

A Guide to the Thanksgiving Blessing - Bentching Gomel

Introduction to 'Bentching Gomel'

HaGomel is a prayer said to thank God for having enabled one to emerge safely from a dangerous situation. It is said by both men and women.

Common situations in which one would Bentch Gomel include, but are not limited to:

1. Safely completing a long journey, particularly one involving travel across water or a desert and certainly one that was hazardous.
2. The safe delivery of a baby.
3. Surviving a serious accident.
4. Surviving an earthquake, terrorist attack, etc.
5. Recovering from a serious illness or operation.

For more details of the circumstances in which HaGomel is said, please consult your rabbi. HaGomel should ideally be said within three days of the relevant event, but in any case at the first available opportunity.

How do I Bentch Gomel?

As HaGomel is a public thanksgiving, it is only said in the presence of a minyan. In the synagogue it is usually said on an occasion when the Torah is read, directly after someone has had an aliyah. One should inform the rabbi or Shul official that one wishes to Bentch Gomel to obtain guidance as to when and where to do so. In some communities a woman who has given birth will Bentch Gomel from the women's section of the synagogue; in others, it may be said at a weekday service at an appropriate time, or with a specially convened minyan, e.g. at a kiddush. The rabbi will advise on local practice.

This sheet contains God's name. Please respect it and don't throw it away.

The Blessing

The following is recited while standing.

Brachah

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַגּוֹמֵל לְחַיִּימָם טוֹבוֹת, שְׂגַמְלֵנִי כָּל טוֹב

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who bestows kindness on the unworthy, who has bestowed on me much good.

Transliteration

Baruch Atah Adonay Eloheinu Melech HaOlam
HaGomel l'Chayavim tovot Sheg'malani kol tov

Response

Those who hear the brachah (blessing) say:

אָמֵן. מִי שְׂגַמְלֵךְ כָּל טוֹב,
הוּא יְגַמְלֵךְ כָּל טוֹב סְלָה

'Amen'. May He who bestowed much good on you always bestow much good on you.

Transliteration

Amen. Mi Sheg'mal-ech kol tov Hu Yig'mal-ech kol tov selah

(Please note that the transliteration is in the feminine form)
(See page 412 in the Green Siddur)

What else can I do to thank God?

Some may not feel comfortable to Bentsh Gomel; others may wish to do something in addition to saying the blessing.

Many possibilities exist, but three suggestions are:

1. Giving Tzedakah (charity) to show your gratitude to God for helping you.
2. Getting involved in some form of caring project to help others in challenging situations.
3. Give a Kiddush to celebrate your survival.