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Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן קכ"ד סעיף ח'

Halacha Highlight

Answering אמן when one did not hear the *beracha*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 124 Seif 8

מאחר שלא שמעה לא יענה אחריו אמן דהוי אמן יתומה

Since he did not hear the *beracha* he should not answer אמן since it would constitute an "orphaned אמן"

Shulchan Aruch explains that an "orphaned אמן" refers to one who is obligated to recite a particular *beracha* and the *shaliach tzibbur* recites that *beracha* but one does not hear his recitation. Even though one knows what *beracha* he recited, he may not answer אמן since he did not hear the recitation of the *beracha*. Rema cites authorities who are stringent and include in the definition of an "orphaned אמן" one who answers אמן to a *beracha* if he does not know which *beracha* was recited. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק ל"ג) rules that if one knows what *beracha* was recited he may answer אמן as long as he is not obligated to recite that *beracha*. This applies even to *chazaras hashatz* once he has already *davened*. Mishnah Berurah then cites authorities who follow Bach who contends that since Chazal enacted the recitation of *chazaras hashatz* even if everyone in the *tzibbur davened,* it is considered as though the *tzibbur* is obligated in the recitation of these *berachos* and as such one may not answer אמן unless he hears the *beracha* from the *shaliach tzibbur* and merely being aware of which *beracha* was recited is not sufficient. Mishnah Berurah writes that *l'chatchila* one should make an effort to hear all the *berachos* but *b'dieved* as long as one knows which *beracha* was recited he may answer אמן.

Rav Akiva Eiger suggests that perhaps Bach was referring to someone who is *davening* in the *minyan* with the *shaliach tzibbur*. However, someone who is not *davening* as part of that *minyan* but happens to walk by as they are *davening* and hears *chazaras hashatz* may answer אמן even though he did not hear the *beracha* that was recited. Although he finds this qualification to be logical he leaves the matter unresolved. Toras Chaim disagrees and maintains that Bach was commenting about the character of the *berachos* of *chazaras hashatz* rather than about the person who would like to answer אמן. As such, even one who is not *davening* in the *minyan* with the *shaliach tzibbur* may not answer אמן if he did not hear the *berachos* (ספר חיי משה).

Overview

Siman 124 Seif 8:

One should not answer an אמן חטופה, meaning one should not say אמן as if there is a *chataf* under the א nor should one answer אמן quickly before the one reciting the *beracha* even finishes the *beracha*. One may also not answer an אמן קטופה, meaning that one leaves out the נ or doesn't pronounce it so that it is recognizable (One should also not interrupt in the middle of the word). **One should also not answer an אמן יתומה, referring to one who is obligated to recite a particular *beracha* and the *shalaich tzibbur* recites the *beracha* but the other person cannot hear the *beracha*; even though he knows what *beracha* is being recited, since he did not hear the *beracha* he may not answer אמן since it would be an "orphaned אמן"**. Some authorities are stringent that even if one is not obligated in that *beracha* he should not answer אמן if he does not know what *beracha* the *shaliach tzibbur* is reciting since this is also called an אמן יתומה. One should not wait to answer אמן; rather as soon as the *shaliach tzibbur* finishes the *beracha* one should answer אמן**. One should not answer an אמן קצרה, rather it should take as long as it takes to say א-ל מלך נאמן but one should not say it too slowly since letters are not discernable if they are said too slowly.**

- Shulchan Aruch refers to pronouncing the א with a *sheva* and the same *halacha* applies if one pronounces the א with any other vowel other than a *komotz gadol*. (M.B. 29)
- Some people begin to answer אמן while the *shaliach tzibbur* is in the middle of the last word of the *beracha* and this is prohibited. (M.B. 30)
- Shulchan Aruch maintains that answering אמן when one does not hear the *beracha* is an issue when one wants to discharge his obligation but if he is not obligated to recite the *beracha* he may answer אמן even though he does not know what *beracha* was recited and he merely heard others answer אמן. Rema disagrees and maintains that one may never answer אמן if he does not know what *beracha* was recited. (M.B. 31)
- One may answer אמן if he knows which *beracha* was recited even though he did not hear the *beracha* as long as he was not obligated to recite that *beracha*. According to some authorities one must at least hear the end of the *beracha* to be able to answer אמן and one should *l'chatchila* be stringent in accordance with this opinion and listen to each *beracha* of *chazaras hashatz* by the *shaliach tzibbur*. *B'dieved*, as long as one knows which *beracha* was recited one should answer אמן. (M.B. 33)
- One may answer אמן within כדי דיבור of the end of the *beracha*. There is a disagreement whether כדי דיבור is the time it takes to recite three or four words. When together with a *tzibbur* as long as the *tzibbur* is still answering אמן it is considered as though the *beracha* is continuing and one may answer אמן. (M.B. 34)
- If the *shaliach tzibbur* takes a long time to sing the words ואמרו אמן the *tzibbur* should immediately answer אמן. This applies for *kaddish* since the request ends with the phrase בזמן קריב or דאמירן בעלמא but regarding other *berachos* one may not answer אמן until after the *beracha* is completed even if the *shaliach tzibbur* takes a long time to sing the last few words. (M.B. 35)

Stories to Share

The Appropriate Response

ש"ע ס' קכ"ד, ח': "ולא ימתין עם עניית האמן..."

Today's amud continues discussing the halachos of saying amen.

Davening in a 'shteiblach' complex is certainly an experience all its own. The more shuls there are, the more opportunities to say divrei kedushah. But such opportunities can also create some difficulties. For example, when someone has to answer at least one amen, if not amen yehei shmei rabbah, kedushah or borchu, on his way to and from the bathroom. The same is true regarding one who is rushing home for some reason. True, it is forbidden to run out of shul unless one is on his way to a mitzvah. But is one really obligated to pause no matter how many responses he must make?

When this question reached Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zt"l, he ruled that one is not strictly obligated to reply. "The halachos regarding when one must answer amen, kaddish or kedushah, or when one must pause in the middle of davening are only applicable to one who is in the room in which the berachah or davar sheb'kedushah is recited. (שו"ת רבבות אפרים, ח"א, ס' פ"ט, א') But one who is in his home or passing by in the street or the like is not obligated to answer amen or other responses. Nevertheless, it is good to respond as appropriate if possible. (נוטרי אמן, ח"ב, פכ"ד, ס"א, והערה ג') And the same is true regarding one who passes by a shul which is up to the shema recited during mussaf. Although if he had been in the same room he would be required to answer with the minyan, since he is not in the same room he is not strictly required to recite shema with them."

שו"ת אבני ישפה, ח"א, ס' ט'