

# HALACHICALLY SPEAKING

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{ TOPIC }

## Setting Aside Time for Daily Torah Study



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## HALACHICALLY SPEAKING

► Halachically Speaking is a monthly publication compiled by Rabbi Moishe Dovid Lebovits, a former *chaver kollel* of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath and a *musmach* of Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. Rabbi Lebovits currently works as the Rabbinical Administrator for the KOF-K Kosher Supervision.

► Each issue reviews a different area of contemporary *halacha* with an emphasis on practical applications of the principles discussed. Significant time is spent ensuring the inclusion of all relevant *shittos* on each topic, as well as the *psak* of Harav Yisroel Belsky, Shlita on current issues.

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# Setting Aside Time for Daily Torah Study

We all know the tremendous value of learning Torah, which is equal to all other mitzvos.<sup>1</sup> However, when we are unable to learn all day, as our obligation to support our family requires us to work, we end up learning at different times during the day. This may mean a morning *seder*, or learning on the way to work or at night. In this article we will discuss the halachah of setting aside a time each day to learn. Does it have to be the same time each day? What should one learn if he is limited in time? These and other issues related to this topic will be discussed below.

It should be noted that although one may set aside time for learning by day and night, this should not exclude additional learning that one may find time for (i.e., he is off from work).<sup>2</sup>

## Background

The first thing we are judged for when we leave this world<sup>3</sup> is whether we were involved<sup>4</sup> in Torah,<sup>5</sup> although this is

1. *Mishnah Maseches Peah* 1:1.

2. *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 156:1. See *Toraso Yehegeh* 1:17:6.

3. *Rashi, Maseches Sanhedrin* 7a, “*techilas*.”

4. *Rashi, Maseches Sanhedrin* 7a, “*al*.”

5. *Maseches Sanhedrin* 7a, *Rambam, Hilchos Talmud Torah* 3:5, *Shulchan Aruch, Y.D.* 246:19, *Mishnah Berurah, O.C.* 155:2.

not the first thing we are asked about.<sup>6</sup> The Gemara<sup>7</sup> says that when we leave this world, we are asked, “Did you deal honestly in business and set aside time to learn...?”

## For a Working Person

The above discussion is relevant to those who work, since one should set aside time to learn Torah and not busy himself all day with work.<sup>8</sup> A *talmid chacham* who learns and is supported by Torah (see below) has an obligation to learn all day, and this is not relevant to him (see footnote).<sup>9</sup> One should not think that learning an entire day for all of one’s life is ideal and that working is a lesser option.

Many people tried to be like Rav Shimon and learn and not worry about how to support their family, but they were not successful.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, Rav Nurayi said, “I left all the professions of the world and only taught my son Torah.”<sup>11</sup> There are different interpretations as to why he did not teach his son a trade and give him an opportunity to earn a livelihood.<sup>12</sup>

The halachah clearly states that one must support his wife and family, although there is a mitzvah to learn Torah (see

6. Second answer in *Tosafos*, *Maseches Sanhedrin* 7a, “elah.” See *Ben Yehoyada*, *Maseches Sanhedrin* 7a.

7. *Maseches Shabbos* 31a.

8. *Rashi*, *Maseches Shabbos* 31a, “kivata,” *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 156:1, *Aruch Hashulchan*, O.C. 156:2, Y.D. 246:7. See *Gra*, Y.D. 246:4. See *Oz Nidberu* 13:26:2., *Rivevos Ephraim* 2:197:31.

9. *Aruch Hashulchan*, O.C. 156:2. However, when he is off from yeshiva he should also set aside time to learn every day and night (i.e., *bein hazemanim*) (*B’toraso Yehegeh* 1:page 341:6).

10. *Maseches Berachos* 35b. Refer to *Maharsha*, *Maseches Berachos* 35b. See *Salmas Chaim* 503.

11. *Maseches Kiddushin* 82a.

12. Refer to *Pnei Yehoshua*, *Maseches Kiddushin* 82a, *Hamakneh*, *Maseches Kiddushin* 82a, *Maharsha*, *Maseches Kiddushin* 82a, *Chasam Sofer*, *Maseches Bava Basra* 21a, *Biur Halachah* 306, “v’lilamdo,” *Igros Moshe*, O.C. 2:111.



below). If one does not work, sin may eventually fall upon him.<sup>13</sup> The Gemara in Kiddushin<sup>14</sup> says one is required to teach his son a trade.<sup>15</sup> The Gemara in Kiddushin<sup>16</sup> further says that one should learn a respectable trade.

One should not think that working is disgraceful, as many Tannaim and Amoraim had jobs.<sup>17</sup> One who supports himself with his own hands (labor) is praiseworthy.<sup>18</sup>

Still, one who is working must make sure his work is not the main focus.<sup>19</sup> One should not be enticed to working more than needed,<sup>20</sup> since everything is from Hashem.<sup>21</sup> It is proper to have the mindset that one will work to earn whatever he needs to support his family.<sup>22</sup>

It should be noted that one who works is not exempt from learning Torah. The Rambam clearly says: “Everyone is

13. *Shulchan Aruch* O.C. 156:1.

14. 29a.

15. See *Maseches Kiddushin* 82a, *Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos* 24:5, *Rotzei'ach* 5:5, *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 306:6, *Magen Avraham* 13, *Mishnah Berurah* 30; see *Binyan Tzion* 125, *Igros Moshe*, Y.D. 4:36. Refer to *Avos* 2:2, 3:17, *Yonah*, *Avos* 2:2. In regards to learning other professions, see *Maseches Menachos* 99b, *Shulchan Aruch*, Y.D. 246:4, *Shach* 6, *Gra* 17, *Chasdei Dovid* on *Tosefta* to *Maseches Avodah Zarah* 1:3 (end), *Mamleches Kohanim V'goy Kadosh*, pages 44-67 in great depth about going to college, *Torah Umadah* journal 1:pages 91-102 in great depth. It is well known that the concept of learning all day and not attending school didn't exist in America until Harav Aharon Kotler, zt"l, came to Lakewood, N.J. In other American yeshivos, such as Torah Vodaas and Chaim Berlin, boys learned Torah and went to college. The concept of *kollel* did not exist either until Harav Aharon Kotler enacted it. Chassidim throughout the ages worked and only stayed in *kollel* for a few years, unless they wished to become a Rav or *posek*.

16. 82a. See *Maharsha, Maseches Kiddushin* 82a.

17. *Aruch Hashulchan*, O.C. 156:1.

18. See *Tehillim* 128:2. Refer to *Aruch Hashulchan*, O.C. 156:1.

19. *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 156:1. See *Magen Avraham* 1, *Pri Megadim*, *Eishel Avraham* 1.

20. *Mishnah Berurah*, O.C. 156:2. Obviously, the amount depends on each person's needs (*Shaar Hatzion*, O.C. 156:2).

21. *Mishnah Berurah* 155:5.

22. *Mishnah Berurah*, O.C. 156:2. See *D'ryana D'igrisa* 1:34:page 45.

איז ער להקצי"ה בעמלון אלץ זי אמוות של הלכה בלויבד... (ברכות ה.)

obligated in learning Torah, whether poor, rich, complete in his body, a person full of pain, single, old, weak ... even one who has children.<sup>23</sup>

## By Day and Night

The mitzvah to set aside time to learn obligates one to set aside time by day and by night.<sup>24</sup> When one leaves shul in the morning<sup>25</sup> he should make sure to learn a bit<sup>26</sup> (if he can learn before shul this also suffices).<sup>27</sup> If one goes to work prior to learning, there is a concern that he may forget to set aside time to learn in the morning.<sup>28</sup> One should also make sure to learn in the same seat every day.<sup>29</sup>

One may set aside time to learn between *Minchah* and *Maariv*, which would suffice for setting aside time to learn at night.<sup>30</sup>

One who was not able to learn even a *passuk* by day should do so at night and learn then what he usually learns by day (in addition to his night learning).<sup>31</sup> Others say that time missed out is lost forever, since when night begins there is a different obligation for the new day.<sup>32</sup>

23. *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:8, *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 246:1, *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 155:1, *Aruch Hashulchan*, Y.D. 246:7. See *Rivevos Ephraim* 5:530.

24. *Rambam*, *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1:8, *Shulchan Aruch*, Y.D. 246:1, *Levush* 155:1, *Biur Halachah* 155, "eis." See *Maharsha*, *Maseches Shabbos* 31a.

25. See *Mishnah Berurah* 155:1.

26. Some say an hour (*Pri Megadim*, *Eishel Avraham* 155:1).

27. *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 155:1.

28. *Pri Megadim*, *Eishel Avraham* 155:1, *Mishnah Berurah* 2.

29. *Mishnah Berurah* 155:7, *Kaf Hachaim* 19.

30. *Biur Halachah* 155, "eis." See *B'toraso Yehegeh* 1:page 338.

31. *Shulchan Aruch* 238:2.

32. *Pri Megadim*, *Eishel Avraham* 238:1, *Mishnah Berurah* 4.

Before one begins to set aside time to learn, he should say that he is doing so “*bli neder*.”<sup>33</sup>

## When Time Does Not Allow

If one is not able to learn before or after davening in the morning, he should say one *passuk* or one halachah.<sup>34</sup> During times when one cannot learn even one *passuk*, he may rely on the recital of *Krias Shema* in the morning and night as a set time for learning.<sup>35</sup>

In any case, one should make sure to set aside the same time each day for learning.<sup>36</sup>

## What Amount of Time?

If one has time to learn both by day and night, how much time should be set aside to learn?<sup>37</sup> The *poskim* say that a working person should learn three to four hours a day.<sup>38</sup> However, today this is not practical for most people since jobs usually require them to spend eight hours at the workplace. In addition, people look forward to leisure time so they can relax, enabling them to learn and serve Hashem properly.<sup>39</sup>

It would seem that any amount of time suffices for setting aside time each day for learning.<sup>40</sup>

33. Magen Avraham 238:1, Machatzis Hashekel 1, Mishnah Berurah 5. See Pischei Teshuvah, Y.D. 246:1.

34. Magen Avraham 155:1, Mishnah Berurah 4, Aruch Hashulchan 2.

35. Shulchan Aruch Harav, Hilchos Talmud Torah 3:4, Aruch Hashulchan, Y.D. 246:7

36. Shulchan Aruch 155:1, Mishnah Berurah 155:4, Aruch Hashulchan 1, Kaf Hachaim 13. If one learns after he davens each day, then even if he davens a different time on a different day it is called a set time — after he davens (*Ohr Yisrael* 1:page 175). Refer to *B'toraso Yehegeh* 1:page 339:footnote 11.

37. See *Pri Megadim*, *Eishel Avraham* 155:1.

38. *Shach*, Y.D. 246:5, *Chai Adam* 1:10:3, *Mishnah Berurah* 155:3.

39. See *Massei Ish* 2:page 59. Refer to *Igros Moshe*, Y.D. 4:36:5.

40. Refer to *Aderes Tiferes* 1:5.

## Tutoring

One who makes money through tutoring on the side to supplement one's income may not count that time toward setting aside time for learning.<sup>41</sup>

## What to Learn

Many people who work tend to learn mostly Daf Yomi, which is very valuable.<sup>42</sup> While it is wonderful to be part of such a program and finish *masechtos*, it should not be the only learning one does.

The *poskim* stress that the point of learning is to know what one can and cannot do. This can only be accomplished through the learning of halachah.<sup>43</sup> One who learns halachah each day is guaranteed to enter into Olam Haba.<sup>44</sup>

One should not make excuses that learning halachah is

41. *Shaarei Teshuvah* 155:1, *Pischei Teshuvah*, Y.D. 246:2. If one gets paid from a yeshiva, it is questionable whether this counts as setting aside time for learning (*ibid.*). See *Moadim V'zemanim* 8:318:page 79. As mentioned above, the halachah does not apply to someone who learns all day.

42. *Igros Moshe*, Y.D. 2:110. See *Birchei Yosef*, Y.D. 246:4. Refer to *Igros Moshe*, Y.D. 4:32. On questions that arise regarding learning Daf Yomi, see *Kol HaTorah* 43:pages 50-53. In regards to learning Gemara and whether one should learn the different *masechtos* in order, see *Ohr Yisrael* 47:pages 215-226.

When learning Gemara, one should first learn the *masechtos* that are most relevant, such as *Chullin*, *Shabbos*, and *Berachos* (*Sefer Chassidim* 1011). The reason why yeshivos start with *masechtos* relating to *Nashim* and *Nezikin* is because they open up one's mind to learning (*K'rayna D'igrisa* 2:1).

43. *Drisha*, Y.D. 246:1, *Shach*, Y.D. 246:5, *Chai Adam* 1:10:3, *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 155:1, *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 3:4, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 27:3, *Mishnah Berurah* 155:3, *Shem Olam* 2:7, *Aruch Hashulchan*, Y.D. 246:17, *Shearim Metzuyanim B'halachah* 27:5, *K'rayna D'igrisa* 2:1, *Be'er Moshe* 3:176. See *Mishneh Halachos* 6:165, 8:247, 12:127, 133, *Tzitz Eliezer* 12:93, *Yabea Omer*, C.M. 7:1:8. Refer to *Be'er Moshe* 8:108 regarding the importance of learning *hilchos niddah*. See *Sefer Chassidim* 744. Some suggest that if one is beginning to learn halachah, he should start with the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (*Mishneh Halachos* 7:159, see 6:165). Refer to *Mishneh Halachos* 12:124 regarding those yeshivos that do not have halachah *sedarim*.

44. *Maseches Megillah* 28b. See *Tzitz Eliezer* 12:93, *V'ein Lamo Michshol* 7:pages 198-199.



too difficult since it is in Hebrew and hard to understand. Today, there are many English books on halachah that one can learn from.<sup>45</sup>

If one does not set aside time to learn Torah, when he leaves this world what will he answer when he was asked if he set aside time to learn?<sup>46</sup>

Each person is supposed to know *Orach Chaim*, some of *Yoreh Deah* (some sections may not apply today), all of *Choshen Mishpat*, and *Even Ha'ezer*.<sup>47</sup> When one only focuses on learning Gemara without practical halachah, he is missing out on the goal of learning: to know how to act, as well as to bring him closer to Hashem<sup>48</sup> (which can be done by learning other topics as well as halachah).<sup>49</sup> For example, if one does not learn *hilchos Shabbos* he will transgress *d'Oraisa* prohibitions every Shabbos.<sup>50</sup>

If one has a choice between learning Daf Yomi or learning halachah, and he will not have time every day for both, he should learn halachah.<sup>51</sup>

## Working Vs. Learning

We mentioned above that some people wished to learn all day and were not successful. Below we will discuss whether it is ideal to try and learn all day and be supported by others, or whether one should go to work and support oneself, although he will learn less.

45. *Mishnah Berurah* 155:9.

46. *Biur Halachah* 155, "eis." Refer to *Nefesh Shimshon (HaTorah V'kinyanehu)*, pages 231-240.

47. *Aruch Hashulchan*, Y.D. 246:17. See *Be'er Moshe* 3:176.

48. *Sefer Chassidim* 17.

49. *Aruch Hashulchan*, Y.D. 246:17.

50. See *Yechaveh Daas* 6:52; Introduction to *Mishnah Berurah* volume 3. See *Shem Olam* 2:7, *Shem Olam (Shabbos)* 5.

51. *Yechaveh Daas* 6:52.

איזן ער לערנדיג? האט ער געמאכט אלץ ווי אמתות של הלכה בלעב... (ברכות ה')

The Rambam famously uses strong words against those who feel that they should learn all day and be supported by others.<sup>52</sup> He says that one who does so is disgracing the Torah and detracts from his Olam Haba.

However, many argue with this premise<sup>53</sup> and say that obviously, one who can support himself should do so.<sup>54</sup> However, if Rabbanim or others in such positions wouldn't take money for their jobs, then Torah would not be taught.<sup>55</sup> People can't survive while learning all day and not getting paid for it.<sup>56</sup> The same is true for rebbeim and those who learn in *kollel*.<sup>57</sup>

Some say that if one is learning all day and being supported, and he says to himself that perhaps he should take the Rambam seriously and go work, he is giving in to his *yetzer hara*.<sup>58</sup> This is not for everyone who is learning, and one should make sure to think long and hard before being supported by other people when sitting in *kollel*.

52. Rambam on explanation of *Mishnayos, Maseches Avos* 4:6, *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 3:10-11. See *Igros Moshe, Y.D.* 4:36:4.

53. Refer to *Piskei Teshuvos* 156:1. See *Biur Halachah* 231, "b'chol," 306 "v'lilamdo," *D'rayan D'grisa* 1:52.

54. See *Biur Halachah* 156, "sofo."

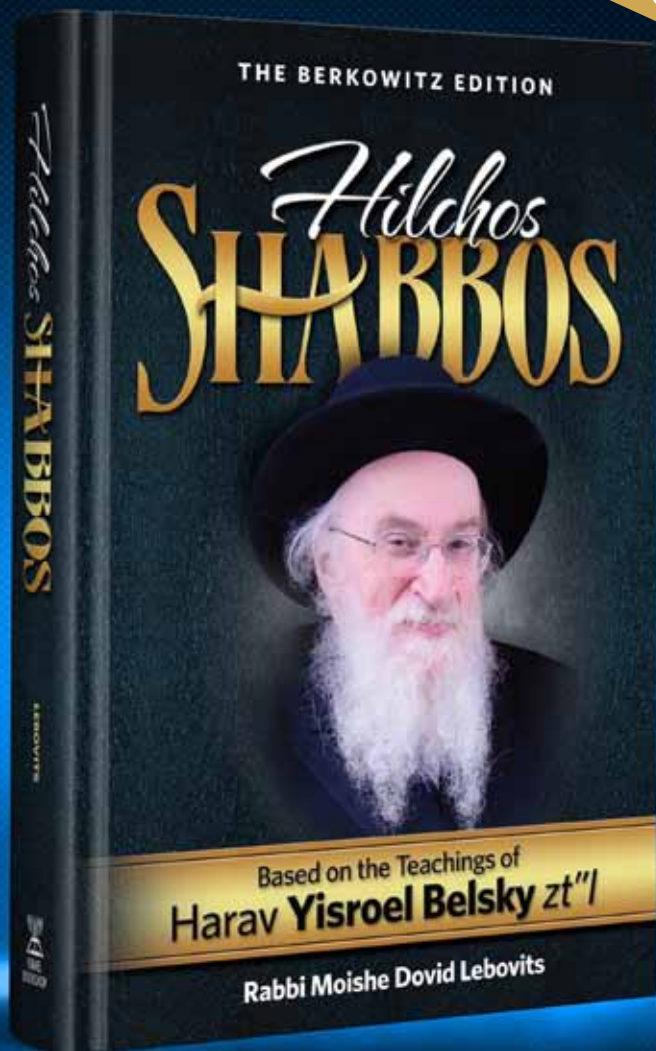
55. See *Rashbatz* 1:142, *Yam Shel Shlomo, Maseches Chullin* 3:9, *Kesef Mishnah, Hilchos Talmud Torah* 3:10. Refer to *Yabea Omer, Y.D.* 7:17:3. Rabbis used to teach and didn't have options of going to college. Today they can technically go but choose not to. Therefore, the salaries for rebbeim are higher, resulting in the raise in tuition (Harav Herschel Shachter, *shlita*).

56. *Levush, Y.D.* 246:25,

57. *Igros Moshe, Y.D.* 2:116, 4:36:3-4. See *Rema, Y.D.* 246:21, *Shach* 20. Refer to *Hilchos HaGra U'minhagav*, pages 205-206.

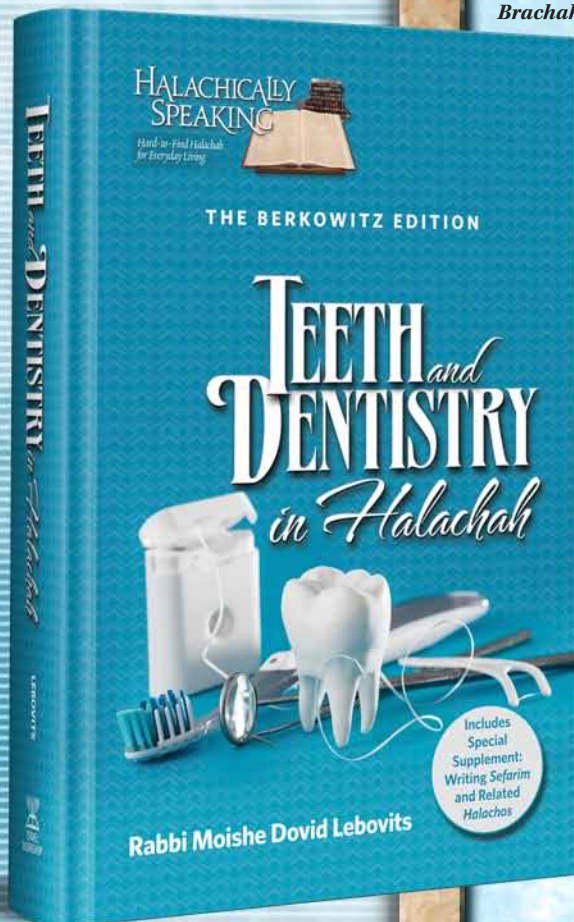
58. *Igros Moshe, Y.D.* 2:116.

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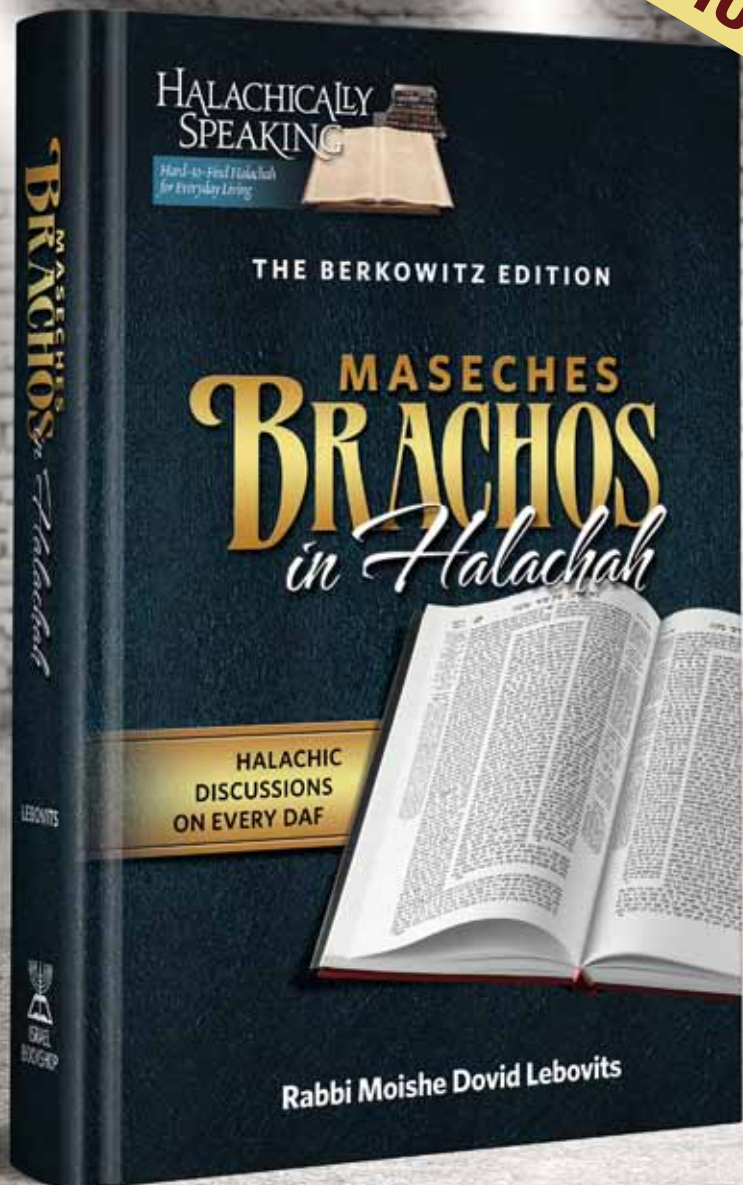


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