

HALOCHOSCOPE

This week's question:

When answering Kaddish, should one wait for the shliach tzibbur to say 've'imru amein' before answering 'amein'? If the shliach tzibbur does not say 'amein' but waits for the tzibbur, is answering amein considered amein yesoma, an 'orphaned' amein?

The issues:

A) & B) *Kaddish* and its structure and wording

C) *Amein Yesoma*

A) *Kaddish*

Kaddish is an Aramaic word for holy. It is an extremely holy praise of Hashem and one of our loftiest prayers, for the future glorification of His Name, when His enemies will be destroyed in the days of *Moshiach*. Fervent recitation of '*amein yehei shemei rabah*' can annul a lifetime of evil decrees. Normally, one may not interrupt his *shemone esrei* prayer to answer *amein* or the like. However, due to the holiness of *kaddish*, the Talmud entertains the possibility that one may interrupt to respond to it.

Kaddish is a *davar shebikedusha*, only to be recited in the presence of a *minyán*, quorum of ten men. Many poskim maintain that the congregation must stand while listening to the *shliach tzibbur* recite *kaddish*. One may never engage in conversation at this time, but should focus on *galus Hashechina*, the exile of the Divine Presence from our midst. *Kaddish* is recited during after *davening* and after Torah study.

It is likely that a form of *kaddish* has always existed. Some say the *kaddish* that we know was instituted and formalized at the same time as the *kedusha*. Both these forms of communal praise were instituted at the same time that the *shemone esrai*, the 'eighteen' blessings centerpiece of our *tefilos*, was formalized by the *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah*, the court of Ezra. This group of sages included some prophets. The *tefilos* instituted at the time are considered exceptionally holy and potent, and may not be modified. Even if *kaddish* was instituted at a later date, it was invested with this holiness, as indicated in its name. Others say that *kaddish* was instituted even earlier, after the destruction of the first *Bais Hamikdash*. It was a *tefilah* for the restoration Hashem's glory.

The language of *kaddish* is predominately Aramaic, with certain words in Hebrew. When the Talmud refers to it, it uses the Hebrew form of the main part '*yehi shemo hagodol*' [Hebrew for '*yehei shemei rabah*']. [The name '*kaddish*' was given later. Its earliest reference in in *Masechess Sofrim*, considered a slightly post-Talmudic text (see Psachim 40b etc.)] This raises some debate about the original language of *kaddish*. Initially, *tefilos*, like the Oral Torah, were not written down. They had to be recited from memory. By the time the *tefilos* were written, *kaddish* was in its Aramaic form, and we have no records of another Hebrew version. Some commentators point out that it is discussed in the Talmud in reference to what is known as *kaddish derabanán*. This is recited

after a session of Torah study by a group. The language of Torah study is always the vernacular, being the most effective means of communication. In Talmudic times this was Judeo-Aramaic. In addition, many ordinary folk did not understand Hebrew. Since kaddish would be recited at such gatherings, it was originally composed in Aramaic. Aramaic was always the spoken language of the Jews, dating back to the *Avos* and *Imahos*, who came from *Aram*. In Egypt they spoke Aramaic, and *Targum Onkelos* was originally given as a companion to the Written Torah at Har Sinai, so everyone would understand it. [See Megillah 3a, Maharsha, Yerushalmi.] Another opinion is that *kaddish* is so holy that it was composed in a language that the angels do not know, Aramaic. There was concern that they would interfere with the prayers ascent to Heaven because they would feel that they alone may praise Hashem with a *tefilah* of this caliber. In a third view, the Hebrew version is used by sages in Eretz Yisroel. [See Tana D'bei Eliyahu, Raba 6 7 17 21.] Originally, inside Eretz Yisroel Hebrew was used for all *tefilos*. In Bavel it was deemed appropriate to change it to Aramaic. There are more reasons, meant to remain hidden.

B) The wording of Kaddish

Kaddish is in three parts. The main section is from *yehei shemei* until *da'amiran be'alma*. This is actually said aloud by the entire congregation in some communities. In our communities it is separated into two parts: from *yehei shemei* until *olmaya*; and from *yisborach* until *da'amiran be'alma*. The poskim debate whether they are equally holy, or the first part is holier. Any *davar shebikedusha* requires a *hazmana*, invitation or introduction by the leader of the *minyan*. The beginning section, from *yisgadal* until *yehei shemei raba* is the *hazmana*. Only the leader recites this section. The congregation responds *amein*, where appropriate. After *da'amiran be'alma* we add *tefilos* for peace acceptance of *tefilah* or for the welfare of Torah students. This section is considered *minhag*, and not a part of *kaddish* proper.

The issue in our case, is how the *hazmana* is intended at the point of the *amein*. The *shliach tzibbur* recites the introduction, ending with the words '*ve'imru amein*' – and say *amein*. Thus, he 'invites' the congregation to respond. The response, *yehei shemai rabah*, is meant to begin with the word *amein*. It would seem that the *amein* is actually attached to the next section. Could the congregation respond if the *shliach tzibbur* did not say these two words? They are not a part of the praise or prayer. Why are they there? The same issue arises at the end of the middle section, which is the main part of *kaddish* and the prayers added after it, that also end with the two words *ve'imru amein*.

It seems that one does not say *ve'imru* after reciting regular *brochos* out loud, because they are really private *brochos*. When recited aloud with a congregation, the *shliach tzibbur* is helping the congregants discharge their own private obligations. The *amein* is the same as a regular *amein* recited on the *brocha* of a friend. However, *kaddish* is never said privately. Its whole purpose is to be recited with the congregation. Therefore, we find this extra phrase inviting the congregation to recite their parts.

The sources explain two of the instances where *ve'imru* appears, for different reasons. The first is after the *hazmana*, right before *yehei shmai rabah*. The *shliach tzibbur* will be saying the words *yehei shemai rabah* anyhow. In many situations, the *tzibbur* need not respond if they hear the *chazan* say something. They fulfill their obligation by hearing the *shliach tzibbur* and concentrating. However, in this case, the verse '*gadlu*

Lah'shem iti, exalt Hashem with me (the *chazan*), applies. It would appear that the main idea is to ensure that the *tzibbur* begins *yehei shemai* together. Accordingly, there should be no issue with a *chazan* who stops after the word *ve'imru*. If the *tzibbur* begins *amein* at the same time, they fulfill the verse *gadlu* etc. This view would link *amein* with *yehei shemai*. A second explanation is that the *amein* is a response to the preceding words. The prayer that *Moshiach* come speedily is reinforced – amen, may it be [Hashem's] will! According to this view, there is no real need for the *chazan* to say *ve'imru*. Perhaps it is there for the reason mentioned in the preceding paragraph. This view would separate the *amein* from *yehei shemai*. The poskim seem to favor this view, and maintain that one should pause between *amein* and *yehei shmai*. The Talmud refers to them regularly together, probably since they are always recited together, albeit with a pause.

The second instance is the *ve'imru amein* after *da'amiran be'alma*. In this case, the verse '*ve'amar kol ha'am amein*' is cited as a source. This appears in the Torah when the *Leviyim* would recite the blessings and curses at Har Gerizim and Har Eival. Citing this as a source indicates that it is meant as a part of the text of *kaddish*. However, it is clearly not part of the praise. In the case in the Torah, it seems obvious that the Torah considers it imperative that the people responded. They would thus be accepting the curses in the sense that they were undertaking them like an oath. One would imagine that someone prompted the people to respond *amein*. Thus, it would seem that the same is true of this instance of *ve'imru amein*. It is imperative that the congregation respond, to show their total agreement with the *kaddish*. If so, while the words *ve'imru amein* are not part of the actual *kaddish*, they are indeed part of what the *chazan* must say to the congregation. However, it is possible that as long as the *chazan* indicates to the congregation when they should say *amein*, he has fulfilled his duty.

The concept of prompting before a response is found in the case of the reading of the passage at a *chalitza*, the ceremony whereby a widow of a childless man is released from the bond to her husband's surviving brother. She does not recite the passage until she is prompted by the rabbis in attendance. Judging by the source given for this, one could say that the same was true in the case of the Jewish people at Har Gerizim and Har Eival. Similar terminology is used by the Torah in both instances. The people were prompted before they said *amein*. If so, there is some basis to require the *chazan* to say the words *ve'imru amein* before the congregation may respond. [See Brochos 3a 21b, Shabbos 119b, Sukah 39a, Yevamos 106b, Sotah 32a etc., Sofrim 16:11 19:1 12 21:16, Poskim. Abudraham, Kol Bo, Siddur Rashi, Kaddish. Tur, Sh. Ar. OC 55 56 98, commentaries.]

C) Amein Yesoma

Amein as a response includes three meanings: as a response to a *shvua*, oath, administered by a judge, it means that the respondent agrees to be bound by the oath; as part of a negotiated deal, it means that the respondent undertakes to do what the other person has just said; as a response to a prayer, it means that the respondent agrees and also wishes to see the realization of the wish. In the context of *kaddish*, it is this last meaning that is expected of the respondents. In addition to agreeing to the wishes, it indicates the 'approval' of the respondent to the praises, both of which are based on the same basic idea.



One may not respond with an *amein chatufa*, not sounding the *alef* properly, or according to some, answering before the *chazan* finishes, an *amein ketufa*, not sounding the

nun properly or an *amein yesoma*, orphaned *amein*. This means that one may not respond *amein* without hearing the blessing or statement on which it is being said. For example, if one hears others responding *amein* he may not join in unless he heard the *brocha*. An example of this is cited in the case of one who hears the congregation answering *amein yehei shemei rabah*, but did not hear the *shliach tzibbur*. He should answer the words *yehei shemei*, but not the *amein*.

The poskim debate whether *amein yesoma* only poses a problem when the respondent needs to satisfy an obligation with the *brocha*, or even when the respondent just answers someone else's *brocha*. There is also a view that if one waited too long before responding, it is an *amein yesoma*. In our case, if one responds before the *chazan* says *amein*, is this like not hearing the full *brocha*? Is it like an *amein chatufah* according to the second view? The respondent said *amein* before the *chazan* 'finished'. On the other hand, the *chazan* might not have intended to finish, but was waiting to say the *amein* together with everyone else. Does this mean that there is an unfinished *brocha* to which one may not respond *amein* at all? [See Brochos 47a, poskim. Tur Sh Ar. OC 224:8, commentaries.]

It would appear from our earlier discussion that in the case of *kaddish* the *amein* at the end of *da'amiran be'alma* is obligatory. However, the introduction *ve'imru* is not a part of the section on which the *amein* is said. The same is true for the *ve'imru* after the *hazmana*. Therefore, if the *chazan* did not say the full version *ve'imru amein*, the respondents must still respond *amein*, on the earlier recitation of the *chazan*.

On the Parsha ... *And the koahin shall make the woman swear with an oath of a curse ... and the woman shall say "amen amen" ... [5:21-22] amen to the oath, amen to the curse, amen from this man, amen from another man, amen while I was betrother, married, waiting for levirate marriage, had consummated levirate marriage ... [Rashi]* The double *amen* indicates all of these. The Talmud and commentaries explain, the passage itself includes the oath and curse and implies the accusation of more than one man. Including violations under different situations, or undertaking to be held to her curse for future violations, is based on *gilgul shvua* including other oaths while she is under this oath. The commentaries debate whether one *amen* would satisfy the first list, and the second comes to include the *gilgul*, or whether the repetition is needed for both issues. On the simple level the woman repeats the word *amen* to reinforce her response. [Ibn Ezra] If she would not repeat it twice of her own accord, how would all the other issues be included? According to many poskim, one may not respond *amein* twice on a *brocha*. This is because it would then look like the respondent attributes the *brocha* to two powers in Heaven, *chas veshalom*. It would seem that simply stating *amein amen* automatically sounds like one has something else in mind besides the issue at hand. Surely, the woman would not voluntarily add the second *amein* here. Perhaps, since the Torah requires her to respond, rather than swear herself, it is understood that she is prompted to say "*amein amen*".

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