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{ TOPIC }

Women Reciting *Kaddish*



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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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Women Reciting *Kaddish*

When one is in shul he can often hear *kaddish yasom* being recited by a woman in the *ezras nashim*. Is a woman permitted to recite *kaddish*? Although there are several kinds of *kaddish*, this issue will focus primarily on *kaddish* recited when one loses a relative and how it applies to a woman.

Kaddish: Its Origin

Kaddish was composed after the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash in response to the *chillul Hashem* that resulted. Originally, *kaddish* was recited seven times a day — three times during *Shacharis*, once after *Yishtabach*, once after *Tachanun*, and once after *Ashrei* and *Uva l'Tzion*. The *kaddish* after *Aleinu*, called *kaddish yasom*,¹ was instituted for mourners who were not able to *daven* for the *amud*. In addition, *kaddish* was instituted after the *Shir Shel Yom* because there were many *yesomim*. *Kaddish yasom* is not an obligation like the other *kaddishim*.²

In any case, *kaddish* is viewed as a prayer said by mourners.

Benefit of Reciting *Kaddish Yasom*

There is a great benefit to the deceased when *kaddish* is said by his children.³

Some say the point of saying *kaddish* is to sanctify

1 *Aruch Hashulchan* 55:3, *Mishnah Berurah* 132:10.

2 *Sefer Haugor* 334.

3 *Mishnah Berurah*, *ibid.*, *Gesher Hachaim* 1:30:4.

איך ללמוד תורה
היא בעולם אלא
אמת של הלקה בלבד
... (ברכות ח)



Hashem's name. Others say that saying *kaddish* is a *zechus* for the deceased because people answer *amen*.⁴

Many People Saying *Kaddish* Together

In previous years, *kaddish yasom* was recited by one *yasom*.⁵ Now it has become the widespread custom to recite *kaddish* at one time.⁶ Some *poskim* accept this custom,⁷ while many *poskim* frown upon it.⁸ One main reason for the latter opinion is because often one cannot hear the one reciting *kaddish* and therefore cannot answer *amen*.⁹ In addition, there is a concept of "two voices cannot be heard,"¹⁰ which may apply to *kaddish* as well.¹¹

Nonetheless, if all those saying *kaddish* recite it at one spot, it is considered as if one is saying it out loud¹² along with the others and *kaddish* can be answered properly.¹³

4 *Beis Lechem Yehudah*, Y.D. 376:5.

5 Refer to *Zecher Simchah* 8:pages 5-6.

6 Refer to *Kol Bo* on *Aveilus*, pages 371-372, *Teshuvos Ivri*, pages 5-6, *Bnei Bonim* 2:7. See *Shevet Hakehasi* 3:48.

7 *Chasam Sofer*, O.C. 159, Y.D. 2:345, *Yufei Leleiv* 5:56:4, *Chai Adam* 30:7, *Aruch Hashulchan*, Y.D. 376:16; see *Pischei Teshuvah*, Y.D. 376:6, *Kaf Hachaim Palagi* 13:11, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 26:18, *Betzel Hachochmah* 5:135; *Halichos Shlomo Tefillah* page 230:25.

8 *Binyan Tzion* 122, *Gesher Hachaim* 30:10:12:pages 284-285; see *Teshuvos V'hanhagos* 1:103, 24:2, opinion of the Chazon Ish, *zt"l*, quoted in *Teshuvos V'hanhagos* 2:42, *Yechaveh Daas* 6:60 (end).

9 Refer to *Binyan Tzion*, *ibid.*, *Mishnah Berurah* 55:4, *Tzitz Eliezer* 9:15:2, 9:16, *Teshuvos V'hanhagos* 5:24, *Tzitz Eliezer*, *Rivevos Ephraim* 3:80, 4:177, 8:170:3.

10 Refer to *Maseches Rosh Hashanah* 26b, 27a, *Megillah* 21b, *Tosefta Megillah* 3, *Rambam*, *Hilchos Tefillah* 12:13, *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 284:5, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 135:6; see *Shulchan Aruch*, O.C. 690:2, *Mishnah Berurah* 4, *Shaar Hatzion* 4.

11 Refer to *Hegyonei Haparshah* 2:pages 213-224 in depth.

12 *Betzel Hachochmah* 5:135.

13 *Teshuvos V'hanhagos* 1:103, 2:42, 5:24. See *Kaf Hachaim Palagi* 13:11, *Gesher Hachaim* 30:10:12:page 285. Refer to *Mishneh Sechir* 11, who frowns upon all *yesomim* saying *kaddish* in one spot.

Some *poskim* (see below) use this leniency to permit a woman to recite *kaddish* as well.

Halachic Literature

Below we will present *teshuvos* that discuss women and *kaddish*.

The *Chavas Yair*¹⁴ says that a man passed away in Amsterdam and left no sons. Before his death he instructed in his *tzava'ah* that during the first year of *aveilus* a *minyan* should be hired to learn *mishnayos*, and after the learning his daughter should recite *kaddish*. The rabbanim in the city at that time did not protest. Nonetheless, the *Chavas Yair* does not agree with the decision to permit *kaddish* to be said by a girl, since doing weakens the Jewish custom of girls not saying *kaddish*. (This is talking about a woman saying *kaddish* in the privacy of her home.)

The *Shevus Yaakov*¹⁵ was lenient with a woman saying *kaddish* in her home with a *minyan* (but it is not clear that he would permit this *lechatchilah*).¹⁶

The *Matei Ephraim*¹⁷ says (paraphrased): “One should not listen to one who does not have sons, only daughters, who before his passing said that a *minyan* should gather in the home and after learning his daughter should say *kaddish*. G-d forbid that you should hear her voice in shul. If she wants a *zechus* for her parent she should listen to *kaddish* and answer *amen* with *kavanah*, and it will be like she said *kaddish* and obeyed her father’s will.”

14 222. Refer to *Piskei Teshuvos*, Y.D. 376:3.

15 93.

16 Refer to *Benesiv Chesed Vemes* 5742:pages 18-19, *Hapardes* 38:1:pages 14-15.

17 *Dinei kaddish yasom* 4:8.

איך ללמוד להקדיש? הבעלמואל ז"ל אמר שכל הלכה בלבי... (ברכות ה')



כל השנה הלכות בכל יום מובטח להשתדל בן עולם הנא... (קדוה עב.)

The *Elef Lemateh*¹⁸ says that women should not be allowed to say *kaddish* even in the home due to concerns of *pritzus*.

The *Teshuvah M'ahavah*¹⁹ recounts a custom in the city of Prague that daughters of a deceased person would go to a designated area in a shul after *Shacharis* and say *Tehillim* until noon. After that the girls would recite *kaddish*. However, he never saw this custom in a shul that is set aside for *tefillah*, and it is not proper for a girl, whether she is young or old, to come into the part of shul where men are. (Here it seems that the issue is girls coming into the men's section to say *kaddish*.)

Harav Yosef Henkin, *zt"l*,²⁰ says the following on this topic (paraphrased):

"If the daughter (of the deceased) wishes to *daven* in the *ezras nashim* and she is one who observes Shabbos, kashrus, and *tznius*, and she wishes to say *kaddish*, then she can say it in front of women. This can be done at the time when men are saying *kaddish* in shul. However, it is painful to the deceased and not permitted for a girl to come into a men's shul and say *kaddish*, even if she is dressed modestly. I remember in my youth that girls said *kaddish* in front of men in *frum* shuls. Many women come to shul because of the recital of *kaddish* and *daven* as well, which brings them close to Judaism. Therefore, a woman can stand in the women's section and say *kaddish* there. The reason for this is because anyone who wishes to say *kaddish yasom* says it together. Therefore, the men will not hear the woman saying *kaddish*."

(Other *poskim* who forbade this were talking about an instance when a woman says *kaddish* by herself without any

18 Ibid:9.

19 229:10.

20 *Teshuvos Ivrei*, pages 5-6. Refer to *Bnei Bonim* 2:7.



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

Men and Women Saying *Kaddish* Together

There is an opinion in the *poskim* that if a woman is singing and her voice is being drowned out by others singing as well, it may be permitted for one to hear the “singing of a woman,”²⁸ but one should not rely on this opinion.²⁹ When one recites *kaddish*, he is saying words and not singing, and this is not included in the prohibition of *kol ishah*.

Lone Woman Saying *Kaddish*

The above discussion is referring to a situation where a woman says *kaddish* together with men (in the men’s section) and one cannot really hear her voice.

If a woman is the only one saying *kaddish* and only her voice is heard, it is not considered *kol ishah* because she is not singing.

Afterword

Many *poskim* are of the opinion that a woman should not say *kaddish* in shul, even if there is a *mechitzah*.³⁰ However, women who do say *kaddish* have *poskim* to rely upon.³¹ This is the custom in some circles mainly out of the New York area.

28 Refer to Chasam Sofer in *Seder Avodas Hakodesh, shaar taharas hayadayim* 14, *Sridei Eish* 1:77:pages 214-219 in depth (new).

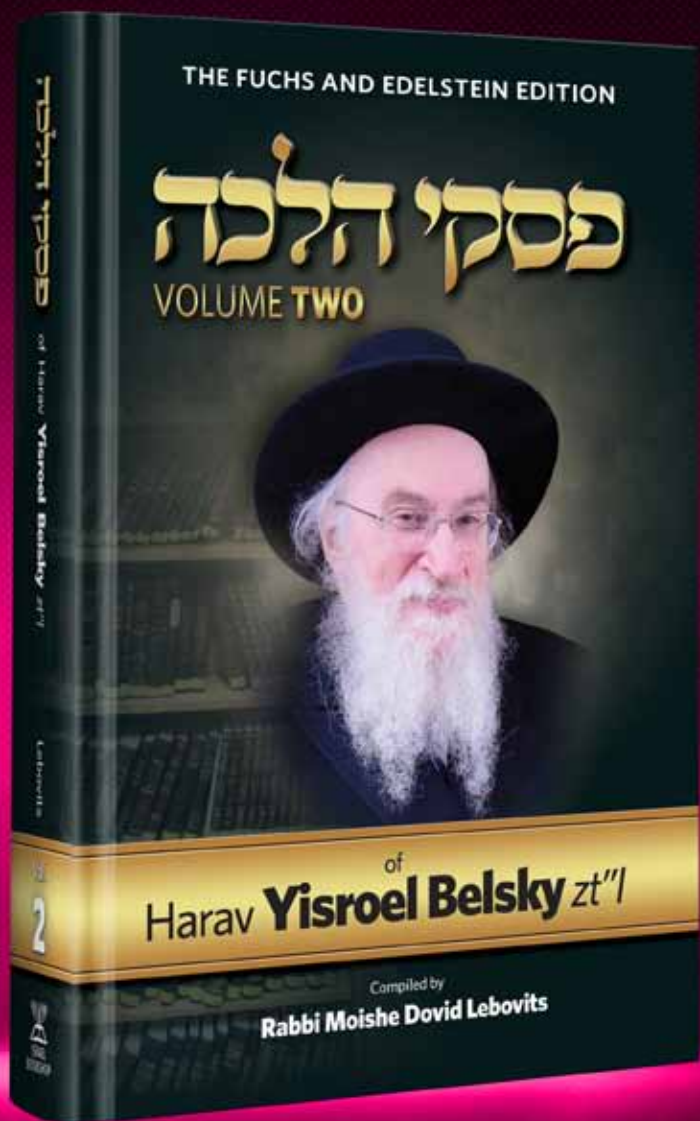
29 Refer to *Oz Nidberu* 3:71, *Shevet Halevi* 5:197:4, *Kinyan Torah* 1:85:2, *Avnei Yushfei* 2:5:1, *Chut Shuni Shabbos* 3:page 271, *Yisrael Kedoshim*, page 161.

30 Refer to *Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society* 32:pages 106-111 in depth.

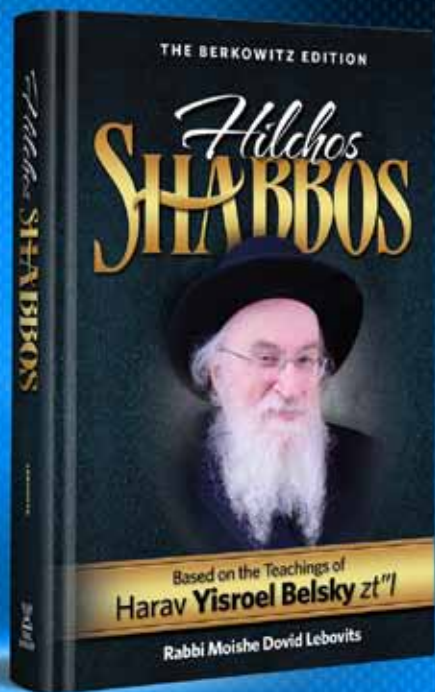
31 Refer to *Judaism* 44:3:1995, *Modern Judaism* 10:1990:pages 191-203.



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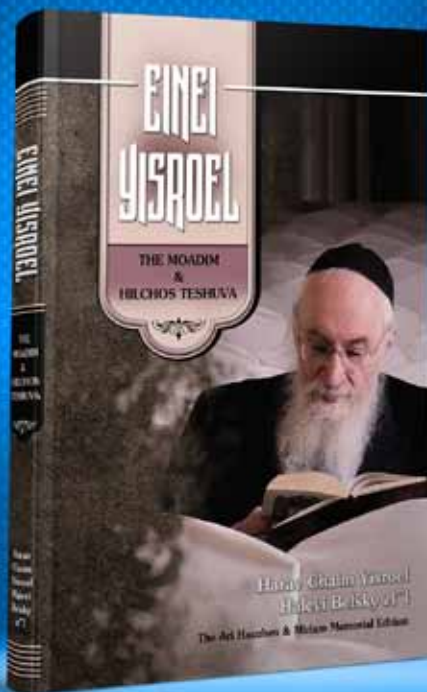


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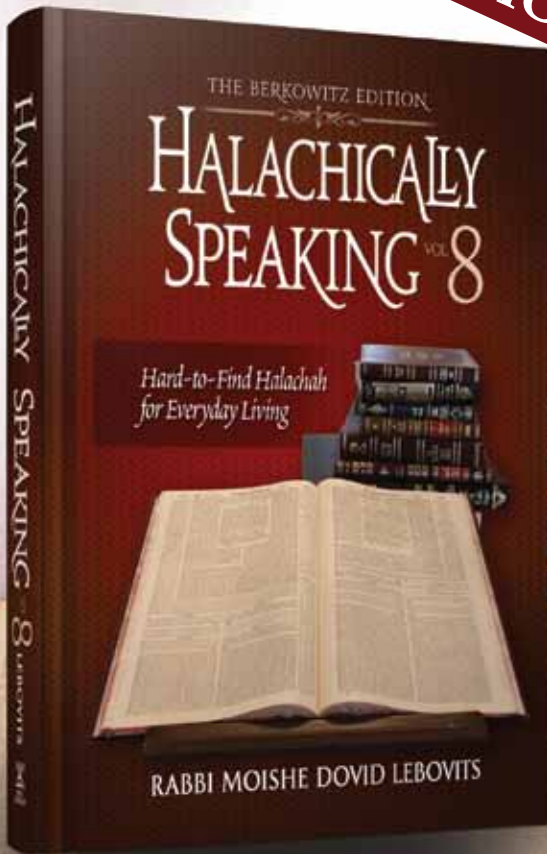
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Rabbi Moishe Lebovits

Rabbinical Administrator KOF-K Kosher Supervision
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