and must be said immediately after hearing the *bracha*.

The *Zohar* writes that it is a *zechus* to have others answer *Amen* to a *bracha* that one recites. However, if one knows that those present will be lax in answering properly, he should rather say the *bracha* quietly and not cause them to err.

(שו"ע אדה"ז סי' קכד ס"ט וסי' רטו ס"ב, זהר ר"פ עקב, בן איש חי מסעי י"ד)

Answering with Enthusiasm

The *Zohar* relates: The son of Rav Safra was a young Torah student when he arrived in *Eretz Yisroel*. One day, while standing on a roof, he heard *Kaddish* being recited, so he quickly jumped down and ran into the *shul* to hear *Kaddish* and join in its responses with the other *mispaelim*. A man who had witnessed this assumed that he was a great *talmid chochom* and took the stranger to be his son-in-law. And indeed, he later became a luminary who revealed many secrets of Torah.

(זהר ח"ב קס"ה ע"ב ואילך)

The Alter Rebbe writes in his *Shulchan Aruch* that one should be very careful to join in the congregation's responses to *Kaddish*, and adds that this is even more important than joining in the congregation's responses to *Kedusha*.

One should answer *Amen, yehei Shmei rabba* with concentration, for one who recites that response with all his *kavana* can cause even a *gzar din* of seventy years' standing to be torn and become annulled. Moreover, by doing so he opens the gates of Gan Eden for himself. One should also answer loudly, for this sound silences all the prosecuting voices and threatening decrees in the Heavenly Court. Some people stand out of respect when when responding to the responses to *Kaddish*.

(שו"ע אדה"ז סי' נ"ו, סנהדרין ק"י ע"ב)

The Alter Rebbe also explains that when responding *Amen* one should think of its meaning, which varies according to the *bracha* that was just said. Thus, if the *bracha* expressed praise to *HaShem*, one's *Amen* echoes that praise, expressing a confirmation and agreement with what was said. Likewise, if the *bracha* was a request or was part of *Kaddish*, then the *Amen* asks that that request be fulfilled soon. And if the *bracha* included both praise and a request, one should keep in mind both meanings.

(שו"ע אדה"ז סי' קכ"ד ס"ט)

The Friediker Rebbe related: One day, many years before the Alter Rebbe's imprisonment in Petersburg in תקנ"ט (1796), he came out to the chassidim and said, "In Gan Eden, they appreciate the preciousness of *Olam HaZeh*. The *malochim* would forgo everything for one *Amen, yehei Shmei rabba* said by a Yid with all his might, with complete concentration and total involvement in those words."

That was the entire *maamar*, and with it the Alter Rebbe kindled such a burning enthusiasm in his listeners that throughout the entire following year, *Amen, yehei Shmei rabba* was said with fire.

(היום יום י"ז אדר א')

The Pleasure of Praising

The Rebbe Rashab writes in a *maamar*, "The spiritual pleasure derived from *Elokus* can actually increase one's body fat. It is said that Reb Nachum Chernobler was heavy from answering *Amen, yehei Shmei rabba*."

The same *tzaddik* was once walking in his

town, when he saw a *goy* in a cheerful mood. He turned in wonderment to the chassidim accompanying him and asked, "What is he so happy about? Did he answer *Amen, yehei Shmei rabba* today?!"

(היום יום ט"ו תמוז, הבעש"ט ותלמידיו ע' 212)

Reb Pesach Molostovker, a chossid of the Alter Rebbe, the Mittlerer Rebbe and the *Tzemach Tzedek*, would *daven* every day for hours on end. In his old age he was no longer able to continue with his extensive meditative *avoda*, so instead he traveled in a wagon from *minyán* to *minyán*, to join in the responses of *Amen, Kedusha* and *Borchu* that he valued so highly.

(רשימות דברים ח"א ע' רנ"ד)

The chossid Reb Zalman Leib Astulin was exiled for many years in a Siberian prison, far from any other yidden. When he finally left Russia, he traveled to *Eretz Yisroel* where he met his brother-in-law, Reb Yankele Galinsky, in Bnei Brak.

The next morning, Reb Yankele took Reb Zalman Leib to a nearby *shul* to *daven*. After *Shacharis* Reb Yankele went home and Reb Zalman Leib stayed on. After some time passed and Reb Zalman Leib didn't return home, Reb Yankele went looking for him. He found Reb Zalman Leib standing in *shul*, supported by his crutches, his face radiating with joy.

"Why are you still here?" Reb Yankele asked. "You probably finished *davening* long ago, so come home and eat something."

"I just can't leave!" answered Reb Zalman Leib. "After my *minyán* finished, another one began, and then another, and each one offers me a chance to say *Amen, yehei Shmei rabba* and *Kedusha* again and again. *HaShem* finally gave me this precious opportunity – and I should give it up for breakfast?!"

(אמן ע' 76)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Is an *Amen* said without "all one's *kavana*" also affective? Why?
- To whom is *Amen* said: the one making the *bracha*, those listening, one's self or *HaShem*?

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A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin
Moreh Hora'ah - Beis Horaa Rechovot

Suspecting Others

If I suspect my Jewish worker of using some items without permission, what steps may I take?

- It is halachically prohibited to judge or suspect another negatively.¹ If we witness someone doing an act which can be interpreted either positively or negatively, we are obligated to judge the action in a favorable manner.² Some *poskim* understand this to be *mid'oraisa*.³ This *mitzva* merits reward in *Olam HaBa* and in This World, and he will merit to be judged positively by others.⁴
- One who transgressed and suspected a person falsely is required to ask them for forgiveness and to give them a *bracha*.⁵ If the suspect is oblivious, some say that one should not ask for forgiveness since this will cause needless animosity and the suspect may not even agree to forgive.⁶
- If the suspect is known to be unscrupulous,⁷ we may judge him negatively, however some say that we should still be doubtful.⁸
- Regarding the general population, we are allowed and encouraged to be cautious and not to be naive, so that we don't come to sin or suffer monetary loss as a result.⁹ *Chazal* say that one should approach all people with a double attitude: take necessary precaution, yet treat them with absolute respect.¹⁰
- At the same time, we are required to avoid doing anything that may cause people to suspect us of wrongdoing, as the *posuk* says, "והייתם נקיים מוה' ומישראל" – And you shall be innocent before Hashem and Yisroel."¹¹ If one needs to do something that looks outwardly suspicious, he must explain himself so that he is not suspected of wrongdoing.¹² Ideally, he should do so before the act, however if time is short, he may proceed with the suspicious act and explain himself afterwards.¹³

1. משנה יומא י"ח ע"ב, וראה גמ' שם.
2. פיה"מ לרמב"ם יומא פ"א מ"ו.
3. ראה פיה"מ לרמב"ם יומא פ"א משנה ה'. (אבל ראה רע"ב אבות פ"א מ"ו ושמשמע שזהו מדת חסידות ויש לעיין) ולהעיר מהעונש "החושד בכשרים לוקה בגופו" שבת צ"ז ע"א.
4. שבת קכ"ז ע"א.
5. ברכות ל"א ע"ב (דרשה מהמעשה דעלי וחנה).
6. אורח מישרים סי' י"ד ביאור ז', וראה יומא פ"ו ע"ב (מימרא דרב יצחק).
7. רע"ב אבות פ"א מ"ו.
8. אורח מישרים שם ביאור ה' ע"פ פיה"מ לרמב"ם אבות פ"א מ"ו (וראה פיה"מ שם שכשאר אחד צדיק יש לדחוק בדוחק גדול בהבנת מעשיו שהם לטובה).
9. ראה ב"מ דף ל' ע"א ותענית כ"ג ע"ב.
10. דרך ארץ רבה פ"ה מימרא דריב"ל (וראה רש"י תענית כ"ג ע"ב).
11. במדבר פרק ל"ב פסוק כ"ב, וראה שקלים פ"ג מ"ב, כתובות כ"ב ע"א.
12. ראה ברכות שם.
13. ראה קידושין נ"ט ע"א.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

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OUR HEROES

Reb Betzalel Azaritzer

Reb Betzalel Azaritzer was a *talmid* of Reb Hillel Paritcher and was of those *yungeleit* who were guided in *Chassidus* by the Mitteler Rebbe. He was of the great chassidim of the Tzemach Tzedek, and served as a *Shadar* for him. The Friediker Rebbe praised Reb Betzalel for his ability to learn from any person.



Reb Hillel Paritcher and Reb Betzalel were very close friends. They would visit one-another every week, alternating between Reb Hillel travelling to Reb Betzalel and vice versa. Once, Reb Betzalel was not well and did not visit Reb Hillel. Reb Hillel sensed there was something wrong and decided to travel to see Reb Betzalel. The travel fare was a hefty six ruble, and Reb Hillel's wife protested. "Why are you wasting six ruble for a wagon?!" she said, "This is anyways not your week to visit him! We will not have the money that we need for our needs!" Reb Hillel was insistent and went on his way.

This was Thursday. Reb Hillel traveled with a *minyan* of chassidim and when they arrived at the house, Reb Hillel saw that his intuition was justified; Reb Betzalel was seriously ill. The visitors spent Shabbos there, staying in one room, while Reb Betzalel lay in the adjacent room. At *Seudah Shelishis*, as was his custom, Reb Hillel said *Chassidus* three times, each prefaced by three *niggunim*. At that time, they heard that Reb Betzalel was nearing death. Reb Hillel went in to Reb Betzalel's room and said, "Tzalkel! What's happening with you?" He placed the *sefer Kesser Shem Tov* on Reb Betzalel's heart and said, "Look at the *oisyos* of the Baal Shem Tov". With that, Reb Betzalel's *neshama* left his body.

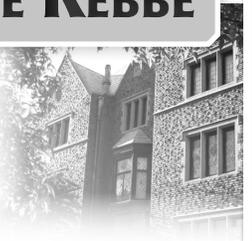


Reb Betzalel used to say that he does not understand why people think it is hard to be a chossid. "The first thing is *'taporu da plachu'* (lit. 'the ax on the wood') – which means action. Then one can become an *oved Hashem* through *davening*, learning, Torah and *mitzvos*."

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

Sensitivity of Speech

After *maariv* on Beis Iyar 5739 (1979), the Rebbe told *HaRav Chodakov* that the *Tzach* convention should be announced. Reb Meir Harlig made the announcement: "Der *kinnus vet zain unten in shul* (the *kinnus* will be down in the *shul*)."



The Rebbe asked, "Which *shul*?" then smiled, and went to his room.

Chassidim were mystified with the Rebbe's comment. Later that day, Reb Leibel Groner relayed a message from the Rebbe: "Regarding a *shul* we don't say 'down.'"

On another occasion, the Rebbe had received an *aliyah* to the Torah, when suddenly the *ba'al korei* noticed a black smudge on one word, rendering the *sefer Torah posul*. However, after touching it with his nail, he discovered that it was merely a piece of dirt. "It's only dirty," he told the Rebbe.

The Rebbe told him, "That word should not be used regarding a *sefer Torah*."