

Tefillah Tips

AND LET US SAY AMEN

Over the course of the next few weeks Jews around the world will be spending a lot of time in shul. One of the most spoken words by all Jews in synagogues is AMEN. What does AMEN mean anyway?

It is one of the first words we learn to say for our *davening*. During the High Holidays it is quite a moving experience to participate in a thundering AMEN in a large Beit Midrash or Synagogue. It is a spiritually powerful tool as well. The Talmud Shabbat 119b states “Anyone who answers Amen with all his strength merits to have opened in front of him the gates of Gan Eden.” Why?

The word *Amen* is associated with the word *Emunah* that means *faith, belief and loyalty*. Therefore reciting Amen to a blessing or a prayer demonstrates a statement of affirmation that the blessing is reliably true and demonstrates hope and confidence that the prayer will be answered. Demonstrating this powerful faith and belief is the key to opening the heavens above.

Amen is also an acronym. It stands for *Ay-I Melech Neeman-G-d is a true and faithful king*. The Halacha teaches that an individual says these three words before reciting the *Shema* if praying alone.

HaRav Shlomo Wolbe zt”l shlitta in his classic work *Aley Shor* Bk2 pp286 reveals the deeper implications of the word *Amen*. He explains that mans relationship with G-d is three-dimensional. We know Him through His creation, His revelation at Sinai, as well as His promise of redemption.

Creation: We recognize G-d by his handiwork. A sunset, a rainbow, a glacier, the human body and the animal kingdom all showcase G-d’s artistic genius.

Revelation: At Mount Sinai 3323 years ago Hashem called out from the heavens and uttered the first two commandments. The awesome encounter described in Deuteronomy 4:9 was a moment of national inspiration and prophesy when the Infinite directly engaged the finite.

Redemption: In Isaiah 8:10 it says “And on that day G-d will be one, and His name will be one.” We are promised that one day (may it be soon) all the nations of the world will recognize the one eternal G-d and then evil and falsehood will be eradicated from the world.

These three concepts are ensconced in the word *Amen*. **Ay'I** represents G-d’s trait of kindness with which He created the world. **Melech** – He is our King due to the Torah we have received

from Him. And ***Neeman*** – He is faithful and will one day reveal His grandeur to the world and bring redemption to all mankind.

During the course of the holidays we will all have plenty of opportunities to answer Amen. May Hashem hear our prayers, recognize our sincerity and open the heavens for our prayers and provide life, health and serenity for all of us 5771-Amen.

Shannah Tova.

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