



Overview

Siman 124 Seif 6:

The *tzibbur* should answer *amen* to each *beracha* whether they are discharging their obligation or not. One should have in mind when answering *amen* that what was said in the *beracha* is true and he believes it as well.

- ❖ Chaye Adam adds that one should also have in mind when he answers *amen* the meaning of the words that conclude the *beracha*. (M.B. 24)
- ❖ Confirming the truth of the *beracha* applies when the *beracha* involves only praise of Hashem but in *tefila* one should also have in mind that the will of Hashem should be to fulfill the words of the *beracha*. (M.B. 25)
- ❖ Pri Megadim writes that one should not group together the words *amen* מודים אנחנו לך since the *amen* is on the previous *beracha* and מודים starts a new idea. (M.B. 25)
- ❖ One who must answer *amen* to two things should say *amen* twice and should have in mind the two things about which he is answering *amen*. It is preferable for him to answer *amen* ואמן. (M.B. 25)

Siman 124 Seif 7:

One should not discuss idle matters during *chazaras hashatz* and one who discusses idle matters is a sinner, the sin is too great to bear and he should be rebuked. One should teach his young sons to answer *amen* since a child earns a portion in the World to Come as soon as he answers *amen*.

- ❖ Shelah reports that he has observed people who keep a *siddur* open in front of them to follow each and every word of *chazaras hashatz*. (M.B. 26)
- ❖ Elya Rabba in the name of Kol Bo writes that many *shuls* were destroyed because people were talking during *chazaras hashatz*. (M.B. 27)
- ❖ Very young children who run around in *shul* should not be brought to *shul* since their behavior will become habitual and they distract the *tzibbur* that is *davening*. (M.B. 28)

Stories to Share

The Soul's Portion

ש"ע ס' קכ"ד, ז': "כי מיד שהתינוק עונה *amen* יש לו חלק לעולם הבא..."

On today's *amud* we find that from when a child answers "*amen*" he has a portion in the World-to-Come.

Rav Elchonon Wasserman would recount a compelling question and answer from the Chofetz Chaim regarding one's portion to the next world: "The mishnah assures us that every Jew has a portion for the World-to-Come. Yet immediately after this it lists exceptions. If there are exceptions, then why does the mishnah make a blanket statement that implies that everyone has a portion unconditionally?"

"The answer can be understood in light of a parable. Once there was a poor man who went from door to door collecting food and soliciting donations from kindly donors. A certain wealthy man had pity on him. He gave him a generous donation and a good meal. After this he brought the poor man into his pantry and filled the poor man's sack with the best food that could be had.

Halacha Highlight

Talking and learning during *chazaras hashatz*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 124 Seif 7

לא ישיח שיחת חלין בשעה ששליח צבור חוזר התפלה

One may not talk idly while the *shaliach tzibbur* is repeating the *tefila*

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' ז') emphasizes the importance of paying close attention to *chazaras hashatz*. He writes that one should not engage in idle chatter during *chazaras hashatz* and one who does talk is a sinner, his sin is too great to bear and should be rebuked. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק כ"ו) explains that even if one is careful to answer *amen* to each *beracha* he is behaving improperly. He then relates in the name of Shelah that he noticed people who are meticulous in their mitzvah observance who would have a *siddur* open in front of them during *chazaras hashatz* so that they could follow each and every word. The sin of talking during *chazaras hashatz* is so severe that *Poskim* write that if a person know that he will not be able to restrain himself from talking during *chazaras hashatz* it is better if he does not come to *shul* altogether (ז' פסקי תשובות אות ז').

Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ז) even warned against reciting supplications or even learning during *chazaras hashatz* even if one will pay attention to properly answer *amen* to each of the *berachos*. Many *Poskim* reference Teshuvos Rama MiPano (סי' ק"יב) who offers a justification for the practice but still concludes that it is preferable for one to refrain from all other activities and pay attention to *chazaras hashatz*. Someone who already *davened* in an earlier *minyan* or will *daven* at a later *minyan* and would like to recite supplications or learn while another *minyan* is *davening* is not obligated to interrupt his supplications or learning to listen to *chazaras hashatz*. In the event that answering *amen* would be distracting to his learning or supplications he is not even required to answer *amen* to the *berachos* that are recited out loud. He should, however, make an effort to make it clear to those who are present that he is not part of the *minyan*. Additionally, he must be careful that his learning does not distract others who are trying to *daven* (ז' פסקי תשובות שם).

"The poor man blessed his benefactor and left his home filled with joy, especially since his sack was filled with food and his pockets were filled with coins.

"Unfortunately, the sack was old and had many small tears and there were holes in his pockets. Although these were not readily noticeable, they quickly expanded enough for the bountiful gifts to fall out of the sack one by one and his entire journey was littered with coins and valuable foodstuff which he needed, but had no way to contain.

"The same is true regarding one's portion in the World-to-Come. Every soul's spiritual pockets and pouches will be filled with spiritual illumination. But one who reads works of heresy 'tears the pockets in one way,' while thoughts of apikorsus cause a different type of tear. Lending money to a fellow Jew for forbidden interest makes yet another hole, as does bringing shame to Torah scholars. Unless he does a heartfelt teshuvah, he will have no way of enjoying his portion in the World-to-Come!"

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