

HALACHICALLY SPEAKING

Volume 18 Issue 5



{ TOPIC }

L'Dovid Hashem Ori



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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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L'Dovid Hashem Ori

There is a well-known custom to recite *L'Dovid Hashem Ori*, the 27th chapter of *Tehillim*, from the second day of Rosh Chodesh Elul until after Sukkos. What is the source of this custom? Why is there such a custom? When should one recite it? If one is in a place where it is not recited, should he still say it? These and other issues related to *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* will be addressed below.

Source

The custom of reciting *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* is not mentioned in the Shulchan Aruch or the usual sources of halachah.¹ However, there are early sources that do bring down the custom.²

The Matei Ephraim³ brings down that the custom is to recite *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* every day after davening, once in the morning and once in the evening.⁴

Some maintain that saying *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* is a *segulah* for one to live a long life, have *parnassah* for the year, and merit a positive judgment.⁵

Reason

There are a few different sources for the reason why we

1. *Moadim Lsimchah* 1:pages 63-64, *Natei Gavriel Rosh Hashanah* 3:footnote 3. For a very detailed discussion on this topic, see *Ohr Yisrael* 1:pages 147-166 in great depth. Also see *Moadim Lsimchah* 1:pages 63-79 in great depth. Refer to *Shaar Hakollel*, page 38.
2. *Shem Tov Kattan*, page 24 (printed in the year 1706), *Sefer Zechirah*, page 124, *Moreh B'etzba* 2:37, *Ben Ish Chai Pekudei* 1:6, *Lekutei Maharich* 3:page 599. See *Chazon Ovadia*, *Yamim Noraim*, page 24.
3. 581:6.
4. *Mishnah Berurah* 581:2.
5. *Shem Tov Kattan*, page 24. See *Sefer Zechirah*, page 124.

recite *L'Dovid Hashem Ori*.⁶ The most common reason is that the chapter of *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* is a *remez* to Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkos. “*Ori*”— light — alludes to Rosh Hashanah, since Hashem lightens us by showing us mercy.⁷ “*Yishi*”— salvation — refers to Yom Kippur, since we ask Hashem for salvation on Yom Kippur. “*Yitzpineini*”— is talking about Sukkos.⁸

Some question this reason, since it is based on a Medrash in *Vayikra*⁹ and there are many other instances where a *remez* is brought and we don’t say *Tehillim* in davening because of the *remez*. In addition, the *remez* in the Medrash is only one example of what the above words stand for.¹⁰ The *remez* for Sukkos is not mentioned in the Medrash but is added by other *poskim*.¹¹

Others say the reason why we say *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* is because the name of Hashem appears 13 times in this chapter. During the *Yamim Noraim* period we call on the 13 *middos* of Hashem, so we recite *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* at this time.¹²

Another reason mentioned is that the *gematria* of “*ori*” and “*yishi*” is 613, which equals the number of mitzvot.¹³

6. Refer to *Tzitz Eliezer* 19:24, 21:15.

7. *Panim Yafes Acharei Moshe*, “*b’yad*.” Refer to *ibid.* for other reasons. Also see *Ratz K’tzvi*, pages 366-367, 374. Refer to *Pri Tzaddik* 5:page 4, *Ohr Yisrael* 1:pages 156-158, *Moadim Lsimchah* 1:pages 66-68.

8. *Elef L’mateh* 581:5, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 128:2. See *Chazon Ovadia, Yamim Noraim*, page 24.

9. 21:4.

10. *Baruch She’amar*, page 202. Refer to *Shaar Hakollel*, page 19:28. See *Medrash Rabbah Vayikra* 21:1.

11. *Shaar Kolllel*, page 19:28. See *Elef L’mateh* 581:5. Refer to *Baruch She’amar*, pages 201-202, *Ohr Yisrael* 1:page 147.

12. *Katzeh Hamateh* 581:16.

13. *Panim Yafes*, *ibid.*

In addition, this chapter contains the word “*lulei*” — לוּלֵי. If the letters are read backwards they spell “Elul.”¹⁴

Another reason for saying the chapter is the following: The Gemara in Maseches Taanis¹⁵ says that when asking Hashem for something, one should not ask for more than one thing at a time. If one does so he is not answered, even for one thing. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we ask Hashem for many things. However, all the things we ask for have one common goal: to become close to Hashem. The chapter says, “*Achas sha’alti*” — Dovid Hamelech asked for one thing as well: to sit in Hashems house. Therefore, during the days leading up to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we say this chapter since we ask many things from Hashem as well.¹⁶

From When and Until When?

The custom in most places is to begin saying *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* on the second day of Rosh Chodesh Elul.¹⁷

The custom is to recite it until and including Shemini Atzeres,¹⁸ while others have the custom to recite it until after Yom Kippur.¹⁹

Sefardim have the custom to recite this chapter all year round at the end of *Shacharis*.²⁰

14. *Ratz K'tzvi*, page 374.

15. 8b.

16. *Sheiros Menachem* 2:page 214.

17. *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 128:2, *Ohr Yisrael* 1:page 148. This is the custom in Belz and Munkatch as well (*Natei Gavriel Rosh Hashanah* 3:footnote 4). See *Mishmeres Shalom* 41:2.

18. *Matei Ephraim* 581:6, *Shaar Hakollel*, page 19:28, *Lekutei Maharich* 3:page 599, *Darchei Chaim V'Shalom* 694, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 128:2, *Mishnah Berurah* 581:2. Refer to *Mishmeres Shalom* 41:5. Also see *Ohr Yisrael* 1:pages 161-162. Refer to *Shevet Halevi* 10:87:1.

19. *Baruch She'amar*, page 201.

20. See *Ohr Yisrael* 1:page 151.

Shacharis

The custom of those who daven *nusach Sefard* is to recite *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* after the *shir shel yom*.²¹ Those who daven *nusach Ashkenaz* recite it after *Aleinu*,²² although many who daven *nusach Sefard* recite it after *Aleinu* as well, especially during Elul when the shofar is blown after *Aleinu*.²³ A possible reason for this is that the shofar is the mitzvah of the day on Rosh Hashanah and *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* contains references to Sukkos. Therefore, the shofar is blown first and then *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* is said.²⁴

After reciting the *shir shel yom*, Kaddish is recited before saying *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* (this is the custom of *nusach Sefard*) so as not to make it seem like *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* is part of the *shir shel yom*.²⁵ Others have the custom to recite Kaddish after *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* and not *Aleinu* so as not to increase the number of times Kaddish is said.²⁶

Based on the reason that *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* is said because it relates to the 13 *middos* of Hashem, some have the practice to say it before opening the *aron kodesh* since we mention the 13 attributes when the *aron* is opened on Yom Tov.²⁷

21. *Katzeh Hamateh* 581:16, *Natei Gavriel Rosh Hashanah* 3:5. *Shir shel yom* is said more often and what is said more often comes first (*Matei Ephraim* 581:6).

22. *Katzeh Hamateh* 581:16. See *Mishmeres Shalom* 41:5. Refer to *Rivevos Ephraim* 1:392.

23. *Mishmeres Shalom* 41:2, *Moadim Lsimchah* 1:page 70. Refer to *Nefesh Harav*, page 199, who says the shofar should be blown after reciting *L'Dovid Hashem Ori*.

24. *Nefesh Harav*, page 199.

25. *Matei Ephraim* 581:6, *Mishnah Berurah* 581:2.

26. *Natei Gavriel Rosh Hashanah* 3:8. See *Mekadesh Yisrael Yamim Noraim* 10. Refer to *Pe'as Sadcha* 1:9.

27. *Katzeh Hamateh* 581:16, *Lekutei Maharich* 3:page 599.

Some have the custom to recite *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* after *Aleinu*, close to when the shofar is blown.²⁸

There is a custom to recite it after *chazaras hashatz* before Kaddish (usually recited after *Tachanun*).²⁹

Minchah / Maariv

The custom of those who daven *nusach Sefard* is to recite *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* after *Minchah*,³⁰ while those who daven *nusach Ashkenaz* recite it after *Maariv*.³¹

In communities where *Borchu* is repeated after *Aleinu* at *Maariv*, *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* should be recited before that *Borchu*.³² One who has the custom to recite it by *Minchah* and forgot may say it by *Maariv*.³³

Days When Mussaf Is Recited

L'Dovid Hashem Ori is recited on days when *Mussaf* is recited after davening *Shacharis*, before the Torah is taken out.³⁴ This is the custom of those who daven *nusach Sefard*,

28. *Katzeh Hamateh* 581:16, *Mishmeres Shalom* 41:3, *Minhag Yisrael Torah* 581:6, *M'Beis Levi* 2:page 10:6. See *Asei Lecha Rav* 5:pages 339-340.

29. *Katzeh Hamateh* 581:16, *Mishmeres Shalom* 41:3, *Natei Gavriel Rosh Hoshanah* 3:footnote 7. See *Moadim Lsimchah* 1:page 69:footnote 22.

30. *Matei Ephraim* 581:6. See *Shaar Hakollel*, page 38.

31. *Matei Ephraim* 581:6, *Katzeh Hamateh* 581:15, *Be'er Moshe* 5:37. See *Even Yisrael* 9:page 114. This is based on the fact that those who daven *nusach Ashkenaz* daven *Minchah* while it is light outside, so they say *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* at *Maariv* when it is dark. However, Chassidim and those who daven *nusach Sefard* daven *Minchah* later in the day, so they say *L'Dovid Hashem* then, closer to dark (see *Haelulim Kodesh L'Hashem*, page 58:footnote 212).

32. *Maasei Ish* 5:page 88, *Natei Gavriel Rosh Hashanah* 3:5. See *Teshuvos V'hanhagos* 1:58.

33. *Rivevos Ephraim* 1:392, see *Divrei Malkiel* 6:23, *Zechor L'Avraham* 5762, pages 1090-1091.

34. *Matei Ephraim* 581:6, *Mishnah Berurah* 581:2.

אין על להקדיש ה בעולמו אלא י אמור של הלכה בלובד (ברכות ה)

while those who daven *nusach Ashkenaz* recite it after *Aleinu*.³⁵

Those who have the custom to recite the *Shir Hakavod* after *Mussaf* on Shabbos and recite *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* after *Aleinu* (as is the custom of *nusach Ashkenaz*) should do so before saying the *Shir Hakavod*.³⁶

Rosh Chodesh

On Rosh Chodesh, *Borchi Nafshi* is recited and then *L'Dovid Hashem Ori*, since *Borchi Nafshi* is said every Rosh Chodesh as opposed to *L'Dovid Hashem Ori*, which is only said at a specific time during the year.³⁷

The custom in some places is that *Borchi Nafshi* is recited without being followed by *Kaddish* and then *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* is recited. One *Kaddish* is recited after both.³⁸

Davening Different Nusach

As mentioned above, there are different times when *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* is recited, depending if one davens *nusach Sefard* or *nusach Ashkenaz*. If one is davening in a shul that has a different *nusach*, he may say *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* when he usually says it and not according to the shul's custom.³⁹

A question arises when one usually davens *nusach Ashkenaz* and does not say *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* at *Minchah*, but finds himself at a *nusach Sefard* minyan for *Minchah* and says it then. Now he finds himself at his usual *nusach*

35. *Natei Gavriel Rosh Hashanah* 3:footnote 8.

36. *Be'er Moshe* 5:37. See *Lehoros Nosson* 1:27.

37. *Matei Ephraim* 581:6, *Mishnah Berurah* 581:2.

38. *Matei Ephraim* 581:6.

39. Opinion of Harav Elyashiv, *zt"l*, quoted in *Ohr Yisrael* 1:page 166. See *Divrei Moshe* 1:34-35, *Rivevos Ephraim* 8:331:1.

Ashkenaz minyan. Does he recite *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* then as well?

It would seem that reciting it at *Minchah* suffices,⁴⁰ but others maintain one should say it again at *Maariv*.⁴¹

Custom Not to Say It

There are some communities (mostly Chassidim)⁴² where the practice is not to recite *L'Dovid Hashem Ori*.⁴³ Some mention that they don't say it because it is not brought down in the writings of the Arizal.⁴⁴ Others say that when the Gra davened with a *tzibur* he did not add *mizmorim* that are not part of the main *tefillah*.⁴⁵

Another reason for not reciting it is based on the following: there is a *sefer* called *Chemdas Hayamim* where it mentions the custom to recite *L'Dovid Hashem Ori*. It is unknown who the author is, and some say that perhaps it was written by a "false prophet." We therefore do not follow any customs mentioned in the *sefer*, and since *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* is mentioned there some refrain from reciting it.⁴⁶

Some question this, since the custom to recite *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* was mentioned in sources that predated *sefer*

40. *Rivevos Ephraim* 6:300.

41. Opinion of Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, *zt"l*, quoted in *Halichos Shlomo Moadim* 1:footnote 3; see *Shalmei Moed* 7:page 21.

42. *Moadim Lsimchah* 1:page 73. The custom in certain Sefardi communities is not to recite it as well (*Moadim Lsimchah* 1:pages 78-79 footnote 51).

43. *Masei Rav* 53:page 24 (old), *Minhag Karmarna* 386. Refer to *Minhag Yisrael Torah* 581:5. See *Natei Gavriel Rosh Hashanah* 3:footnote 14, who quotes this as the custom of Zidichov, Rapshitz, Kolov, and Sanz. It is said in a shul in Tel Aviv named for the Gra (*Ohr Yisrael* 1:page 153:footnote 23). Some do not recite it on Friday night (*Kovetz Beis Aharon V'yisrael* 73:page 100).

44. *Otzer Hachaim* 226 (Sanz), *Divrei Moshe* 1:34, *Sheva Chaim* (letters) 1:46. Refer to *Divrei Yatziv, lekutim* 19.

45. *Divrei Moshe* 1:34.

46. *Divrei Moshe* 1:34. Refer to *Ohr Yisrael* 1:page 154, 159-160. See *Moadim Lsimchah* 1:pages 74-75.

Chemdas Hayamim.⁴⁷ In addition, it says in the *Chemdas Hayamim* that the author had a custom to recite *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* when *Selichos* began to beseech Hashem for mercy.⁴⁸ However, there is no mention to recite it when it is customarily said, at the end of davening.⁴⁹

Others say that if the above concern is valid, why so some Chassidim in fact say *L'Dovid Hashem Ori*?⁵⁰

There is another reason why some Chassidim don't say *L'Dovid Hashem Ori*. Many years ago in Poland, the king asked the Jews to daven for his wife to have a child or he would expel the Jews. Someone called the Baal Shem (not the Baal Shem Tov) told the king that in 12 months the queen would have a baby. He tried many different things to make this happen, as he was known to perform wondrous acts using the name of Hashem (hence the name Baal Shem), but he was not successful. Finally, he went to the Satan. Although he achieved his goal, he was punished for going to the Satan by being wiped out of both Olam Hazeh and Olam Haba. However, since he risked his life for the Jewish people, it was decreed that two *tefillos* he had instituted in davening would be mentioned. One was *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* and the other is *K'gavna* (recited on Friday night by those who daven *nusach Sefard*).

The famous Baal Shem Tov told this story to his students. However, he told some to say *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* and not *K'gavna* and others not to say both. Therefore, some

47. *Kovetz Beis Aharon V'yisrael* 73:page 99. See *Ohr Yisrael* 6:pages 127-128).

48. Which can perhaps be from Rosh Chodesh Elul, according to the custom of the Sefardim (*Ohr Yisrael* 6:page 128).

49. *Ohr Yisrael* 1:pages 160-161, *Kovetz Beis Aharon V'yisrael* 73:pages 99-100. For a comment on this, see *Ohr Yisrael* 6:pages 127-128. See *Moadim Lsimchah* 1:pages 75-77.

50. The Noam Elimelech said it (*Kovetz Beis Aharon V'yisrael* 73:page 97), as well as chassidim of Chabad, Karlin, Tchernobyl, Kunidov, Belz, Breslov, Ger, and others (*Kovetz Beis Aharon V'yisrael* 73:pages 97-98). See *Moadim Lsimchah* 1:page 77.

Chassidim have the custom to recite *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* and others do not.⁵¹

Some have the custom not to say *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* on Shabbos, or on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.⁵²

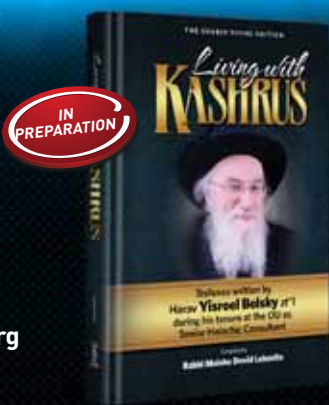
51. *Nezer Hakodesh*, page 147.

52. See *Haelulim Kodesh L'Hashem*, page 55. However, see *Halichos Shlomo Moadim* 1:footnote 3.

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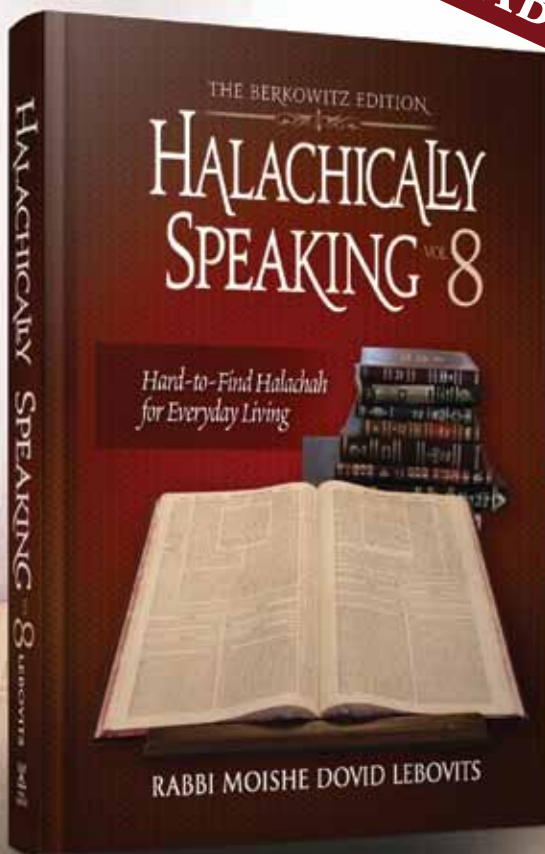
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