



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד **מרדכי מלכא שליט"א**
נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
ישיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel MORDECHAI MALKA, Founder & President of Institutions "Or Hamelech"



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Yom Kippur

The Segula of Saying "Amen" and "Amen Yihei Shmei Rabba"

The *pasuk* states (*Devarim* 32:3) "When I will call out the Name of Hashem, we will ascribe greatness to our G-d."

The Requirement to Answer Amen

Our Sages expound in the Sifri (*Ha'azinu* 306) that from the above mentioned *pasuk* we learn out the requirement to answer *amen* following the recitation of a blessing. The Midrash relates that Moshe told the Jews, "When I call out the Name of Hashem, you should ascribe greatness to Him [- by answering *amen*]." This is also stated in *Masechet Berachot* 45a.

It is furthermore stated by our Sages (*Berachot* 53b, *Nazir* 66b) that the one who answers *amen* is even greater than the one who recites the blessing.

Why is the One Who Answers Amen Greater than the One Who Recites the Blessing?

The reason for this is explained by the *Maharsha* (*Chiddushei Aggadot Sota* 40b). The *Gemara* there asks from where we know that we do not respond with *amen* in the *Beit Hamikdash*. According to the *mekubalim*, the word *amen* connotes the maintaining of something or establishing it to be true [*ha'amanat davar*]. *Amen* has the same numerical value as two Names of Hashem, the Name *A-donai* and the Four Letter Name [שם אדני ושם הוי"ה]. Outside the *Beit Hamikdash*, the Four Letter Name is read as *A-donai*, while in the *Beit Hamikdash* it is pronounced the way it is spelled. This is why the *Gemara* in *Nazir* states that the one who answers *amen* is greater than the one who recites the blessing. This is because by saying *amen*, he combines the Name in both its written form as well as in the form in which it is annunciated.

Advice of the Ben Ish Chai

Our sages enacted that each person recite *amen* 90 times over the course of a day. Since this is so important a matter, if an individual is unable to pray with a *minyan* and is therefore missing part of the ninety *amens*, the *Ben Ish Chai* advises him to say the *pasuk*, "*Baruch Hashem le'olam amen ve'amen*" forty five times. If he does so, he will have said *amen* 90 times. This was always the traditional custom, so that a person would not miss any of the *amens*.

The Way to Emerge Meritorious on the Day of Judgment

We find ourselves shortly before the greatest and holiest day of the year, *Yom Kippur*. On this day is decided what will happen to each person over the course of that year. Our Sages have revealed to us the greatest *segula* with which an individual can easily merit being sealed for a good year. The *segula* is the following one: In *Masechet Shabbat* (119b), Rebbi Yehoshua ben Levi teaches us that anyone who answers *yihei Shmei Rabba mevorach* with all his strength, merits having a harsh decree that was leveled against him torn up. In the *Rosh's* version of the *Gemara*, it read, "a decree of **seventy years** will be torn up." Rebbi Yochanan teaches that even if one has slightly violated the sin of idolatry – he will be forgiven for it. Reish Lakish teaches that anyone who answers *amen* with all his strength has the gates of *Gan Eden* opened for him. Rebbi Chanina says that *amen* [אמן] is the *roshei teivot* of *Kel Melech Ne'eman* [אל מלך נאמן].

Decrees Are Nullified in the Merit of Saying Yihei Shemi Rabbah



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In *Otzar Ha'midrashim* (*Asara Harugei Malchut* pg. 446) it is related that Rebbi Yishmael was once told by the ministering angel of the inner chambers that he would tell him what was to befall the Jewish Nation in the future. As the angel was looking at what would happen, tears were dripping from his eyes and falling on Rebbi Yishmael. Rebbi Yishmael asked him why he was crying. He responded by showing him a list of the troubles that would befall the Jews. Each tragedy was worse than the next. Rebbi Yishmael asked who these tragedies were intended for, and the angel responded that they were to befall the Jews. Rebbi Yishmael asked if the Jews were capable of withstanding such horrors. He replied that tomorrow he would show him a list of misfortunes that were even worse than these. The next day, he brought Rebbi Yishmael into the innermost chambers and showed him misfortunes that were worse than the previous ones. Some were killed by the sword and some by famine. Others were taken captive. Rebbi Yishmael then asked if only the Jews had sinned? The angel answered that there are new decrees issued against the Jews every day, and when the Jews enter the *batei knessiot* and the *batei midrashot* and recite *yehei Shmei Rabba mevorach*, the decrees are withheld from leaving the inner chambers.

The Zohar on the Importance of Saying Amen

The *Zohar* states (*Parashat Vayelech* 285a) that one who does not know how to honor the Name of Hashem is better off not having been born. However, one who *does* know how to honor the Name by answering *Amen* with the proper intention draws down bounty and blessing. An announcement rings out in Heaven that bounty should descend to the world in the honor of this individual. It states that when the Jews wait to answer *amen* with *kavana*, many blessings descend to them from above, and they merit a great reward both in this world and the next. When they pray, an announcement rings out in all of the Heavenly Worlds, citing the following *pasuk* (*Yeshaya* 26), "Open gates, and enter a righteous nation, guardians of faith [שומר אמונים]." The *Zohar* expounds that we should not read the word as *emunim* [אמונים] but, rather, as *ameinim* [אמינים]. Their prayers will be accepted as well. But one who is not careful to say *amen* with *kavana* does not have these gates opened for him and is not blessed. In the next world, he will descend to a place from which he will never rise again.

A Miracle was Wrought for R' Chaim of Volozhin Because of Amen

Just how precious saying *Amen* is can be seen from the miracle that was wrought for R' Chaim of Volozhin. R' Chaim was always careful to recite a *bracha* in front of another person, so that he would respond *amen* to the *bracha*. Otherwise, he would not make the *bracha*. One time, he was absorbed in a deep topic of *Shas* until very late at night. His head started hurting him very much, due to his extreme thirst. However, since everyone was sleeping, he could not recite a blessing, since no one would be able to answer *amen* to it. It was very difficult for him. Suddenly, he heard knocking on the door. He rose and opened it. Standing there was a student of the yeshiva, who apologized to R' Chaim for coming so late. He too, had been engrossed in a difficult Talmudic topic and did not succeed in understanding it. He decided to check if there was any light illuminating from R' Chaim's house; if there was, he would go and ask him for an explanation. Seeing that there was light, he decided to go. R' Chaim obviously greeted him happily. He only requested that since he had a headache, he would like to take a drink and afterwards explain the topic to him. Indeed, R' Chaim made a *bracha* and drank, and then explained the topic clearly, at which point the young man departed. The next day, R' Chaim entered the *Beit Midrash*, approached the young man and thanked him, for in his merit, he was able to drink. The student was confused, "But I did not come to the Rav's house last night!" R' Chaim could not believe it. "But you requested me to explain you the topic that you were studying. I explained it to you – you don't



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remember?" He responded that he was not in the Rav's house last night at all. Only then did R' Chaim realize that a miracle had been wrought for him. Eliyahu Hanavi had been sent to him in the guise of the student so that he could answer *amen*.

Story About the *Levush*

There is a story about the *Levush* and Rav Abuhav that is brought in many *sefarim*. In short, the *Levush* once went to Rav Abuhav to learn astrology. Once, the son of R' Abuhav recited a *bracha* over an apple. The *Levush*, engrossed as he was in his learning, did not notice, and when all those present responded "Amen," he remained silent. Seeing this, Rav Abuhav immediately excommunicated the *Levush*. Therefore, for thirty days, the *Levush* conducted himself according to the *halachot* which apply to one who has been excommunicated. At the conclusion of the thirty days, he approached Rav Abuhav to understand why he had excommunicated him. Rav Abuhav responded by telling a story: About a thousand years ago, there were Jews who lived in a land ruled by gentiles, and the king would decree harsh decrees against the Jews every so often. However, the king had a good friend, a very pious, G-d fearing Jew. Whenever such a decree was issued, the Jews would send him to the king, and he would succeed in annulling the decree. One time, the king decreed to expel the Jews. The Jews therefore approached the pious man before the *mincha* prayer, and they requested him to go to the king even before praying *mincha*; after all, a life threatening matter takes precedence over everything else. He therefore went, and when he arrived, the king understandably was overjoyed to see him and welcomed him with a glowing countenance. In the meantime, a renowned priest arrived from a faraway land to visit the king. A feast was obviously arranged in his honor, and they sat down together. The priest began by speaking by blessing the king etc. Seeing this, the pious Jew decided to pray *mincha* until the priest finished speaking. However, when he was still in the middle of *mincha*, the priest finished blessing the king and asked everyone to respond "amen" to his blessing. Everyone did so, except for the Jew, who was still praying. Noticing this, the priest suddenly began to scream and pull out his hair, saying that his blessing was now nullified, because the Jew did not answer "amen." The king immediately decreed a harsh death sentence upon the Jew. They cut him to pieces and sent the body parts back to his home. The pious Jew had a good friend, who was very saddened, wondering why such a thing took place. The pious Jew appeared to him in a dream and told him that this happened because, one time, he did not answer *amen* to his son's *bracha*. Therefore, measure for measure, Hashem placed him in a situation where he would not answer *amen*, and he would be sentenced to death. Rav Abuhav explained to the *Levush* that this was why he excommunicated him, to save him from death.

Words of Mussar

We have learned just how readily available a very great *segula* is, a *segula* which has the power to tear up the decree against an individual and to grant him long life as well as limitless influx of blessing. It can nullify all harsh decrees and prevent every illness from befalling him. Therefore, how can an individual give up such a *segula* and instead, search out "kabbalists" to write amulets and provide other *segulot* to be saved from a difficult situation. We have the true *segula*, the *segula* of the *Tanaim*, *Amora'im*, and *Rashbi* that can help in every situation. The only condition is that we answer out loud and with *kavana*. By doing so, we will all merit a *g'mar chatima tova*, and a *shana tova u'mevorachat* in both material and spiritual matters. *Amen ve'amen*.

With Blessings for a *Gmar Chatima Tova*,
Rav Mordechai Malka



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