

# The Weekly Farbrengens



למען ישמעו • ויקהל-פקודי תשפ"א • 609  
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

## 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 *mispa'elim*. 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"ז, סנהדרין ק"י ע"ב)

### CONSIDER

Is an *Amen* said without "all one's *kavana*" also effective?  
Why?

To whom is *Amen* said: the one making the *bracha*, those listening, one's self or *HaShem*?

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 1796 (תקנ"ט), 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 *minyan* to *minyan*, 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 *minyan* 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)



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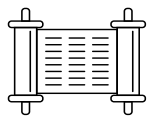
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## MEDICINE FOR PESACH

### Does my medicine on Pesach need to be *kosher l'Pesach*?

During every moment of Pesach, we are obligated by two *mitzvos* *lo saaseh* and one *mitzvas asei* to get rid of our *chometz*.<sup>1</sup> *Min haTorah*, *chometz* that was inedible before the prohibition of *chometz* begins may be used on Pesach, but *midrabanan* it may only be owned if it's unfit for a dog. Still, one may not eat it, since by eating it one deems it "edible" (*achshevei*).<sup>2</sup>

Non-chewable pills and tablet medications are deemed unfit for a dog, even if they contain *chometz*. If a proper substitute can't be found, one may swallow them when medically required since the prohibition of *achshevei* is only *midrabanan* and is the subject of dispute.<sup>3</sup>

When liquid or chewable medications contain *chometz*, one should check for a substitute pill or non-*chometz* variety. (Even syrup with a bitter taste may not be unfit for a dog.<sup>4</sup>) If one cannot find a substitute and he will become ill without it, he should consult a *rov* describing his situation and the options. In some instances, the *rov* will recommend that he swallow it in an irregular manner without deriving enjoyment, such as wrapped in a tissue.<sup>5</sup>

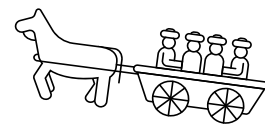
When the *chometz* ingredient is itself inedible, but the pill is edible due to added flavor or sugar coating, *poskim* debate its status and there is more leeway for swallowing it abnormally.<sup>6</sup> When the *chometz* is in the flavoring or non-essential elements of the medicine, and one cannot swallow the pill substitute, it is sometimes an option to crush a non-chewable pill into a *kosher l'Pesach* liquid or food.

Even when edible *chometz* medications are needed, one should avoid owning them on Pesach. They should be included in the sale to the non-Jew and one should not intend to own it even while using it on Pesach, employing the clause in the sale that the accounting for this can be worked out after Pesach. If one needs to purchase such a medicine on Pesach, he should try to defer payment and have in mind that he is not taking ownership of it then. (This will allow him to use it after Pesach as well).<sup>7</sup> If he must pay for it, he should buy it day by day as needed, and if it only comes in bigger packages, he should dispose of the rest.

In any case, medication for even potential life-threatening conditions must of course be taken even if it contains *chometz*.<sup>8</sup> Someone who takes a medication consistently for a condition – e.g. blood pressure, heart issues, diabetes – should not change to a different brand without consulting a doctor as this can be detrimental.<sup>9</sup>

1. ראה הקדמה להלכות פסח שו"ע.
2. שו"ע סי' תמ"ב ס"כ-כ"א וסל"ב.
3. ראה שו"ע סי' תמ"ב ס"כ-כ"א וסל"ב.
4. מנחת שלמה ח"א סי' י"ז.
5. ראה שלמי מועד להגרש"א ע' ת"ט.
6. ראה שו"ע סי' תמ"ב ס"כ-כ"א וסל"ב.
7. נשמ"א ח"א סי' ת"נ סק"א. וראה סי' זכר יצחק סי' ז' שיתכן שאם עבר וקנה לא יהיה לה דין חמץ שעבר עליה הפסח. וראה שו"ת שערי דעה ח"ב סי' ל"ז שיקנה מנכרי.
8. ראה שו"ת אג"מ או"ח ח"ב סי' צ"ב.
9. שו"ת שביבי אש ח"ג סי' ל"ט.

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



## CHIDUSHEI HORIM

Reb Yitzchok Meir Alter was born in the year 5559 (1799). His father was a *talmid* of Reb Levi Yitzchok Barditchever. Reb Yitzchok Meir was a *talmid* of Reb Simcha Bunim of Pshischa and Reb Mendelev of Kotzk, and was known as the "Iluy of Warsaw." He is known by his *seforim*, *Chidushei HoRim*. Towards the end of his life he became a Rebbe and founded Chassidus Ger. He passed away on 23 Adar 5626 (1866).

A *misnaged* once asked Reb Yitzchok Meir, "Why do the chassidim *daven* after *zman tefila*? It is an *aveira* and it's going against a clear *din* in *Shulchon Aruch*!" Reb Yitzchok Meir responded, "A sign for an *aveira* is when it leads to another *aveira*, as it says 'Aveira goreres aveira.' But when the chassidim transgress *zman tefilah*, they do not come to transgress another *aveira* as a result. Rather they learn and become inspired to *daven*, thereby doing Hashem's will."

(באר החסידות ע' 165)

In one of his *deroshos* he spoke about King Achav, and brought out something good in him. One *chossid* present thought it was not right to be *melamed zchus* on a *rasha* like Achav, and Reb Yitzchok Meir told him, "Make a *kal vchomer*. If chassidim, which can only imagine that their Rebbe has *giluy Eliyohu*, travel to him and learn from his mouth, it is definitely worthwhile to find some *zchus* to Achav, who everyone knows saw Eliyohu *Hanovi* face-to-face..."

(באר החסידות ע' 145)

A non-religious man once asked Reb Yitzchok Meir: "It says in *Krias Shema* that if the *Yidden* sin the skies won't give rain, etc. and they will suffer physically. But I am a sinner and I am nonetheless very rich. Now how does that make sense?" The Gerer Rebbe explained: "It seems from your words that at least once in your lifetime you have recited the *Shema*. That being the case, however many riches you have, it is very little compared to what you deserve!"

(באר החסידות ע' 146)

## A Moment with The Rebbe



## A BOCHUR'S AVODAH

A transcript of a *bochur's yechidus* from 5732 (1972):

"Hashem should help that the next time you come in you should be able to write of the good that you do, and not only the negative. When I hear of a *bochur* in Tomchei Temimim who learns, *davens* and acts appropriately, this gives me *simcha un tanug nafshi upnimi* (personal, inner joy and pleasure).

"The opposite affect is also self-understood. Certainly, at least out of *ahavas Yisroel*, you and your friends at the *yeshiva* will work to this end..."

"Regarding this that you ask a *bracha* for *hiskashrus* – it is obvious that one

cannot *drei zich arum pust un past* (pass time aimlessly) and concurrently be a *mekushar*.

"A *bochur* in Tomchei Temimim who doesn't keep the times, learn or *daven* properly – I won't accept bribery from the fact that he learns *Likutei Sichos* periodically and does me a favor by getting involved in *ufaratza* activities..."

"Hashem should help you to become a true *tomim*, a true *mekushar*, firstly by being *tomim* (wholesome) with Hashem, with *simcha*. And we should be able to say with pride '*reu gidulim shegidalti* – look at the offspring that we have raised.'"

(Teshurah Slavatici, Adar 5766)