

# HALACHOS HATZRICHOS

PACKET #10



# SAYING AMEN TO BIRCHOS HASHACHAR

When we hear another person say a *bracha*, we say *Amen* — EXCEPT if the *bracha* is part of a longer *bracha*. For example, the *bracha* of *Asher Yatzar* is a long *bracha*. It starts with the words “*Boruch Ata Hashem,*” but there’s another *bracha* at the end. With this kind of *bracha*, we only say *Amen* at the end.

Another long *bracha* in *Birchos Hashachar* is “*Hamaavir Sheina.*” This *bracha* is a part of the paragraph “*Vihi Ratzon*” that comes right after it. If we hear someone say the *bracha* of *Hamaavir Sheina*, we shouldn’t answer *Amen* until they end off the *bracha* with the words “*Hagomel Chasadim Tovim Le’amo Yisroel.*”

There is an opinion that the *bracha* of *Al Divrei Sorah* is part of a long *bracha*, together with the paragraph of *Veha’arev Na*. According to the Alter Rebbe, though, they are two separate *brachos*, so we should answer *Amen* to each.

*See the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch, siman Mem-Vov*



# BIRCHOS HATORAH

In the morning, we say a group of *brachos* called *Birchos Hashachar*, the *brachos* for the morning. We thank Hashem for all of the things we enjoy each day, like being able to get up, to see, and that we have *mitzvos*.

Then we say three special *brachos* to thank Hashem for one of the things we appreciate more than anything else — the Torah!

The first *bracha* we say is like the *bracha* we say before many *mitzvos*: “*Asher Kidishanu Bemitzvosav Vetzivanu Al Divrei Sorah,*” that Hashem made us holy by giving us the *mitzvah* to say words of Torah.

Then we say two more *brachos*, speaking about the sweetness of Torah and about how lucky we are that Hashem chose to give it only to us!

Since we made a *bracha* on saying words of Torah, it is best not to interrupt with anything else. Right away, we say *pesukim* from the Torah, the *pesukim* of *Birchas Kohanim*. Then we also say a part of the *Torah Shebaal Peh*, from *Mishnayos Pe’ah*, that starts with the words *Eilu Devarim*. This way, we started doing the *mitzvah* right away!

*See the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch, siman Mem-Zayin*



# HEFSEK BETEFILLAH

In *halacha*, there are many times when we are supposed to do a *mitzvah* without any interruptions. For example, we don't talk or do other things between washing our hands *Netilas Yodayim* and eating the challah. Washing our hands and eating challah are connected, and we can't separate between them by making a *hefsek*, an interruption. (If someone makes a *hefsek*, where they were not supposed to, sometimes they need to start again.)

In *davening*, we also don't make a *hefsek* between parts that are connected. Starting from *Boruch She'amar*, we don't make a *hefsek* until after *Shemoneh Esrei*.

How are all of these parts connected?

*Boruch She'amar* is the *bracha* at the beginning of *Pesukei Dezimra*, and *Yishtabach* is the *bracha* at the end. The whole *Pesukei Dezimra* is meant to be sandwiched between *brachos*, so we don't make a *hefsek* to separate it. *Pesukei Dezimra* is meant to be an introduction to *Shemoneh Esrei*. The *Chachomim* put *Kriyas Shema* right before *Shemoneh Esrei* for other reasons, but we try to keep *Pesukei Dezimra* as close to *Shemoneh Esrei* as we can, by not making any *hefsek*.

(*IY"H* we will learn about what is considered a *hefsek*, and when there are exceptions.)

See the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*, *siman Nun-Alef*



# HEFSEK BETEFILLAH

During *davening*, we are not allowed to interrupt for other things. This is called making a *hefsek*.

These *halachos* have many details, especially in a *shul*! In *shul*, there are many parts of *davening* that we are supposed to answer to, like *Kaddish*, *Kedusha*, *Barchu*, and *amen* to other *brachos*. If we are in the middle of some parts of *davening*, we are allowed to answer some of these things, but not in other parts. We will IY”H slowly try to understand when and why.

First let’s learn a *halacha* about *hefsek* that we need to know about when we *daven* outside of a *shul*:

Usually, when we hear someone saying a *bracha*, we answer *Amen*, saying that what was said in the *bracha* was true. But what if we’re in the middle of *davening*?

It depends where we’re up to! If we are in the middle of *Pesukei Dezimra*, where we praise Hashem, we DO answer *amen* to someone else’s *bracha*. That’s because a *bracha*, and agreeing with a *bracha* by saying *amen*, are ALSO praising Hashem! So it’s not really an interruption at all!

(This is true wherever we are in *Pesukei Dezimra*, except for during the paragraphs of *Boruch She’amar* and *Yishtabach*, because they are *brachos* themselves, and have different *halachos*. We will IY”H learn more about them later!)

*See the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch, siman Nun-Alef*



# HEFSEK BETEFILLAH

Before *davening*, we learn *Chassidus* so that we will have the right *kavana* during *davening*.

But since *davening* is long and has many parts, sometimes it could help to review the *Chassidus* during *davening*. Is that a *hefsek*, an interruption in *davening*?

Of course, learning out loud is a *hefsek*. But reviewing the words of *Chassidus* without saying them, to help bring *chayus* into the next part of *davening*, is not a problem.

For example, after *Yishtabach*, we might want to look inside of the *Tanya* we learned before and think it over to help us have *kavana* before *Kriyas Shema*. This is not a *hefsek*, and it is a good idea to help us *daven* better!

*See Igros Kodesh chelek Ches, p. 99*



# HASHEM MELECH

There are a group of *pesukim* that we say before *Boruch She'amar*, that start with the words “**Hashem Melech, Hashem Malach.**” The Arizal taught that these *pesukim* are very important to say during *davening*, and they are connected to a very high *Ruchniyus'dike* source! That's why we stand up when we say them.

Let's say you were *davening*, and you see that everyone else is standing up for *Hashem Melech*, even though that's not where you're up to.

The *halacha* is that even though you don't say these *pesukim* along with everyone else, you still stand up to show their *kedusha*.

*See Sefer Haminhagim p. 9*



## HEFSEK BETEFILLAH

During *davening*, we are not supposed to interrupt for other things. We don't answer the phone, have a snack, or play a game.

In a house, there are many things that might distract us during *davening*, and there are *halachos* about what we are allowed to say or do during *davening*.

In *shul*, there aren't as many distractions, but the *halachos* are MUCH more detailed! That's because even when someone is *davening* in *shul*, he might not be exactly up to the same place as the *minyan*. There are many parts of *davening* that we are supposed to answer to, like saying "Amen" to the *chazan*. If we're in the middle of a different paragraph, we need to know if we are allowed to interrupt to answer.

Here is one *halacha* about what to do when the *minyan* is ahead of you:

Let's say you are *davening* in *shul*, but very slowly, with a lot of *kavana*. You are still in the middle of *Pesukei Dezimra*, and the *minyan* is way ahead of you!

You are allowed to answer along with everyone to most of the things the *chazan* is saying. You can answer Amen to his *brachos*, say the words of *Kedusha* along with the *minyan*, say *Modim Derabanan*, and *Amen Yehei Shmei Rabah* in *Kaddish*.

What you DON'T say during *Pesukei Dezimra* is Amen to the second half of a long *Kaddish* (like the *Kaddish* at the end of *Shemoneh Esrei*), starting from the line *Tiskabel*. You also don't say the paragraph of *Brich Shmei* before *Kriyas HaTorah*, or the paragraph of *Vezos HaTorah* when the Torah is lifted high for everyone to see.

*See the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, siman nun-alef.  
See also Sefer Haminhagim p. 9-10*

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