



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 "ד)

Answering with Enthusiasm

The *Zohar* relates: The son of Rav Safra was a young *talmid chochom* 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 making the responses to *Kaddish*.

Chazal say that when a person answers *Amen*, he accepts upon himself the fear of *HaShem*, for the word *amen* is made up of the initials of the words *א-ל מלך נאמן* – "*HaShem*, Who is a trustworthy King." The Alter Rebbe writes in his *Shulchan Aruch* that it should take as long to respond *Amen* as it takes to say those three words.

(שו"ע אדה"ז סי' נ"ו, סנהדרין ק"י ע"ב)

The Alter Rebbe also explains that when responding *Amen* one must 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 Frieddiker Rebbe related: One day, many years before the Alter Rebbe's imprisonment in Petersburg in 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 one of his *maamarim*, "The *ruchniyusdikke* 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 Mitteler 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)

One of the Russian chassidim who was exiled for many years in a Siberian prison was a chossid by the name of Reb Zalman Leib Astulin. Being cut off from other Yidden, he was unable to *daven* with a *minyan*, hear *Kaddish* and *Kedusha*, or even answer *Amen* to a *bracha*. When he finally left the Soviet Union, he traveled to *Eretz Yisroel* where he met his brother-in-law, Reb Yankele Galinsky, in Bnei Brak. It was a rapturous reunion.

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. Time passed and although the *shul* was very close by, which meant that he could not possibly have lost his way, Reb Zalman Leib didn't return home. After a while, Reb Yankele went to *shul* and found his brother-in-law standing there, 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' 67)

CONSIDER THIS!

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

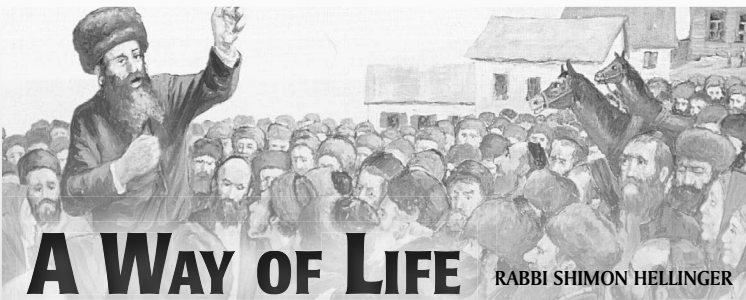
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A WAY OF LIFE

RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

Mezuzah Placement

Are there are any specific halachos one must know before affixing mezuzos?

The halachos of mezuzah placement are numerous and complex and unfortunately many homes have the mezuzos placed incorrectly, causing them to be invalid¹. For this reason it has been long recommended² that one review each doorway in the home with one proficient in these halachos.

Here are a few common issues:

1) **Doorway between Rooms:** The mezuzah must be placed on the right side entering the room. In many instances it is unclear which way is "entering" (e.g. a doorway between a kitchen and dining room, or between a dining room and living room). In such a case the mezuzah is affixed on the right side, coming from the direction which is usually the starting point³. When this is unascertainable, the mezuzah should be placed on the right side when entering the more significant of the two rooms⁴ (e.g. a dining room is more essential than a living room etc.).

2) **Heker Tzir:** When the doorway has a door, our mesorah is to use the direction which the door opens as an indicator of which side is considered "inside", since a door normally opens into a room.

Exceptions to this rule are: (a) a door which opens out to an unenclosed outdoor area⁵ or (b) a door which opens away from a room without a window (that can open wide enough for a person to go through)⁶. In these cases, the mezuzah is placed on the right side entering the room.

3) **Height:** Ideally, the mezuzah should be placed at the bottom of the top third of the doorway⁷. When the doorway is so high that placing it at that height would leave it above average view, it is then placed at average shoulder height⁸. If the doorway is arched or has other curvatures, a shailah should be asked.

4) **Depth:** Optimally, a mezuzah should be placed in the outermost tefach within the entranceway⁹. If this is not possible, the mezuzah can be placed closer in. If it is not possible to place the mezuzah within the doorway before the door, a shailah should be asked.

1. שו"ע יו"ד סי' רפ"ט ס"ב. וראה אג"ק חו"ד ע' תקלו ואג"ק חט"ו ע' שפ"א שבדיקת מקום הקביעות הוא חלק מחיוב בדיקת המזוזות.
2. קול סופרים (השלמה לס' קסת הסופר) ע' 34.
3. פתח"ת יו"ד סי' רפ"ט סק"ד, וכן פירשו כמה אחרונים בהש"ך (סק"ו) והלבוש (ראה שו"ת מנח"י ח"א סי' צ ועוד).
4. דע"ק סי' רפט ועוד.
5. סי' המנהגים ע' 18, אג"ק ח"ב ע' תכד.
6. ראה קובץ רז"ש ע' 75 שהוא דוקא כשאפשר ליכנס עכ"פ ע"י סולם.
7. שו"ע יו"ד סי' רפ"ט ס"ב, ברכ"י שם, נתיח"ח סי' ר"מ סק"א.
8. מסגרת השלחן סי' יא סק"ד ובלח"פ שם.
9. שו"ע יו"ד סי' רפ"ט ס"ב וברמ"א, וש"ך שם סק"ג.

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

לזכות הבחור צבי הירש קאריק וגאלדע קאטלארסקי שיחיו לרגל בואם בקשרי שידוכין בשעטומ"צ

לזכות הילדה סימא רחל תחי' לוי'ן שיגדלוה הורי' לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

Dedicated in honor of the marriage of Shmuel Aaron and Malka Forshner

OUR HEROES

ח"י אלול

Maharal

Reb Yehuda Lowe, also known as the Maharal of Prague, was one of the greatest early Achronim. He descends from Dovid Hamelech and is an ancestor of the Alter Rebbe's family. He was the rav of Poznan, then Nikelsburg, and eventually settled in Prague where he became famous as a posek, mekubal, and compiler of many seforim of halacha, derush, and chakirah (philosophy). His manuscripts served as a basis for the Tanya. He passed away on the 18th of Elul, ה'שס"ט (1609).



According to some, it was the Maharal who coined the title "chevra kadisha" for those who occupy themselves with the deceased. Because at some point, no one wanted to busy themselves with this work, by giving the group this name, he raised their dignity. Furthermore, for this reason, the Maharal also instituted that an annual seuda be arranged by the community for the chevra kadisha.



It is a well-known tradition that the Maharal created a Golem to rescue the Yidden from their evil enemies. Regarding this, the Rebbe once related in a sicha: "Once, the (Friediker) Rebbe and the Rebbe nishmaso eden (Rashab) were in Prague and went to the Maharal's shul. The Rebbe wanted to go to the attic where the Golem lies, so he "bribed" the shamash, took a ladder and climbed up. When the Rebbe told me this, I asked what he had seen, but he did not answer. When the Rebbe Rashab heard about this, he strongly rebuked the Rebbe, and sometime later he commented to him, "I had to toil for months (to rectify this act)."

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

The Beginning of Avodah

Even before the Rebbe accepted the nesius, many bochorim already knew the Rebbe, and had known him prior to the histalkus of the Friediker Rebbe. Reb Dovid Goldstien was one of them. One Shabbos, in the year 5710, as the Rebbe finished davening, Dovid found an opportunity to ask the Rebbe something that had been on his mind.

In Reb Dovid's own words:

"I asked the Rebbe how to begin serious avodah. The Rebbe looked at me with such warmth, and said, 'Techilas ho'avodeh iz, az m'tut nit vos m'vil.' (The beginning of avodah is to withhold from doing as you wish).

"Later that day, as the Rebbe was walking Rebbetzin Chana down the stairs, the Rebbe's eyes met mine. 'Dovid,' the Rebbe said to me, 'This does not mean that if you wish to lay tefillin one day, you should overcome your wishes...' and the Rebbe and his mother smiled."

לזכות הילדה חנה תחי'

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