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{ TOPIC }

Gloves in Halachah



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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.

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Gloves in Halachah

People wear gloves for many different reasons: cold weather, to avoid germs when a virus is circulating, and to avoid touching food with bare hands.

If a person is cold, is he permitted to wear gloves when davening? If one uses the bathroom while wearing gloves, does he have to wash his hands? What if he wears gloves in a cemetery — is he required to wash his hands upon leaving? May one wear gloves on Shabbos in a place that does not have an *eruv*?

Washing Hands After Using a Restroom

When one uses the restroom, he is required to wash his hands.¹ There are those who maintain that there is a *ruach ra* even in today's restrooms, which are constructed differently than they used to be. In today's restrooms, one is able to flush and wash away garbage. Therefore, one who wishes to wear plastic gloves in the bathroom so he does not get germs on his hands would exempt himself from washing his hands when leaving the restroom.² This is especially applicable when one is traveling and he does not have water to wash his hands when leaving the bathroom (e.g., the sink is not working).³

The Shevet Hakehasi⁴ was lenient regarding one who tans animal skins and wears thick gloves, and it is a big bother for him to remove them when he uses the restroom. He therefore does not have to remove his gloves and may continue his work without washing his hands.

1 *Shulchan Aruch* 4:18.

2 See *Meishiv Nevonim* 4:1. Refer to *Avnei Derech* 8:11; *Mishneh Halachos* 15:4.

3 *Meishiv Nevonim* 2:2.

4 4:52.

איזן ער אפילו גענוצט אלץ אים צו וואשן זיין האנטער נאך דעם באניצן פון דעם באטערעם? (פרק ה')

There are times when one is required to wear gloves so he does not get his hands wet (e.g., he has an infection that must remain dry). If he wears gloves he does not have to wash his hands when exiting the restroom.⁵

One who draws blood from others should wash his hands when he is done. However, this is not the case if one is wearing gloves (which is standard practice) when drawing blood from others.

Sleeping with Gloves

There are two reasons why we wash our hands upon awakening in the morning. One reason is that since we woke up from our sleep, we are new creatures and this requires washing our hands. Another reason is that while we are sleeping, there is a *ruach ra* on our hands, which we wash off upon awakening.⁶ If one sleeps with gloves, the latter reason would not apply. The Biur Halachah⁷ says that in this case, one should wash his hands without a *brachah*.⁸

Coloring *Retzuos* with Gloves

Harav Chaim Kanievsky *shlita*⁹ permits one to color the *retzuos* of tefillin while wearing gloves in order to avoid getting one's hands dirty.

Davening with Gloves

Some people wear gloves when davening because of germs, while some may wear them because of the cold,

⁵ *Piskei Shlomo* 1, page 11.

⁶ *Mishnah Berurah* 4:1 quotes both opinions.

⁷ 4:13 "kol." Refer to *Nemukey Orach Chaim* 4:1, who says one should wash his hands the usual way even with gloves.

⁸ *Leket Sheilos Hametzuos* 5, page 37. See *Piskei Teshuvos Divrei Binyahu*, page 104, 24; *Yabea Omer* O.C. 4:2:8-11. For a discussion on this, see *Tzohar* 10, pages 508-509.

⁹ *Daas Noteh* 3, page 333.

such as in a shul where the heating system is broken. The Bach¹⁰ says that wearing gloves during davening is an issue of haughtiness.¹¹ It seems that the issue of wearing gloves during davening centers around wearing them during *Shemoneh Esrei*, as opposed to other parts of *davening*.¹²

The Notech Sorek¹³ says that it is better to daven alone without wearing gloves than with a minyan while wearing gloves, since it is a disgrace to daven this way before Hashem.

The Be'er Moshe¹⁴ maintains if one must wear gloves because of extreme cold then he may do so.¹⁵ In the same vein, one may wear plastic disposable gloves if he is doing so in order to avoid catching a virus such as COVID-19.

Gloves during *Birkas Kohanim*

A *kohen* who has cuts or bruises on his hands may wear gloves during *duchaning*. There is no issue of a *kohen* wearing something on his hands while *duchaning*, and it is not a sign of haughtiness to *duchan* while wearing gloves.¹⁶

Sefer Torah and Gloves

The Torah Lishmah¹⁷ says that it is not honor for a *sefer Torah* to be held with gloves while *leining*. However, other

¹⁰ 91.

¹¹ *Mishnah Berurah* 91:12; *Halichos Chaim* 1, page 19:22.

¹² However, see *Daas Notech* 1, page 282:109.

¹³ *O.C.* 6.

¹⁴ 4:39.

¹⁵ *Halichos Shlomo Tefillah* 2:18, *Piskei Shlomo* 4, page 35; *Ohr Yitzchak* 1:48, *Avnei Derech* 1:11.

¹⁶ *Beer Moshe* 4:39; *Maasei Nissim* 2:52.

¹⁷ 26.

אין לו להקדיש "ה בעולמו אלא י' אמות של הלכה בלבד".... (ברכות ה')

poskim say that if it is cold, it is permitted to hold a *sefer Torah* while wearing gloves.¹⁸

One who performs *gelilah* on a *sefer Torah* while wearing gloves is not showing proper honor to the *sefer Torah*.¹⁹

The *Shulchan Aruch*²⁰ says that one should not touch the *klaf* of the *sefer Torah* with bare hands, but one may do so while wearing gloves.²¹

The *Pischei Teshuvah*²² says that even if it is very cold where a *sofer* is working, it is a lack of honor to the *sefer Torah* for gloves to be worn while it is being written.²³

Holding Food while Wearing Gloves

In order to concentrate properly on the *brachah* being recited, one should hold his food or drink in his right hand²⁴ before reciting the *brachah*.²⁵ When eating, one can hold the in any hand he wishes.²⁶

18 *Ohel Yaakov (Sefer Torah)*, page 256:4, quoting the opinion of Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt"l*.

19 *Yalkut Yosef* 147, footnote 1.

20 *O.C.* 147:1.

21 *Teshuvos Avigdor Halevi, O.C.*, page 179:39.

22 *Y.D.* 271:19.

23 Refer to *Chashukei Chemed, Maseches Gittin*, pages 148-149, in regard to writing a *get* while wearing gloves.

24 *Shulchan Aruch* 206:4.

25 Refer to *Berachos* 43b, *Rashi*, "b'shemem," *Rosh* 6:39, *Tiferes Yisrael* 20, *Rif, Mordechai* 149, *Rambam, Hilchos Berachos* 7:14, *Shulchan Aruch* 206:4, *Levush* 4, *Ateres Zekeinim, Shulchan Aruch Harav* 8, *T'zlach Maseches Berachos*, pages 183-184, *Mishnah Berurah* 17-18, *Aruch Hashulchan* 7, *Ben Ish Chai Balak* 1:14. One should not recite a *brachah* on food if the food is being held in one's hands while wearing gloves (*Kaf Hachaim* 206:32). In regard to holding a *shofar* in one's right hand, refer to *Siddur Yaavetz* page 290, *Matei Ephraim* 585:3, *Elef Hamugen* 7, *Kaf Hachaim* 14, *Minhag Yisrael Torah* 585:6, *Mekroei Kodesh, Yamim Noraim, siman* 12:pages 28-32, *Piskei Teshuvos* 585:page 217. Some are careful to always hold the food in the right hand, even when not reciting a *brachah* (refer to *Piskei Teshuvos* 206:footnote 50).

26 *Shaarei Habrachah* 10:23, footnote 62.

When holding food, one should refrain from wearing gloves.²⁷ The Yalkut Yosef²⁸ says that if one is cold, he may hold the food with gloves.

Covering Hands When Washing for Bread

Some *poskim* are of the opinion that one is not allowed to eat bread if there is no water, even if he wraps his hands with a towel.²⁹ Gloves may also be used.³⁰ Others maintain that if there is no water, one is permitted to wrap his hands in a towel or bag in order not to touch the bread.³¹ This is only if there is no water behind him within³² a *mil* (18 minutes) and in front of him for four *mil*³³ (72 minutes).³⁴ This *shiur* applies even today when traveling by car.³⁵ Some say that one should only wrap his hands if he is very hungry.³⁶ One who is home and has no water is only obligated to travel 18 minutes to find water.³⁷ One who is in doubt whether he will find water

27 *Magen Avraham* 167:9; *Rivevos Ephraim* 8:578:1, *Shaarei Habrachah*, *ibid.* Refer to *Mishnah Berurah* 167:23. See *Menachem Meishiv*, O.C. 27, who differentiates between gloves that cover the entire hand and gloves where each finger is covered individually.

28 Page 461.

29 *Tur* 163. Refer to *Pri Megadim*, *Eishel Avraham* 163:1. Any object may be used, not only a towel (*Mishnah Berurah* 163:5).

30 *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 40:14.

31 Refer to *Rambam*, *Hilchos Brachos* 6:18.

32 *Elyah Rabbah* 163:1; *Mishnah Berurah* 3.

33 Refer to *Rivevos Ephraim* 1:124, 2:90, 3:472, and 5:134:2.

34 *Beis Yosef* 163; *Darchei Moshe* 1; *Shulchan Aruch* 1; *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 1; *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 40:14; *Chayei Adam* 40:11; *Mishnah Berurah* 4; *Aruch Hashulchan* 2. Refer to *Chullin* 107b.

35 *Biur Halachah* 163, “*b’rachok*”; *Ohalecha B’amisecha* 11:2. See *Az Nidberu* 6:66, which explains a contradiction from *Mishnah Berurah* 92:17.

36 *Biur Halachah*, *ibid.*

37 *Chayei Adam* 40:11; *Mishnah Berurah* 163:3; *Kaf Hachaim* 3. See *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 1 and *Tehillah L’Dovid*, which are stringent.

does not have to go look for it and may wrap his hands in a towel (if he is very hungry).³⁸

Some *poskim* say that one may avoid touching bread by eating it with a spoon,³⁹ while many question this leniency.⁴⁰

Most *poskim* are of the opinion that even though one is only eating with one hand, both hands should be covered.⁴¹ It must be emphasized that the *hands* have to be wrapped, and one should not take a bag and hold the bread with it.⁴²

***Bentching* with Gloves**

When *bentching* over a cup of wine, one should not wear gloves while holding the cup (even when it is very cold).⁴³

Plastic Gloves on Shabbos

Plastic disposable gloves are not *muktzah* on Shabbos.⁴⁴

One who wishes to save money and wash disposable plastic gloves when they become soiled may not do so on Shabbos. This is an issue of laundering on Shabbos.⁴⁵ One is allowed to use plastic gloves to wash dishes on Shabbos even though the gloves will inevitably get clean from the soap.⁴⁶

38 *Biur Halachah* 163, “ein.” Refer to *Magen Avraham* 163:1; *Be’er Heiteiv* 1; *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 1; *Chayei Adam* 40:11; *Mishnah Berurah* 3; *Aruch Hashulchan* 2; see *Pri Megadim*, E.A. 1.

39 *Rema* 163:1; *Levush* 1.

40 Refer to *Elyah Rabbah* 163:4; *Pri Megadim*, E.A. 1; *Sha’ar Hatzion* 4; *Aruch Hashulchan* 2; *Rivevos Ephraim* 8:88:3 and 8:393:2.

41 *Mishnah Berurah* 163:5; *Biur Halachah*, “yadav.”

42 *Tzitz Eliezer* 8:7:6 and 8:7:8; *Avnei Yashpei* 2:11:6; *Sha’arei Habrachah*, page 4, footnote 21.

43 *Magen Avraham* 183:6; *Yalkut Yosef* 183:6.

44 *Shalmei Yehudah*, page 160:4.

45 *Orchos Shabbos* 13:6.

46 *Ibid.*, footnote 8.

Wearing Gloves in Place with no *Eruv*

Due to the concern that one will remove his gloves to shake his friend's hand, gloves are not worn on Shabbos in a place that does not have an *eruv*.⁴⁷ If one tends to develop chapped or bleeding hands due to cold weather, he may wear gloves on Shabbos. However, if wearing gloves is for the sole convenience of keeping one's hands warm, one should not wear them on Shabbos.⁴⁸

Women may wear gloves since they don't shake hands when greeting each other. There is no concern that they will come to carry gloves in a place without an *eruv* on Shabbos.⁴⁹

If one does not shake hands with others due to fear of contracting COVID-19, one may wear gloves in the cold even if there is no *eruv*. If he meets his friend in the street he will not remove his gloves in order to shake hands.⁵⁰

The *Mishneh Halachos*⁵¹ was asked whether a woman who wears gloves on Shabbos may go outside in place that does not have an *eruv* with rings and other jewelry that is covered by gloves. He concludes that there is no issue at all with wearing jewelry, even if it is covered by gloves. A woman

47 *Beis Yosef* 301; *Shulchan Aruch* 37; *Mishnah Berurah* 141; *Aruch Hashulchan* 105; *Shulchan Halevi Hebrew* 1, page 111:4, *The Shabbos Home* 1, pages 124-125, *Avnei Yushpei* 1:74; *Rivevos Ephraim* 6:195; *Tzitz Eliezer* 13:49; *Chut Shani Shabbos* 4, page 140; *Yesodei Yeshurun* 5, page 23; *Orchos Shabbos* 28:125. The *Aruch Hashulchan*, *ibid.*, is lenient if it is very cold outside. Some are lenient for women (opinion of Harav Elyashiv *zt"l*, expressed in *Ashrei Ha'ish, O.C.* 2, page 143, 14; see *Divrei Chachamim*, page 97:270).

48 Harav Yisroel Belsky *zt"l*. If it is cold outside and one will not remove his gloves, then gloves may be worn outside on Shabbos in a place that does not have an *eruv* (opinion of Harav Tuvia Goldstein *zt"l*, as related by Harav Yisroel Dov Webster, *shlita*).

49 Harav Yisroel Belsky *zt"l*, as mentioned in *Shulchan Halevi*, *ibid.*

50 Opinion of Harav Asher Weiss *shlita*, as quoted in *Minchas Asher (Corona)*, pages 23-24.

51 4:40.

may also wear jewelry that is covered by a coat, such as a necklace.

Often, children's gloves are attached to a coat to ensure that they do not get lost. One may not walk out with such a coat on Shabbos in a place that does not have an *eruv*. If the gloves are sewn into the coat, which is usually not the case, then it would be permitted since they are viewed as an extension of the sleeve.⁵²

Separate Shabbos Gloves

The Chasam Sofer had separate gloves for Shabbos.⁵³

Disposable Gloves for Pesach

On Pesach, one should refrain from using gloves with powder since it is possible the powder has *chametz* derivatives or is made from *chametz* itself. There is a concern that the powder will attach to one's hand and then to the food, and one will subsequently eat it.⁵⁴

Tishah B'Av

Some *poskim* say that if one is concerned about insects being attracted to dishes that were used by children on Tishah B'Av, and one wishes to wash them, gloves should be worn to avoid water touching one's hands. It is preferable to use cold water, but if hot water is used then gloves should be worn.⁵⁵

Yom Kippur

There is no reason for a doctor to wear gloves in order to avoid washing his hands after handling a sick person on Yom

⁵² *Chut Shani Shabbos* 4, page 140.

⁵³ *Divrei Yisrael* 1:76.

⁵⁴ *Ohel Yaakov (Pesach)*, page 105.

⁵⁵ *Mitzvas Hanashim*, page 184:8; *Rivevos Ephraim* 5:376:6.

Kippur.⁵⁶ Either way, doctors typically wear gloves to avoid germs.

Disrespect for Mitzvos

The Gemara says that wearing gloves when performing a mitzvah is a sign of disrespect. This is true even if one's hands will become dirty in the course of performing the mitzvah and one is merely wearing the gloves in order to keep them clean.⁵⁷

The Gemara⁵⁸ discusses a *kohen* who would wear silk gloves when performing the service in the Beis Hamikdash, so that his hands would not become soiled by the blood of the *korbanos*. The *chachamim* strongly criticized him for this practice due to the requirement that the *kohen's* hands must come into contact with the utensils he uses to perform the *avodah*. These gloves were considered to be a *chatzitzah*. In addition, the *kohen's* preoccupation with the possibility of getting blood on his hands as part of the *avodah* was considered to be disrespectful toward the service.

The Mishnah Berurah⁵⁹ says that one should not hold the *lulav* while wearing gloves.⁶⁰

Separate Gloves for Meat and Dairy

Some *poskim* say that one should use separate gloves for meat and dairy when washing dishes, since some meat or dairy may be absorbed into the gloves. However, in most

⁵⁶ *Be'er Yisrael* (Yamim Noraim), page 89.

⁵⁷ *Maseches Pesachim* 57a.

⁵⁸ *Maseches Kerios* 28b; Rashi, "karich."

⁵⁹ 651:33. Refer to *Tosfas Maseches Pesachim* 57a "d"karich".

⁶⁰ See *Rivevos Ephraim* 1:421:26.

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cases the water is not hot enough for the meat or dairy to be absorbed into the gloves.⁶¹

Wine Touched by a Non-Jew

According to the Chasam Sofer, if a non-Jew who was wearing gloves touched wine that was not cooked, it is not forbidden to be consumed by a Jew.⁶² However, Harav Moshe Feinstein maintains that wine poured by a non-Jewish waiter who is wearing gloves is not permitted (if the wine is not cooked).⁶³

Gloves during a Bris

The *Chelkas Yaakov*⁶⁴ does not permit a *mohel* to wear gloves to perform a *bris milah* since it is a disgrace to the mitzvah. However, other *poskim* allow the *mohel* to wear disposable gloves to protect himself from the baby's germs.⁶⁵ Harav Hershel Schachter *shlita* encourages *mohelim* to wear gloves, arguing that the *milah* by its very nature is fraught with danger.

Shochet Wearing Gloves

If a *shochet* has cuts on his hands and is unable to *shecht* without wearing gloves due to cold weather, he should not *shecht* while wearing gloves.⁶⁶ However, some *poskim* say that he may wear gloves because of the cold.⁶⁷

When checking the inside of an animal after *shechitah*,

61 Opinion of Harav Elyashiv zt"l, quoted in *Shalmei Yehudah*, page 160, footnote 17. See *Hakashrus*, page 38:18, *Sheilas Shlomo* 1, page 180:305.

62 Y.D. 118.

63 *Igros Moshe*, Y.D. 2:51.

64 3:81. See *Toras Habris*, pages 235-236:4.

65 *Chashukei Chemed*, *Maseches Pesachim*, pages 369-370. See *Otzer Habris* 3, pages 258-259; *Zos Brisi*, pages 109-111.

66 *Be'er Moshe* 4:39.

67 *Igros Moshe*, Y.D. 2:16.

one may not wear gloves since it is not possible to perform a proper inspection with gloves.⁶⁸

Niddah Wearing Gloves

A woman who is a *niddah* may not touch her husband. A husband may not touch his wife even if he is wearing gloves.⁶⁹ However, if a woman's husband is sick and can't put on his tefillin, she may put it on for him while wearing gloves or putting another separation between her hand and his arm.⁷⁰

A husband may not hold his wife's hand during labor since she will become impure, even if he is wearing gloves.⁷¹

Ring on Kallah's Finger

If a *kallah* was wearing gloves and the *chassan* placed the ring on the finger that was covered with a glove, the *kiddushin* is valid. However, the glove should ideally be removed beforehand.⁷²

Performing a Taharah

When one is performing a *taharah* on a deceased person, he should not wear gloves. However, it is permitted if one is concerned about catching a virus or other germs.⁷³

68 *Igros Moshe*, Y.D. 2:16, *Shevet Halevi* 10:114:2.

69 *Darchei Tohar*, page 249:6. So too, a husband should not help his wife get up or lie down even if he is wearing gloves (*Shevet Halevi* 4:106:4).

70 *Be'er Moshe* 4:6, 5:24, *V'ein Lamo Michshol* 2, page 197. Refer to *Nitei Gavriel Niddah* 39:13, who discusses a woman wearing gloves when placing eyedrops in her husband's eye if no one else can do it.

71 *Mishneh Halachos* 13:138. See *Minchas Yitzchak* 5:27. In regard to a husband helping his impure wife bathe a child while wearing gloves, see *Be'er Moshe* 3:139.

72 *Mishneh Halachos* 17, page 17, 6. See *Pischei Teshuvah* E.H. 27:1, *Aruch Hashulchan*, E.H. 27:4, *Avnei Derech* 2:61, *Rivevos Ephraim* 8:578:1, *Yabea Omer*, E.H. 2:16:1, 5:10:3, *Rivevos V'yovlos* 2:181.

73 *Teshuvos V'hanhagos* 2:596:4.

Performing *Chalitzah*

When performing *chalitzah*, one should not take off the *chalitzah* shoe while wearing gloves.⁷⁴

Shaking Hands with Women

One who wishes to shake a woman's hand may not do so even if he is wearing gloves.⁷⁵

Shiluach Hakan

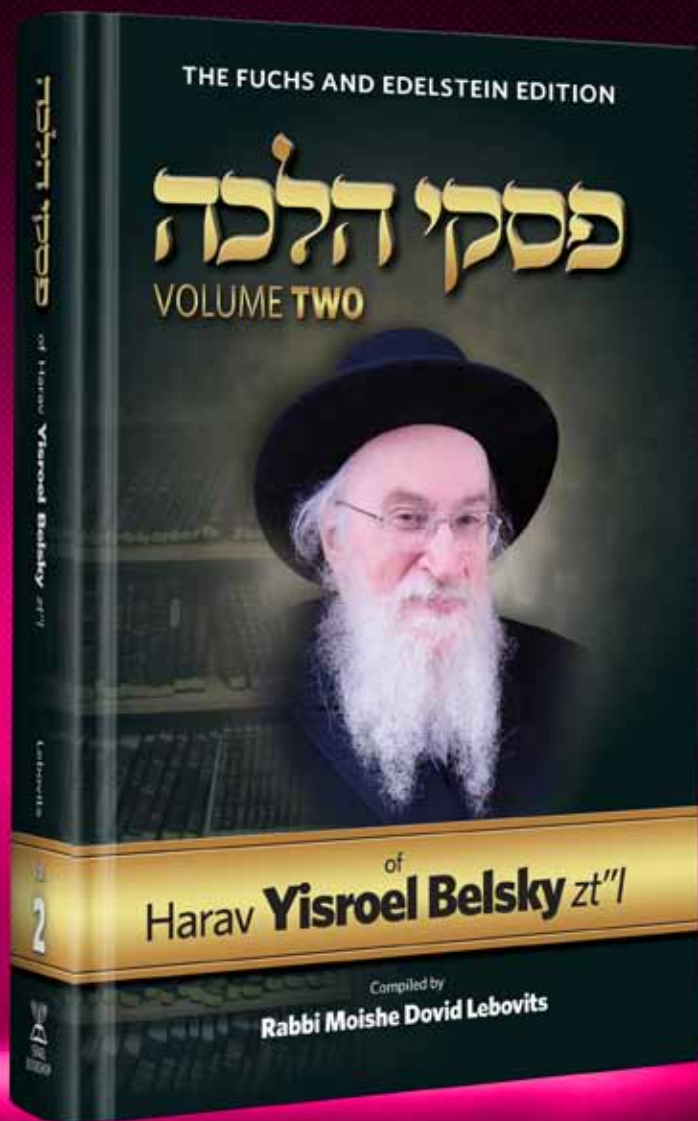
Some say that when performing the mitzvah of *shiluach hakan*, it is proper to send away the mother bird without any *chatitzah*, such as wearing gloves.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ *Chalitzah K'halachah* 32:19.

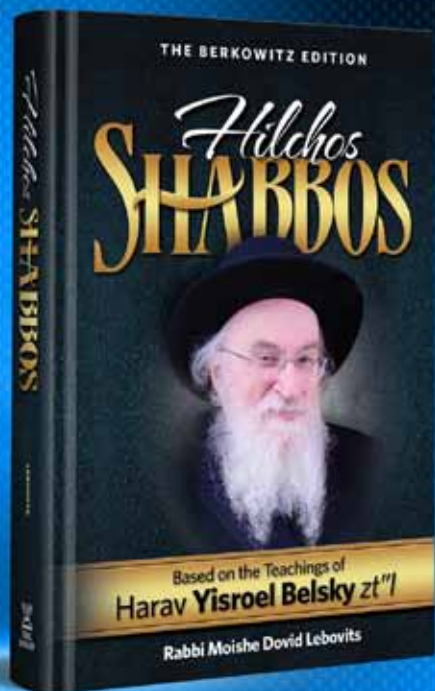
⁷⁵ *Sefer Chassidim* 1090, *Avnei Yushfei* 2:89:1, *Nitei Gavriel (Yichud)* 52:1, *Minchas Yitzchak* 5:27. Refer to *Mishnas Yehoshua (Erusin V'nesuin)* 2:18 regarding helping a woman who fell to the floor.

⁷⁶ *Halichos Chaim* 2, page 147.

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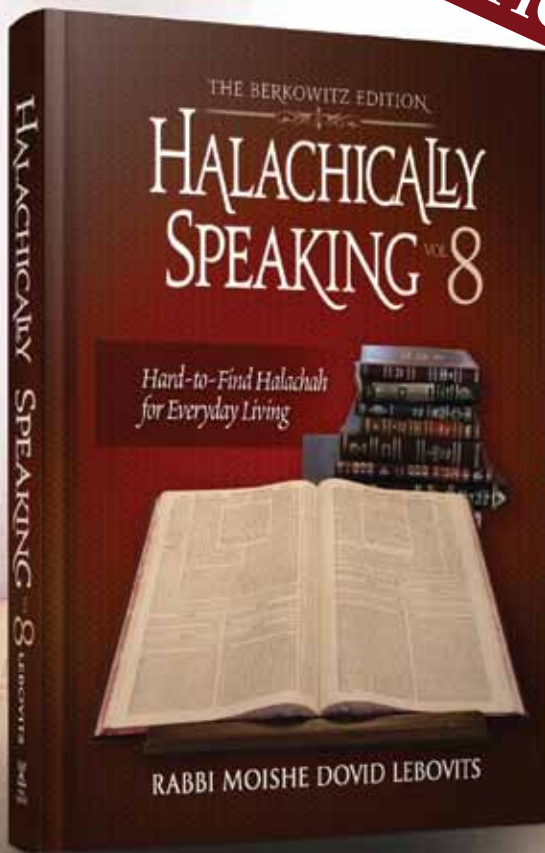
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Any questions please call

Rabbi Moishe Lebovits

Rabbinical Administrator KOF-K Kosher Supervision
at 718-744-4360 • email: mlebovits@kof-k.org

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