

# לוקוטי ופסקי הלכות "חוקי חיים"

ותלמודם  
"חוקי חיים"  
לעשות רצונך  
בלבב שלם



שע"י "חדר הוראה" שכונת מנחת יצחק פעיה"ק ירושלם תובב"א - בראשות הרב חיים אהרן בלייער שליט"א

Halochos compiled by HaRav Chaim Bleier – Translated from the Hebrew edition by R' Zerachya Shicker

## Dinim of

# Amen

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Please do not  
read during  
davening or  
Krias HaTorah

Halachos of Answering "Amen"

Parshas Vayechi 5783

283

## Merits and Importance of Answering Amen

### Needs Reinforcing

1. Answering Amen to brachos is one of the most common occurrences in daily life; it is at hand in every time and place. It is also one of the simplest things. Because of its frequency, many people are lax about it; yet we find that Chazal abundantly praise its merits. Thus, we saw a need to encourage appreciation of its importance and care in its fulfillment.
2. **With halachic meticulousness.** Even for something as simple as answering Amen, there are loads of halachos which can easily be violated if one does not know them. In fact, it is specifically because answering Amen is so simple that Chazal (גמ' ברכות דף מ"ז) highlight the punishment for a person who answers Amen improperly out of laxity. Thus, we saw a need to publicize these halachos so that people are always familiar with them, thereby lengthening their days and years.

### Merits

3. **Opens the gates of Gan Eden.** Reish Lakish said, "The gates of Gan Eden are opened for anyone who answers Amen with all his strength, as the posuk says, 'פתחו שערים ויבוא גוי צדיק שומר אמונים' – don't read it as *emunim*, but rather as *amenim*" (גמ' שבת דף ק"ט). The Zohar says that if someone hears a brachah and does not have kavanah to answer Amen properly, "Close the gates" is announced for him, i.e., he may not enter and rise up (זוה"ק).
4. **Child.** As soon as a child merely answers Amen, he has a share in Olam Habas (גמ' סנהדרין דף ק"ט, כל בו, רמ"א א"ח סי' קכ"ד סי"ז). Thus, one should teach even his young children to answer Amen.
5. **Considered great by Hashem.** There is nothing greater before Hashem than Amen answered by Klal Yisroel (בוא) (מדרש רבה פ' כי תבוא). One who answers Amen in this world will be zocheh to answer Amen le'asid lavo (שם).
6. **One who answers Amen is greater than the mevareich.** Chazal say (ברכות דף נ"ג ע"ב, ניר דף ס"ו ע"ב), "The one who answers Amen is greater than the mevareich," for without the Amen, the brachah is like half a body (זוה"ק פ' עקב). A brachah is like a document testifying that Hashem is the Source of brachos; one who answers Amen is like the signing witnesses who verify the document – he is the one who completes the brachah (רבינו בחיי פ' בשלה). Some write that the reason is because brachos are d'rabanan, whereas answering Amen is connected to a posuk, as we will now discuss (עמק שאלה קמ"ו אות א).

## Obligation to Answer Amen

### Source

7. One who hears a Jew say any brachah must answer Amen even if he is not obligated to say that brachah (סי' כ"ב). This is learned from the posuk on which Chazal say, "כי שם ה' אקרא, הבו גדל לאלקינו" (גמ' יומא דף ל"ז ע"א), "Moshe said to Yisroel, 'When I mention Hashem, you ascribe greatness to Elokeinu'," by answering Amen (מ"ב שם סק"ח).

### D'oraisa or D'rabanan?

8. The basic understanding is that answering Amen is d'rabanan, and the abovementioned posuk is an asmachta.
9. **Brachos d'oraisa.** However, some hold that for mitzvos asei consisting of a brachah, e.g., Birkas HaTorah (סי' כ"ד), Birkas HaMazon, Birkas Kohanim (ח"י ר' יונתן), and the like, answering Amen is also d'oraisa (אייבשיץ ברכות דף ל"ד, פמ"ג בס' תיבת גמא עה"ת פ' האזינו, פמ"ג א"ח סי' רט"ו א"א סק"ו בסופו).

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## Connotation of "Amen"

### Meaning of "Amen"

10. **אָל מַלְךְ נְאֻמָּן.** The word Amen means truth. When saying Amen, one should have in mind, "The brachah that was said is true, and I believe it" (שו"ע סי' קכ"ד סי"ו). אמן stands for נְאֻמָּן (אייבשיץ ברכות דף ל"ד, גמ' שבת דף ק"ט ע"ב, מ"ב סק"ל) which is also its meaning.
11. **Working on having kavanah.** Kavanah when answering Amen is something that needs reinforcement. From a young age, we become accustomed to answering Amen and we think saying it is enough. In truth, we need to mature and develop ourselves a bit. It is not about just saying Amen; it is about considering what the mevareich said, and it is another opportunity to have kavanah, daven, connect and express praise and gratitude to Hashem. [A hint to this idea: the letters of אמין appear at the beginning of the words "מְשַׁכְּנֵי אַחֲרָיךְ בְּרוּצָה" – by answering Amen, we continue to glorify Hashem's greatness and we are zocheh to "be brought into the King's chamber" (דברי תורה מונקאטש ח"ט אות ח"י)].
12. **Brachos of hoda'ah.** For a birkas hoda'ah, e.g., Boruch She'amar, Yishtabach, Go'al Yisroel, and the like, the intent of Amen is as stated (above, 10). When the brachah has a chasimah, one should also have that in mind. E.g., when the chazan concludes, "בא"י מִן אַבְרָהָם," one should say Amen and think, *It is true that the Name of Hashem, Who was the Shield of Avraham, should be blessed.* The same goes for other brachos which just contain praise, e.g., the brachah of Modim (ח"א, מ"ב שם סק"ד, ועי' ביהמ"ל ד"ה ובכוונה לגבי ג' הראשונות של שמ"ע, ובש"ל) (עניני תפילה ד"ה ותחילה נקדים לגבי ב' אחרונות של שמ"ע).
13. **Brachos with a tefillah.** For brachos containing both tefillah and praise, one must have kavanah for both when saying Amen. E.g., for the brachah of Atah Chonein, one should say Amen and think, *It is true that He grants wisdom, and may it be His will that He grant wisdom to us as well.* The same goes for other brachos (מ"ב סק"ה).
14. **In practice.** Since it is hard for us to muster our kavanah for long things like this, when answering Amen one may suffice with the kavanah, *It is true and may it come to be* (מעשה רב החדש), but not less than that.
15. **Kaddish.** The nusach of Kadish consists of requests. Thus, one must have in mind, *May it come to be; may it be His will that this thing is fulfilled* (מ"ב סק"ד וכ"ה).

### Other Tefillos and Requests

16. One should answer Amen to any words of brachah spoken by or about a Jew, as well as to any words of supplication or request, even without mention of Hashem's Name and malchus (מ"ב סי' קפ"ט סק"ה). Thus, if one hears another person bentsching, he should say Amen to the Harachamans (מ"ב שם).
17. **To a mi shebeirach.** Similarly, one should answer Amen to a mi shebeirach during Krias HaTorah, as it contains a request and tefillah. Doing so fulfills the mitzvah לרעך כמוך (ואהבת לרעך כמוך) (סי' רט"ו סי"א). One should be meticulous to answer this Amen (הגרש"א הליכות שלמה תפילה פ"ב אוה"ל הע' 68).



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## Halachos of Answering Amen

### Amen Chatufah [Rushed Amen]

18. **Improperly vowelized.** One must be careful not to say "a rushed Amen." One explanation of this is that it refers to improper vowelization, e.g., with a shva or pasach under the aleph. The aleph must be pronounced with a komatz (מ"ב סק"ט) (ש"י"ע ק"ד ס"ח, מ"ב סק"ט) (ש"י"ע ק"ד ס"ח, מ"ב סק"ט).
19. **Saying it quickly.** Similarly, one should not rush and answer Amen before the mevareich finishes his brachah (ש"י"ע שם). Wait until the mevareich or chazan completely finishes the last word, and only then answer Amen (מ"ב סק"ל).

### Amen Ketufah [Broken Amen]

20. **Proper enunciation.** One must make sure to pronounce the letters properly, such that each letter is distinguishable. For example, one should not slur the nun (ש"י"ע שם) in a way that it is not clearly heard, even if he said it. Similarly, one should not slur the aleph or mem (ביאה"ל ד"ה קריאת הנ"ן).
21. **Broken in two.** Another explanation is that one should not break the word in two by pausing between the two syllables ("A - mein") (ב"י בשם הערוך, רמ"א שם).

### Amen Yesomah ["Orphaned" Amen]

22. **Doesn't know what he's answering to.** An amen yesomah is when the Amen is "orphaned" and disconnected from the brachah, i.e., one answers Amen without any knowledge of which brachah he is answering to. One should not say an amen yesomah. See below (par. 26) for details about this halachah.
23. **Paused after brachah.** Another explanation: an amen yesomah is when one pauses between the end of the brachah and answering Amen. In other words, once it is past toch k'dei dibur [about two to three seconds] after the end of a brachah, one should not say Amen, as that is an amen yesomah (מ"ב סק"ד) (רמ"א שם). It often happens that a baal korei says Amen before beginning to lein, well after the aleh finishes his brachah.
24. **In a tzibbur.** As long as the tzibbur is still answering Amen, one may answer with them even if it is past toch k'dei dibur. This is only if most of the tzibbur has not finished saying Amen (מ"ב שם), and he answers within toch k'dei dibur of their answering (מיד) (ביאה"ל ד"ה מיד).

### Amen Ketzarah [Short Amen]

25. One should not say Amen in a short, rushed manner lest it appear like a burden. It should be somewhat extended – long enough to say like a burden. It should be somewhat extended – long enough to say (ש"י"ע שם ס"ח) 'אל מלך נאמן' (מ"ב סק"ז) (ש"י"ע שם ס"ח). However, one should not extend it too much because when doing so, the word is not heard properly (ש"י"ע שם).

### Did Not Hear Entire Brachah

26. **Birchos hamitzvah.** One who wants to be yotzei a brachah by listening to someone else say it must hear the entire brachah from beginning to end (ש"י"ע סי' ר"ג ס"ג); then he must answer Amen (ש"י"ע) (סי' רט"ז ס"ב ומ"ב סק"ז) (ש"י"ע סי' ר"ג ס"ג ומ"ב סק"ז). [If one is using ערבות to be motzi someone else in a brachah he himself was already yotzei, some hold if the other person does not answer Amen, he is not yotzei (רע"א סי' ר"ט ס"ד).]
27. **Regular brachah.** When one is not being yotzei the brachah he is hearing, the Mechaber holds he may answer Amen if he hears others answering Amen, even if he does not know which brachah he is answering to (ש"י"ע שם ס"ח).
28. **Rama.** However, the Rama holds for all brachos that if one does not know which brachah he is answering to, he may not say Amen (רמ"א שם). If he knows which brachah he is answering, he may say Amen even if he did not hear the end of the brachah (מ"ב סק"ג).
29. **Chazaras Hashatz.** Nowadays that everyone says his own Shemoneh Esrei and no one is yotzei with the chazan, according to the abovementioned opinion of the Mechaber, one may say Amen even without knowing which brachah he is answering to (מ"ב סק"א) (בדעתו). According to the Rama, one should l'chatchilah make sure to know which brachah he is answering to and also listen to the end of the brachah. B'dieved, he may say Amen as long as he knows which brachah was said, even if he did not hear it (מ"ב סק"ג).

### Over the Phone, on a Recording

30. **Phone.** Even though we hold one cannot be yotzei a brachah he hears from a distance over the phone, a loudspeaker, or a live broadcast, he may still say Amen, as he is answering in real time to a brachah someone said (ש"י"ע שבת הלוי) (ח"ה סי' פ"ד) (סוכה דף ג"א ע"ב). Nowadays, one usually hears the brachah within toch k'dei dibur (above, 23) even on an international call.
31. **Recording.** However, one should not say Amen to a recording of a brachah someone made at an earlier time.

### Answering at the Same Volume as the Mevareich

32. **Louder than mevareich.** One should not say Amen in a louder voice than the mevareich's (ש"י"ע סי' קכ"ד ס"ב) based on the posuk, "גדלו לה' אתי ונרוממה שמו יחדיו," which implies their voices should be equal (מ"ב סק"ז). One may say Amen in a voice louder than the mevareich's if he has a valid reason, e.g., to spur other people to answer too (מ"ב שם); to arouse his kavanah in fulfillment of Chazal's statement (see above, 3) that the gates of Gan Eden are opened for one who answers Amen with all his strength (מ"ר בש"ת שבת הקהתי) (ח"ו סי' צ"ג) (שם).
33. **Quietly.** Based on the above posuk ["ונרוממה שמו יחדיו"], one should also not answer in a softer voice than the mevareich's; they should be the same volume (שם).

### Answering Amen to One's Personal Shemoneh Esrei

34. **Quiet Shemoneh Esrei.** When saying Shemoneh Esrei, one must hear what he is saying, but he should not make his voice heard out loud (ש"י"ע סי' ק"א ס"ב). L'chatchilah one should daven so quietly that even someone standing nearby cannot hear (מ"ב סק"ז), but if one cannot hear kavanah that way, he may daven in a somewhat audible voice as long as he is not bothering others in his vicinity (שם).
35. **Saying Amen.** If one is davening Shemoneh Esrei somewhat audibly and the person next to him hears the end of a brachah, he should not say Amen. The one davening is doing something improper – as others can hear his brachah – and the directive to answer Amen was not said in this case (א) (הגרשו"א) (הליכות שלמה, חכמת שלמה, הגרשו"א) (הליכות שלמה, פ"ח ה"ב, ש"ת שבת הלוי ח"ג סי' ט"ו).

### Increasing the Answering of Amen

#### Saying Brachos Out Loud

36. It is very important to have others say Amen to one's brachos. Therefore, one should strive to say brachos in a way that others will answer to them (זוה"ק ריש פ' עקב הובא בכ"ה חיים סי' קכ"ד סק"א, פ') (ויצא דף ק"ס, מחצית השקל סי' ו' סק"ט).
37. Thus, one should say all brachos out loud so that others will hear and say Amen. One should accustom himself to saying brachos in a way that others can answer Amen, as through this, his brachos become complete (הגר"ח וואלווין הובא בס' נוסרי אמן ח"ב פ"א אות ט"ז) (בה"ט סי' תרמ"ג) (סק"א בשם הש"ת) (סק"א בשם הש"ת). According to this reason, one should say a brachah out loud even if there is no one there listening.

#### Ninety Amenim

38. Every Jewish man should strive to answer Amen ninety times a day (מ"ב סי' ו' סק"ג, ש"י"ע תשובה סק"ה, ש"י"ע הרב שם אות ט) to brachos, not including Amen to Kaddish (ש"ת הרמ"ע מפאנו סי' ק"ט) (ישעיהו כ"ו, ב) – "פתחו שערים ויבא גוי צדיק שמר אמנים" – the word צדיק stands for ninety amenim, four Kedushos, ten Kaddishim, and one hundred brachos (כ"ה) (החיים סי' כ"ד סק"ג בשם מהר"ח) (ספר הגן) (צד"ק) by fulfilling this acronym every day.

#### Birchos HaShachar

39. **Tzibbur.** Many have the minhag that the chazan in shul says the brachos out loud and everyone says Amen. Since nowadays the chazan is not motzi others, everyone in the tzibbur also says the brachos out loud so that everyone can answer Amen to them (ש"י"ע) (א"ח סי' ו' ס"ד). This is to increase the answering of Amen for everyone and to help get to ninety Amenim a day (above, 28).
40. **Individual.** Even if they are not saying the brachos out loud for the whole shul [because that is for older people and not everyone can do it (פמ"ג א"א שם סק"ה)], many people at least try to find another person to say Birchos HaShachar in front of so that he can answer Amen.
41. Similarly, many tzaddikim make sure to hear multiple people say Birchos HaShachar every day to help get to ninety Amenim (האר"ל, הבעל שם, יסוד ושורש העבודה, זקנינו הגר"מ בנעט, בית אהרן מקרלין, זקנינו מהר"ם (א"ש, דברי חיים, האדר"ת, ועוד הובאו בס' בני אמונים פרק אוצרות אמונים).
42. **At home.** Even at home, a husband and wife can say the brachos to each other (מנהג הגר"ח קנייבסקי ועוד). It is also proper for one to train each of his sons and daughters to say all the Birchos HaShachar out loud and answer Amen to each other's brachos. They should also be trained to say all birchos hanehenin, Asher Yatzar, and Birkas HaMazon out loud and all answer Amen (רבי) (יעקב מאיר שכטר בס' המברך יתברך עמ' ס"ו, עמ' צ"ו).

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