

HALACHICALLY SPEAKING

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{ TOPIC }

Visiting and Praying for a Non-Jew



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► 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 *zt"l*. 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, *zt"l* on current issues.

WHERE TO SEE HALACHICALLY SPEAKING

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Visiting and Praying for a Non-Jew

If one's non-Jewish coworker or neighbor is sick, is one permitted to visit him?

Visiting a Non-Jew

One may visit a non-Jew who is sick because of peace.¹ This is even if one goes specially to visit a non-Jew and not only to visit a Jew.²

The halachos that apply to visiting a Jew who is sick does not apply to a non-Jew. Therefore, when visiting a non-Jew one can visit during the first and last three hours of the day, he can sit on a higher bench than the sick person, and he does not have to ask for mercy for this person.³

Praying For a Non-Jew

Non-Jewish coworkers, neighbors, or clients often ask Jews to pray for them if they are ill. Is there any issue with doing so?

We find that throughout history, many Jewish people have prayed for non-Jews.

We find that Avraham Avinu prayed for the people of

1 Maseches Gittin 61a, Rambam, Hilchos Avel 14:12, Shulchan Aruch, Y.D. 151:12, Tur 335, Shulchan Aruch 9, Levush 9, Chochmas Adam 151:6, Aruch Hashulchan 11. For an explanation on this, refer to Mitzvas Bikur Cholim, page 375. One is permitted to daven for a sick non-Jew to get better as well (refer to Chaim B'Yad 33, Beis Shearim, Y.D. 229, Yechaveh Daas 6:60).

2 Prisha 16, Shach 8, Levush 9, Gra, Shevet Yehudah 335:9; see Rashi, Maseches Gittin, ibid., "im"; Rambam, Hilchos Melachim 10:12. Refer to Bach, Y.D. 151:1.

3 Mitzvas Bikur Cholim, page 376.

Sedom.⁴ We also know that Avraham Avinu prayed for Avimelech.⁵ Some maintain that although Hashem told Avraham to pray for Avimelech, since it was for the benefit of the Jewish people, one cannot bring a proof from this to pray for other non-Jews.⁶

Moshe prayed for the Mitzrim on three separate occasions. First he prayed that Hashem should remove the *makkah* of frogs from the Mitzrim, and Hashem answered him.⁷ Then he prayed that Hashem should remove the *makkah* of *arov*, and Hashem answered him.⁸ Hashem also answered Moshe when he prayed that He remove the *makkah* of locusts.⁹ Some want to say that praying for a non-Jew with intentions to save the entire Jewish nation is permitted, but in a regular situation praying for a non-Jew would not be allowed.¹⁰ In addition, everyone knew that Hashem brought the *makkos* and could also remove them.¹¹

Shlomo Hamelech told Hashem that when a non-Jew comes to pray at the Beis Hamikdash, he should be granted whatever he asks.¹²

The Sefer Chassidim¹³ says that if one sends a non-Jew to a faraway place, he may pray for his safe return.¹⁴

4 Bereishis Rabbah 39:6.

5 See Beis Shearim, Y.D. 229. See Shulchan Aruch 158:1, Avodah Zarah 26a.

6 Chukey Hachaim, Parshas Va'eira, page 45.

7 Shemos 8:8-10.

8 Shemos 8:26-27.

9 Shemos 10:18-19.

10 Chukey Hachai, Parashas Va'eira, page 45.

11 Ibid.

12 Melachim 1:8:41-43.

13 257.

14 Daas Torah, Y.D. 151:19, Orchos Matanah, page 292.

It says Charvona was remembered for good.¹⁵ He spoke good about Jews so he was given good.¹⁶ The Sefer Chassidim¹⁷ says that if a non-Jew did good for Jews, one can daven to Hashem on his behalf.

Although the halachah says one may not lift a non-Jew (if there will be no animosity), praying for him is not included in this halachah since he is not doing an action with his hands that lifts him.¹⁸ A proof to this concept is from Megillas Esther. As we know, Mordechai overheard the plot of Bigsan and Seresh to kill Achashveirosh, and Mordechai saved Achashveirosh from this plan. How was this possible if we don't lift up non-Jews when there is no animosity? There would have been no animosity toward Mordechai, since no one knew that he overheard their plot. However, saving a non-Jew either through prayer or being instrumental in saving a non-Jew is permitted.¹⁹

The Gemara in *Berachos*²⁰ discusses a situation where Bruriah told her husband that it would be better to pray that the sins of non-Jews go away and they should improve their actions than they should die.

It is clear from many of the above sources that one is allowed to pray for a non-Jew to be healed.²¹

15 Maseches Sofrim 14:3.

16 Sefer Chassidim 756. See Sefer Chassidim 790, 982. Refer to Yerushalmi Megillah.

17 790.

18 Beis Shearim, Y.D. 229.

19 Beis Shearim, Y.D. 229.

20 10a.

21 Refer to Beis Shearim, Y.D. 229, Darchei Teshuvah, Y.D. 158:3, Yechaveh Daas 6:60, Yalkut Yosef (kitzur), O.C. 328:155, Nishmas Avraham, Y.D. 335:23, Birchos Avos 42, Divrei Binyahu, Y.D. 6:35, opinion of Harav Chaim Kanievesky, shlita, quoted in Derech Sichah 1:page 544, Chazon Eliyahu 1:page 216:12, Asei Lecha Rav 9:page 72, V'ein Lamo Michshol 6:pages 240-242, Ateres Paz, E.H. 5:pages 176-177, B'orach Tzedakah, page 61:24. See Sdei Tzofim, Maseches Gittin 57b.

כל השנה הלכות בכל יום מובטח לו שהוא בן עולם הבא... (תורה עב)

Convert Praying for a Non-Jewish Parent

May a convert pray for his non-Jewish parent?

A factor to be lenient in this case is that the convert's parents brought him into this world, giving him the ability to become who he is today. Therefore, one may pray for a non-Jewish parent (and even recite Kaddish after the parent dies).²²

Non-Jew Who Dies

If one is pained by the passing of a non-Jew, such as a co-worker or client, he may say *Baruch Dayan Ha'Emes* upon hearing of his death.²³

There is a discussion whether praying for a non-Jew after who died helps.²⁴

Praying for the Government²⁵

Is one permitted to pray for the well-being of the government?²⁶

The Mishnah in *Maseches Avos*²⁷ says one should pray for the peace of the kingdom, because if there was no peace everyone would take advantage of each other. The Gemara mentions this Mishnah and says if not for the government one would take advantage of his friend.²⁸

22 Yechaveh Daas 6:60, Zekan Aharon 2:87.

23 Chaim B'Yad 33.

24 Refer to Mekabtzel (journal) 35:pages 91-93.

25 Regarding a prayer for Jewish kings, see Melachim 1:8:66, Tosefta, Maseches Sukkah 4:17, Rashi, Maseches Rosh Hashanah 4b, "peh yayin reish," Maseches Sukkah 48a, Rashi, "berachah"; Rashi, Maseches Yoma 3a, "berachah," Radak on Tehillim 72:15, Rashi, Ezra 6:10, "dei." In regards to the prayer for the government of Eretz Yisrael, see Ohr Hamizrach 27:pages 213-220.

26 For a discussion on this, see Kol HaTorah (journal) 64:pages 176-181 I depth.

27 3:2. See Yirmiyahu 26:7.

28 Maseches Avodah Zarah 4a. See Maharsha, Maseches Yoma 69a.

The Meiri²⁹ says one should daven for the government even if it does things that are sometimes not to one's liking.

The *tefillah* does not mention a single king but rather a kingdom, since this applies even when there is a democracy.³⁰ This also means all of the governments' officers.³¹

This *tefillah*³² is said in some places after *leining* on Shabbos.³³ The *tefillah* has had many different *nusachs* throughout the years. While the simple meaning of the *tefillah* is that it refers to a non-Jewish government,³⁴ Rabbeinu Yona³⁵ says one should pray for the peace in the entire world. Is this *tefillah* an obligation or a nice thing to do?

Some maintain that it is a nice thing to do,³⁶ while other say it is an obligation.³⁷ However, many do not say this *tefillah*. Why is this so? It is possible that since this *tefillah* is said so we can have peace with the non-Jews, this may only be an issue if the non-Jews know we are saying it. In shuls where non-Jews have no idea what we say and don't say, not

29 Maseches Shabbos 11a, "I'olam."

30 Tiferes Yisrael, Avos 3:2.

31 Tosfas Yom Tov, Avos 3:2.

32 Regarding the nusach of the tefillah, see Magen Avraham, O.C. 284:7, Machatzis Hashekel 7. If one should say the tefillah in English, see Keser Shem Tov, page 420.

33 Refer to Tiferes Yisrael, Avos 3:2; Seder Hayom, Kol Bo 20, Avudraham Seder Shacharis Shel Shabbos, Shurei Knesses Hagedolah, O.C. 284:5, Aruch Hashulchan 284:15; see Avudraham, Dinei Krias Torah (even during the week). Refer to Nodeh B'Yehudah, tanina E.H. 88 (end).

34 Rashi, Avos 3:2; Rabbeinu B'Chai, Avos 3:2, Maharal, Be'er Hagolah Be'er Shevi.

35 Avos 3:2.

36 A proof to this is the fact that the tefillah is not included in the Rambam or Shulchan Aruch like other berachos (see Kol HaTorah (journal) 64:page 177.

37 Meiri, Maseches Avodah Zarah 4a, Kesav Sofer, O.C. 1. See Chasam Sofer 5 hashmatos 190.

איזן ער אונזערע אמונות פארן גאנצן וועלט (ברכות ה.)

mentioning this *tefillah* would not be an issue.³⁸ There is no issue of “*lo sichaneim*” with those who do say the *tefillah*, since a functional government is for our benefit as well.³⁹

The reason this *tefillah* is said on Shabbos is because the shul is filled with people, and it is an honor to say it then. This is why the *sefer Torah* is held as well.⁴⁰

A proof to pray for the well-being of the government is brought from the fact that Mordechai told Esther to tell Achashveirosh that Bigsan and Seresh wanted to kill him.⁴¹

One is allowed to wish a non-Jew success in his endeavors since it is *derech erez*.⁴²

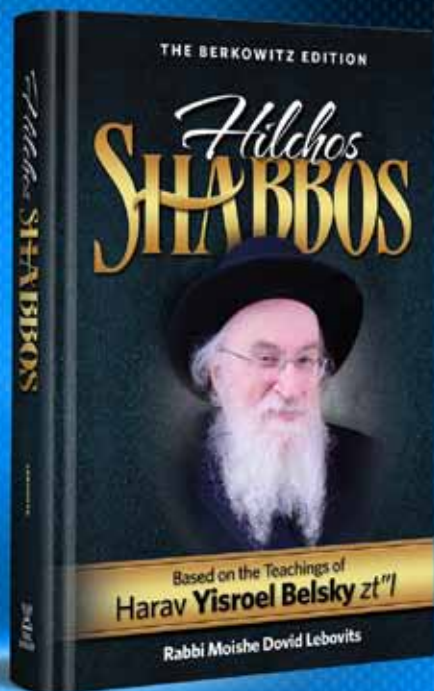
38 Kol HaTorah 64:pages 178-179.

39 Kol HaTorah (journal), *ibid*.

40 Kol HaTorah (journal), page 178.

41 Refer to Kol HaTorah (journal) 64:page 177.

42 Magen Avraham 347:4, Mishnah Berurah 7; see Kol HaTorah 64:page 179.

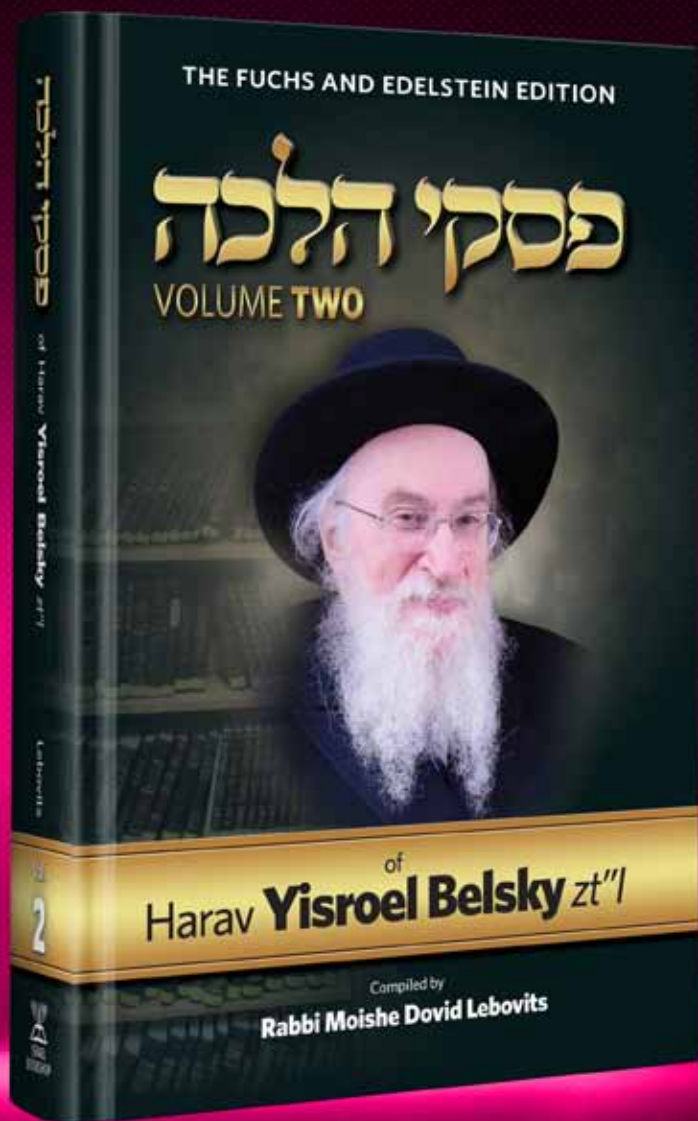


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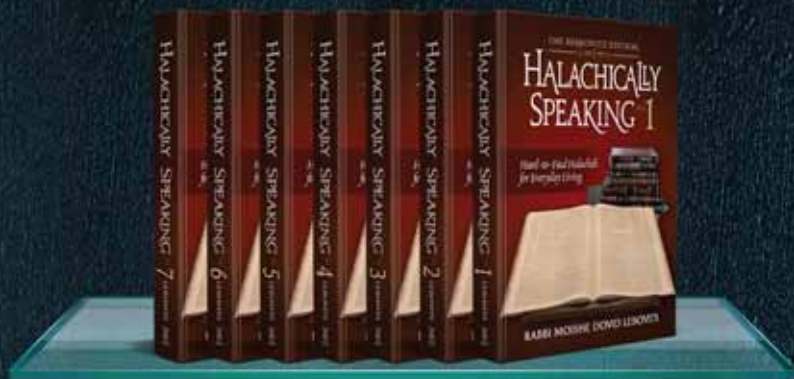


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