

HALACHICALLY SPEAKING

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{ TOPIC }

Eyeglasses 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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Eyeglasses in Halachah

There are many halachos that apply to eyeglasses. We will discuss eyeglasses and how they apply to different areas in *halachah*.

Using Eyeglasses to Clean Tallis

One should not clean eyeglasses with his *tallis gadol*.¹

Some *poskim* prohibit cleaning glasses with a *tallis katan*,² while others permit it.³ Placing glasses on an open *sefer* is not considered a disgrace.⁴

Tefillah

There is no need for a person who wears glasses to remove them before covering his eyes while saying *Krias Shema*, since they are not considered a *chatzitzah*.⁵

If one's glasses are loose, he should tie them with a string

- 1 Harav Yisroel Belsky *zt"l*; see *Halichos Shlomo Tefillah* 3:19, *Rivevos Ephraim* 6:10:1; *Shevet Halevi* 11:229; *Avnei Yashpei* 4:16:4, *Chai Halevi* 3:2; *Ohel Yaakov* (*Kavod Sefer Torah V'sifrei Kodesh*), page 250:14; Harav Elyashiv *zt"l* mentions that doing so is allowed (*Shiurei Maran Hagrash Elyashiv on Maseches Brachos* page 263). Cleaning one's glasses is allowed before davening as well (*Avnei Derech* 7:14).
- 2 *Halichos Shlomo Tefillah* 3:19.
- 3 Harav Yisroel Belsky *zt"l*; *Sifsei Nevonim*, O.C. 22. In regard to using the tablecloths in a sukkah to clean one's glasses, see *Avnei Derech* 6, 88:2). There is no issue with cleaning glasses on Shabbos (*Rivevos Ephraim* 3:210).
- 4 *Ohel Yaakov* (*Kavod V'kedushas Hasefarim*), page 12:9. See *ibid.*, page 25:44. Refer to *Avnei Derech* 10:126.
- 5 *Divrei Yatziv Lekutim* 12; *MishnasO Yosef* 6:23:2; *Avnei Derech* 1:9; *Oz Nedberu* 12:53; *Halichos Yisrael* (pages 235-236) says some people remove their glasses in order to have better concentration (opinion of Harav Sheinberg *zt"l*, quoted in *Halichos Yisrael*, page 236:footnote 6; see *Teshuvos Avigdor Halevi O.C.*, page 96:26).

before *davening* (to make sure they don't slide down when he bows).⁶ Some *poskim* permit one to hold his glasses so they do not fall when he is bowing.⁷

Some *poskim* say that if a person who gets an *aliyah* cannot see the letters in the *sefer Torah* because he does not have glasses, he should preferably not get an *aliyah*.⁸ Harav Elyashiv *zt"l*⁹ did not remove his glasses before getting an *aliyah*.

The practice is that one may serve as a *bal korei* even if he can only see the words in the *sefer Torah* while wearing glasses.¹⁰

Shecheyanu

Some *poskim* say that if one is joyous because he bought new glasses, he should recite a *Shehecheyanu*.¹¹ However, buying regular glasses or sunglasses is usually not a big deal and therefore most people do not recite a *Shehecheyanu*.¹²

Shabbos¹³

In order for one to show proper honor to Shabbos, one should have a separate set of clothing for Shabbos.¹⁴ Some

6 *Chashukei Chemed, Maseches Brachos* 24b.

7 *Yalkut Yosef* 96:7.

8 *Teshuvos V'hanhagos* 2:97. See *Piskei Teshuvos* 142, footnote 23.

9 *Ish Al Ha'edah* 1, page 36.

10 *Halichos Shlomo Tefillah*, page 151:23; *Divrei Binyahu, O.C.* 8:8.

11 *Avnei Yashpei* 5:41:9; *Chut Shani, Y.D.* 3, page 180:6. See *Ohr Yisrael* 52, page 244, 62, page 90.

12 *Teshuvos Avigdor Halevi, O.C.*, page 246:95; *Shaarei Habrachah*, page 470, footnote 62.

13 If someone hired a non-religious Jew to make eyeglasses for him, and the non-religious Jew made them over Shabbos, see *Avnei Yashpei* 3:35 to clarify whether he may use the glasses.

14 Refer to *Shabbos* 113a, 113b-114a, 119a, *Maharsha on Shabbos* 113b-114a, *Kol Bo*, page 25b (old), *Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos* 30:3, *Rosh klal* 21:3, *Tur* 262, *Shulchan*

poskim maintain that this is a mitzvah *d'Oraisa*,¹⁵ while others maintain it is a mitzvah *d'Rabbanan*.¹⁶ The *Yalkut Reuveni*¹⁷ says that the way in which one dresses on Shabbos in this world is the way Hashem will dress him in the World to Come. Both men and women are obligated to have nice clothing for Shabbos.¹⁸ However, it does not seem necessary to have separate eyeglasses for Shabbos.¹⁹

Glasses are not *muktzeh* on Shabbos (if they are usable).²⁰

There is no need for one to remove his glasses in order to be considered seeing the flame at Havdalah²¹ (or to see the moon before *Birchas Halevanah*).²²

One is permitted to wear glasses whose lenses change color when exposed to the sun. This is not considered coloring on Shabbos.²³

Aruch 1; *Levush* 2; *Shaarei Teshuvah* 2, *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 3. Refer to *Medrash Tanchuma Bereishis* 2, *Rus Rabbah* 5:12.

15 Refer to *Al Pi HaTorah Bereishis*, page 8.

16 *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 242:1.

17 *Parshas Bereishis*, page 50; *Kaf Hachaim* 260:24.

18 *Mishnah Berurah* 262:11; *Aruch Hashulchan* 4.

19 *Avnei Yashpei* 5:46:3; *Avnei Derech* 7:45. In any case, one should clean his regular glasses before Shabbos (*ibid.*).

20 *Orchos Shabbos* 19, page 41.

21 *Maadanei Shlomo*, page 124; *Yalkut Yosef* 298:8; *Piskei Teshuvos* 298:11; See *Beer Moshe* 6:63:22.

22 *Kiddush Levanah*, page 48:15; *Maadanei Shlomo*, *ibid.*; *Nishmas Avraham* 426, page 609; *Halichos Shlomo Moadim*, pages 21-22, *Tefillah*, page 121:23.

23 *Igros Moshe*, O.C. 3:45, *Mesoros Moshe* 1, page 96; *Tzitz Eliezer* 14:31, *Be'er Moshe* 6:46, *Betzel Hachochmah* 4:4; *Yechaveh Daas* 2:47; *Machzei Eliyahu* 1:65:24; *Shevet Halevi* 4:23; *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah* 18:footnote 70; *Shulchan Shlomo* 320:footnote 29; *Rivevos Ephraim* 3:221, 3:226; *Yalkut Yosef* 301:34, 320:15; *Zachor V'Shamor*, page 15; *Orchos Shabbos* 1:15:66; *Chut Shani Shabbos* 1, pages 149 and 157; *Tzitz Eliezer* 14:31; *Contemporary Halakhic Problems* 2, pages 14-15; see *Nishmas Shabbos* 4:292, *Avnei Yushfei* 2:39, *Klalim*, pages 360-361. For an explanation on how the lenses change color, refer to *Klalim*, pages 593-594. See *Mishneh Halachos* 8:44, 11:307; *Pnei Menashe* 12-13.

The *Chayei Adam*²⁴ is of the opinion that it is forbidden to walk outside on Shabbos with regular corrective glasses in a place that does not have an *eiruv*. The reason is because the glasses might fall off and one will come to carry them in a *reshus harabim*. Today this is not the case, since glasses are made to fit around the ear and are not susceptible to falling off.²⁵ Accordingly, one may wear regular corrective glasses on Shabbos even in a place that has no *eiruv*.

One who wears sunglasses because the sun hurts his eyes may also wear them on Shabbos, even in a place that has no *eiruv*.²⁶ One who wishes to wear sunglasses for other reasons (i.e., they are stylish) may wear clip-on sunglasses that are attached to regular glasses.²⁷ Other types of sunglasses should not be worn outside without consulting a *rav*.

24 *Klal Shabbos* 56:3; see *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 84:?. *Keren L'Dovid* 91; *Mishnah Berurah* 301:44; *Aruch Hashulchan* 61; *Kaf Hachaim* 65.

25 *Rav Poalim*, O.C. 2:48; *Minchas Shabbos* 84:6; *Ketzos Hashulchan* 115:badi 27; *Rivevos Ephraim* 2:115:115, 6:215:19, 8:436:23, 521:2; *Har Tzvi*, O.C. 1:173; *Divrei Shalom* 4:70; *Divrei Chachamim* 22:268, *Tzitz Eliezer* 18:15, 22:24; *Chai Halevi* 5:29; *Yalkut Yosef* 301:31; *B'shvilei Haparshah* page 52-53; *Teshuvos HaGrach* 2, page 689; see *Aruch Hashulchan* 61; *Nishmas Avraham* 301, page 268. The *Shulchan Shlomo* 301:7 is of the opinion that perhaps one should not wear glasses in the rain, since one might take them off when they are very wet and dry them, and he will end up carrying them on Shabbos. One is permitted to go outside on Shabbos with glasses that are tied to a string in a place that does not have an *eiruv* (*Rivevos Ephraim* 1:227). In regard to using glasses to tie a key to a door on Shabbos, see *Vayishma Moshe Pesakim* 1, page 143. If one of the temples broke off on Shabbos and one wishes to walk outside with one temple, see *Rivevos Ephraim* 3:227.

26 Refer to *Har Tzvi* 1:173, *Be'er Moshe* 1:17:6, *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah* 18:18, *Oz Nidberu* 1:64, *Betzel Hachochmah* 4:4;5, *Rivevos Ephraim* 2:115:115, 3:226, *Yalkut Yosef* 301:35.

27 *Yalkut Yosef* 301:36, *Rivevos Ephraim* 3:221, *Divrei Chachamim* page 96:footnote 268. Refer to *Hilchosa Rabbsu L'Shabbos*, page 74, *Vihi Binsoa*, page 154:4; *Nishmas Avraham* 301, *ibid*.

Reading glasses may not be worn outside on Shabbos in a place that does not have an *eruv*.²⁸

Some *poskim* permit contact lenses to be worn outside on Shabbos (in a place that does not have an *eruv*), since it is not common for lenses to fall out in the street.²⁹ However, one who is just starting to wear contact lenses and tends to take them out of his eyes is not permitted to wear them in a place that does not have an *eruv*.³⁰

One may not wear glasses outside on Shabbos in a place that does not have an *eruv* if he is wearing them because he likes the way they look and not because he needs them.³¹

If one's glasses lenses fell out of the frame before Shabbos, he may put them back in the frame on Shabbos. If they fell out on Shabbos, it is not permitted to put them back in the frame.³²

One may not straighten glasses that became bent on Shabbos if they are not fit to be worn as they are.³³

One may tell someone on Shabbos that he is going to check out glasses the next day if he does not mention that he is going to buy glasses.³⁴

28 *Yalkut Yosef* 301:32; *Ohr L'tzion* 2:23:1; *Teshuvos V'hanhagos* 2:97; *Divrei Shalom* 4:70. Refer to *Divrei Moshe*, O.C. 5.

29 *Ohr L'tzion*, *ibid*. See *Mishneh Halachos* 11:248, who is not convinced that this should be permitted. For more on this, see *Divrei Shalom* 4:70.

30 *Yalkut Yosef* 301:33.

31 *Emek Hateshuvah* 6:83.

32 *Betzel Hachochmah* 6:123. See *Orchos Shabbos* 19:171; *Maaneh Eliyahu* 131; *Koneh Bosem* 1:19; *Nishmas Shabbos* 3-2, page 280; *Piskei Teshuvos* 313:5; *Teshuvos Avigdor Halevi*, O.C., page 321:244.

33 *Nishmas Shabbos* 7:332.

34 *Shabbos K'halachah*, page 108:7.

Yom Tov

One who can only check for *chametz* while wearing glasses may do so.³⁵

On Yom Tov, one may go outside with eyeglasses since walking outside with them is important for those who need them.³⁶

One may clean eyeglasses during the Nine Days.³⁷

One may wear gold glasses on Yom Kippur, although other gold items are avoided.³⁸

It is permitted to fix broken eyeglasses on *Chol Hamoed*.³⁹

Miscellaneous⁴⁰

Some *gedolim* did not wear glasses while davening or learning.⁴¹

35 Nitei Gavriel Pesach 1, 17:10.

36 Shulchan Shlomo 522, page 70, footnote 1.

37 Nechamas Yisrael 14:7; Nitei Gavriel Ben Hametzarim 30:8.

38 Betzel Hachochmah 6:3; Piskei Teshuvos 610?; Avnei Derech 7:100. Teshuvos V'hanhagos 7:173.

39 Avnei Derech 4:54; Piskei Teshuvos 546:3; Nishmas Avraham 546, page 672; Shevet Halevi 4:214; Igros Moshe, O.C. 3:78. A distinction is made between regular glasses and sunglasses (Nishmas Avraham, *ibid.*).

40 One is allowed to say *Birkos Ha'ilanos* even if one can only see the bud of the tree with his glasses (Avnei Derech 10:22, see Piskei Teshuvos 226, footnote 30). In regard to damaging another person's eyeglasses, see *Chashukei Chemed*, *Maseches Bava Kamma* 26a; *Teshuvos V'hanhagos* 4:320; *Piskei Shlomo* 4, page 303; *Avnei Derech* 5:104; *Kav V'naki* 674. Whether a *kohen* is considered to have a blemish if he wears eyeglasses, see *Chashukei Chemed*, *Maseches Sanhedrin* 36b; *Yalkut Yosef (Yamim Nora'im)*, page 377. If a woman who checks the purity of women exiting the mikvah can only see them while wearing glasses, see *Mishnas Hager*, pages 513-515; *Teshuvos V'hanhagos* 2:427. Whether one who found eyeglasses on a beach can keep them, see *Chut Shani Pesach* pages 327-328. Someone who can see only with glasses may serve as a *mohel* (*Pesakim V'teshuvos* page 547:4).

41 Practice of Harav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld *zt"l* as mentioned in *Hanhagos V'poskim* 4. Harav Elyashiv *zt"l* did not learn Torah with his glasses (*Vayishma Moshe Pesakim* 1, page 10). The Chafetz Chaim *zt"l* did not wear glasses even in his later years when he needed them. He said that it was enough to see what

A *shochet* may kill an animal even if he can only see the animal while wearing eyeglasses.⁴²

Since the streets are filled with women who are not dressed properly, some *poskim* say that one should remove his glasses when walking in the street if this will not pose any danger to him.⁴³

A man should not wear sunglasses that are meant for a woman. If one wishes to wear a woman's eyeglasses because he needs them to see, he may do so.⁴⁴

An *avel* is allowed to wear a new pair of eyeglasses.⁴⁵

There is no issue with telling others that someone has a high eyeglasses prescription. This is even allowed if one is asked the information in reference to a *shidduch*.⁴⁶

A woman is not required to have separate glasses for her pure state and impure state.⁴⁷

A person may look at a *mareh* while wearing eyeglasses or lenses.⁴⁸

was in front of him and that he didn't need to see far (*Pirkei Avos B'mechitzas HaChafetz Chaim* 2, page 554). See *Kuntres V'hiysem Kedoshim*, page 21.

42 *Yalkut Yosef*, Y.D. 1:4; *Yabea Omer*, O.C. 4:40:4; *Nishmas Avraham*, Y.D. 1, pages 7-8.

43 *Ohel Yaakov*, *ibid.*, page 531:2.

44 *Ohel Yaakov* (*Yichud*), page 315:50. See *Tznif Meluchah*, page 60; *Ein B'mishpat* 3:13; *Vayivarceh Dovid* 2:123.

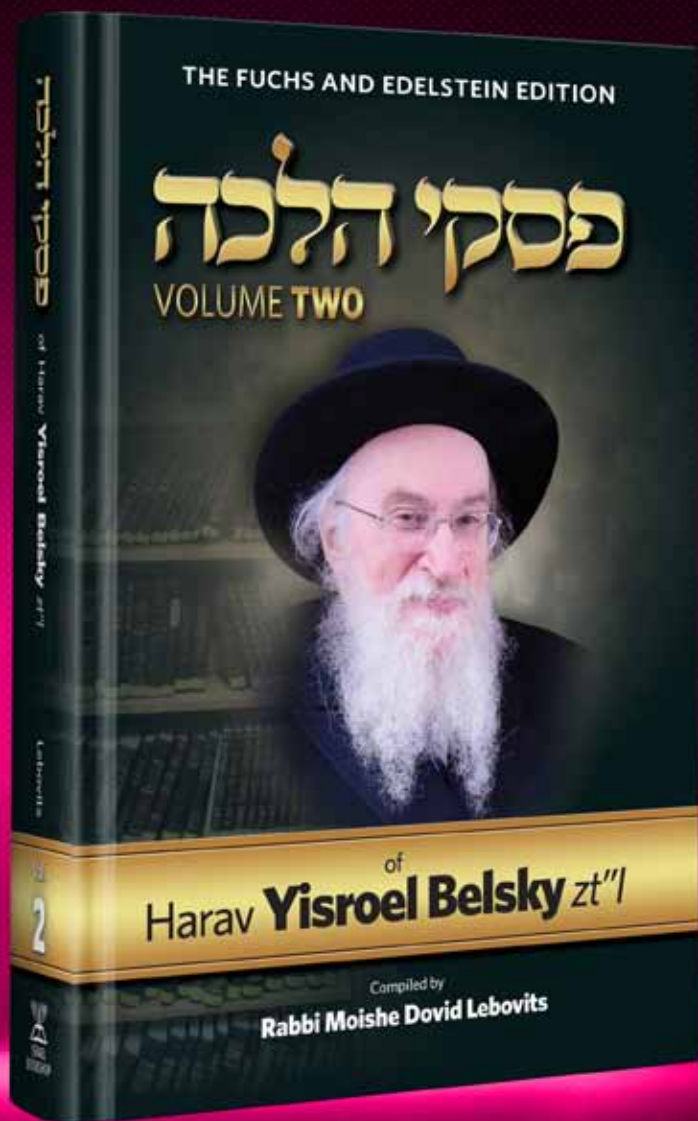
45 *Ohel Yaakov* (*Aveilus*) 4:4.

46 *Avnei Derech* 10:150.

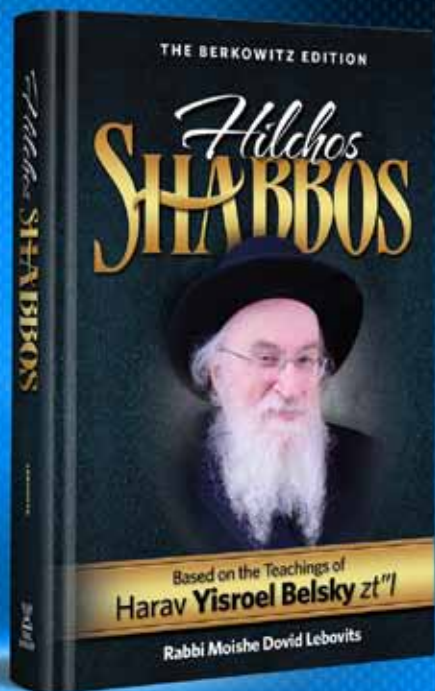
47 *Toras Hateharah*, page 243, footnote 1.

48 *Otzros Hateharah* page 201:37.

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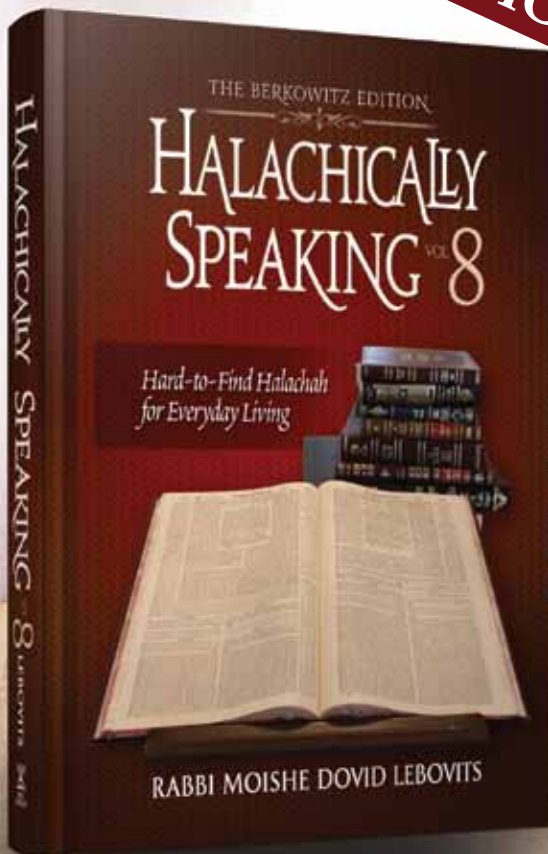
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