



From the desk of
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עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

TORAT

Parashat Haazinu

HAMELECH

Open the Gates

“When I proclaim the Name of Hashem, ascribe greatness to our Almighty.”

The Sifri sees here an allusion to the answering of “Amen” after a *berachah* has been recited.

Says the Zohar HaKadosh (Vayeilech 285a): One who does not respond “Amen” with attention is failing to respect Hashem and it would have been better for him not to have been created. Says Rav Yehuda: Of him the verse states: Those who disgrace Me will be made light of. Gates will not be opened before him, he will not be blessed.

In the World-to-Come, he will descend into the abyss and remain there forever!

In contrast, one who respects Hashem’s Name and responds “Amen” with attention will merit great reward in this world. When he davens, an announcement is made: Open up the gates and allow the righteous to enter, the one who is careful with “Amen”. His prayers are accepted and all gates of Gan Eden are opened before him.

Long Live the Good Amen Answerer

Our Sages teach us that “Amen” is so important that it must be enunciated properly and it must be said at the right time. They advise us not to say an Amen *chatufah* (a “snatched” Amen) nor an Amen *ketufah* (a “snipped” Amen) nor an Amen *yetomah* (an “orphaned” Amen). (Berachot 47a)

Ben Azai expounds: One who answers an orphaned Amen, well, his sons will be orphaned! One who answers a “snatched” Amen, his days will be “snatched” (i.e. he will die before his allotted time). One who answered a “snipped” Amen, his days will be “snipped”. One who answers Amen in the appropriate fashion will merit longevity.

Rabbeinu Yonah explains: A snatched Amen is said too hurriedly. A snipped Amen is one who got some of its letters snipped off. An “orphaned” Amen is when you do not know to which *berachah* you are answering.

Shulchan Aruch (124:8) explains it like this: A snatched Amen was said before the *berachah* was completed. A snipped Amen is “Ame...” without the “Nun”. An Amen *yetomah* is disconnected from its parental *berachah*.

Three in One

In Berachot 53b, Rabbi Yosi teaches: One who responds Amen is greater than the one who said the *berachah*. Why? Tikunei Zohar explains: Amen equals 91 which is the combination of how Hashem’s Name is written (26) and how it is pronounced (65).

Each Shemoneh Esrei has 19 *berachot*. Answering Amen counts twice as much as a *berachah*. So someone who davened Shacharit or Minchah and also answered Amen to *Chazarat HaShatz* amassed the equivalent of 57 *berachot*! (Avudraham)



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Give it Your All

Says R' Yehoshua ben Levi: One who answers "Amen Yehei Shmei Rabbah..." with all his might, an evil decree against him will be torn apart. (Shabat 119b)

Rabbi Yishmael ascended to the Heavens and saw a certain *malach* crying. Why? Because he saw all of the *gezeirot* poised at Klal Yisrael. R' Yishmael asked the *malach*: How will we manage?

The *malach* answered: When Bnei Yisrael enter shuls and answer Amen yehei shemei... the *gezeirot* are not given permission to take effect.

The Key to Eternity

From what age does a child earn his place in Olam HaBa? Says R' Meir: From when he responds: Amen (Sanhedrin 110b)

The Alter fun Kelm said: The entire world would have been worth creating and running for 6,000 years just for the sake of one Jew saying one "Baruch Hu uvaruch shemo"! And 100 *Baruch hu uvaruch shemoes* do not even equal one *Amen*! And one hundred *Amenim* do not add up to one *Amen yehei shemei rabbah*! And 100 *Amen yehei shemei rabbahs* do not get to the level of one word of Torah!

The Stolen Berachah

Gemara Bava Kama 91b teaches that one who takes away someone else's ability to do a mitzvah

with a *berachah* must pay him ten gold coins per *berachah*!

In the days of Rabbeinu Tam, a story happened in a shul one day. The gabbai called up Reuven to the Torah to get an *Aliyah*. Shimon came up instead, on his own accord and took the *Aliyah*. Rabbeinu Tam said that Shimon need not pay to Reuven. Why not? Because Shimon allowed Reuven to answer Amen and that is even greater than saying the *Berachah*!

Even if you would consider an Amen equal to ten *zehuvim*, let us make the following calculation. A person is to attempt to answer 90 Amens a day. That's 900 *zehuvim* a day, 2700 a month. Over 70 years (or 840 months) you can amass 22,680,000 *zehuvim*! How about that! You can do it, too!

Ben Ish Hai is all into answering 90 Amens a day. If you just don't see it happening, he advises saying the verse, "Baruch Hashem le'olam Amen ve'Amen" as many times as you need in order to get to 90.

Rebbi, Please Explain

Rav Chayim of Volozhin tried to have someone answer Amen to his *Berachah*. All the time. One night, late at night, his family had retired for the evening. But Rav Chayim was quite thirsty. He wanted to drink some water. But who would answer Amen to his *Berachah*?



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Just then, a *bachur* from his yeshivah knocked on the door. He had a question on the *sugya*. Rav Chayim answered his question and asked if he'll answer Amen to his *berachah*. The *bachur* answered Amen and went on his way.

The next day, Rav Chayim saw the *bachur* in yeshivah and thanked him. The *bachur* was surprised, "I did not go to the Rosh Hayeshivah's house last night," he said.

Rav Chayim then understood that in response to his caution to always have his *brachot* answered with Amen, Heaven sent an angel, disguised as a *bachur* to answer his *berachah*.

Say "Amen"

Rabbi Mordechai Yaffe, known as the Levush, went to learn by Rabbi Abuhav. One day, Rabbi Abuhav's young son said a *berachah* on an apple and the Levush was focused on his learning, so he did not say Amen. Immediately, Rav Abuhav put the Levush into *niduy*. Thirty days later the Levush asked for an explanation.

R' Abuhav answered with a story which transpired a thousand years earlier. Jews lived under heathen rule. Every once in a while, the king's court would issue a decree against the Jews. Each time, they sent a certain *chacham*, who was on good terms with the king, to get the decree abolished. On one such occasion, the good Jew was speaking with the king when a

priest walked in and began uttering a lengthy incantation and blessing for the king.

The Jew saw that sunset was approaching and he had not yet davened *minchah*. So he went to the side and began praying. He hoped to finish before the long-winded priest. But, alas, the priest finished his incantation and proclaimed: All assembled now say: Amen. And they did.

But the priest inquired, "Did everyone here say 'Amen' – even that Jew?"

People next to the Jew said, "No, he did not answer."

At that, the priest got mad. He screamed and yelled and made a scene. He shouted that all because of that one Jew, all of his blessings for the king will not be fulfilled. He went on cursing the Jew and "proving" that the Jew hated the king, etc.

The foolish king listened to the priest and ordered the Jew to be chopped into pieces and sent home.

A friend of the Jew was very distraught at the suffering and disgrace of his pious friend. The deceased appeared in a dream to his friend and explained that he suffered so because he failed to answer Amen one time when his son said a *Berachah*.

Rabbi Abuhav told the Levush: I put you in *niduy* so as to save you from death.



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Only Three Months?

There was once a man whose wife got sick. Her condition worsened. Doctors gave her three months to live. Her husband decided to be *mitchazeik* in answering Amen. Two months later, the doctors did another CT and the illness had disappeared. (Keter Meluchah p. 371)

This One is for Kids

Here's another Amen story. Reuven and Leah were married for years, childless. Yes, they did all they could, from *tsaddik* to doctor. Then they went to the Karliner Rebbe. He suggested being *mechazek* amein. Take some candies to shul, said the Rebbe, and give out to boys who answer "amein" nicely.

Well, he tried that and within a year, had a boy.

He was so happy that the *segulah* worked; he found another man who needed this *segulah* and had him take over. The second man then sponsored the candies and gathered the boys. But he did not give over the job at the end of the year after his first child. He kept ongoing. He and his wife had eight children.

R' Moshe and the Amen

Doctor B.T. came from U.S.A. to E.Y. and worked at the Mayanei Hospital in B.B. What made him become a B.T.? Amen!

What?! Once, in America, he had a patient who was very sick. It seemed to be only a matter of days. Doctors held a meeting and then presented the family with their ultimatum. A complex

operation could possibly extend the patient's life for six months. Is it worth it? The operation is very expensive and the patient stands to endure suffering. The family said that they have to consult Rabbi Moshe Feinstein.

The doctor continues: I wanted to consult with Rabbi Feinstein directly. As the attending physician, I wanted to make sure that all relevant information was relayed.

So I came to Rabbi Feinstein and told him the story. Oy! The first thing he did was simply to cry! For about twenty minutes! He could not get a word out of his mouth. Then, after twenty minutes, he asked to give him a day to think about it, because it is a very serious decision.

I returned the next day and R' Moshe said: Operate! You do what you can to keep him alive. We'll pray for his recovery and your success.

I asked the rabbi what made him decide to operate. He said: For six more months, he'll be able to answer "amen". Each *malach* from each amen will speak well on his behalf.

Irreligious as I was at the time, I was quite surprised at the rabbi's answer. I saw the rabbi's full belief in what he was saying. Medicine gave the man 6 months. Belief, prayers and merits gave him a lot more. Is it at all surprising that I personally became inspired to discover more about the truth of my heritage and to become the Jew I was meant to be?

One word, "Amen." That says it all.

**Shabbat Shalom and Chag Sameach,
Mordechai Malka**