

# HALACHICALLY SPEAKING

Volume 12 Issue 17



{ TOPIC }

## RUNNING TO AND FROM SHUL



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# HALACHICALLY SPEAKING

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► 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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# RUNNING TO AND FROM SHUL

A fairly obscure halachah governs the rules of running to and from shul. We will discuss this halachah below.

## Running to Shul

It is a mitzvah to run to shul,<sup>1</sup> as this shows a drive (or a love)<sup>2</sup> and a desire to do a mitzvah<sup>3</sup> (this applies to all mitzvos<sup>4</sup>). This only applies until one reaches the door of the shul. One should not run in the shul itself (and certainly not during *davening* either),<sup>5</sup> since one must act with trepidation and fear.<sup>6</sup> However, walking quickly to put on *tallis* and *tefillin* or to make *tefillah b'tzibbur* is permitted.<sup>7</sup>

There is a discussion in the *poskim* whether one should start running from his home and speed up when he gets near shul, or only start running when he is near shul.<sup>8</sup> The practice is only when he is near shul.<sup>9</sup>

The main aspect of running to shul is as one approaches the shul, for this shows the most respect for the shul.<sup>10</sup> In

1. *Maseches Brachos* 6b; *Rambam Hilchos Tefillah* 8:2; *Shulchan Aruch* 90:12; *Chayei Adam* 17:4; *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 90:13; see the *Tzlach Maseches Brachos* *ibid.* on this topic.

2. *Levush* 90:12.

3. *Aruch Hashulchan* 90:16. See *Kaf Hachaim* 86.

4. *Chayei Adam* 17:4; *Aruch Hashulchan* *ibid.* Refer to *Yalkut Yosef* 90: pages 181-182 in depth regarding the reason for this halachah.

5. *Lekach Hakemach Hachadash* 90:79.

6. *Elyah Rabbah* 90:13; *Magen Avraham* 90:24; *Mishnah Berurah* 40.

7. *Lekach Hakemach Hachadash* 90:78\*.

8. Refer to *Elyah Rabbah* 90:13; *Kaf Hachaim* 86; *Yalkut Yosef* 90: page 178:15.

9. *Mishnah Berurah* 90:40.

10. *Ibid.*

איך ללמוד להלכה של אמות של הלכה בלבד... (ברכות ח)

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

the morning, the mitzvah applies even at a distance, since everyone sees his *tallis* and *tefillin* and realizes that he is running to shul.<sup>11</sup>

When Klal Yisrael runs to do a mitzvah, our angels of defense run and are *melamed zechus* on us.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, one should not run in a way that people will laugh at him.<sup>13</sup>

One may run to shul even on Shabbos,<sup>14</sup> when one is generally not allowed to take large steps.<sup>15</sup> (This is known as a *pesiah*, which is more than an *amah* – about 12-18 inches.<sup>16</sup>) Generally, one should not take large steps, since it can cause damage to the eyes.<sup>17</sup> (On Shabbos it is *assur*.<sup>18</sup>)

### Streets Full of Non-Jews

One should not run on a street which is occupied by non-Jews,<sup>19</sup> as they will laugh at him.<sup>20</sup> In modern times, however, many people run for sports or exercise. There should be no reason to refrain from running to shul even in a non-Jewish area<sup>21</sup> (obviously one should be careful not to run into anyone while running to shul).

### Stopping on the Way to Shul

Many times, when one is on the way to shul he sees his

11. *Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham* 90:24; *Mishnah Berurah* 40.

12. *Ben Ish Chai Mikeitz* 1:2.

13. *Ben Ish Chai* *ibid*.

14. *Shulchan Aruch, O.C.* 90:12.

15. *Shulchan Aruch, O.C.* 301:1; *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 90:13; *Mishnah Berurah* 301:1.

16. *Rama* 301:1; *Magen Avraham* 2; *Lekach Hakemach Hachadash* 90:80. Others say not to lift your second foot without putting down your first (*Magen Avraham* 301:2).

17. *Magen Avraham* 90:25, 301:1; *Mishnah Berurah* 90:41, 301:1.

18. *Mishnah Berurah* 301:1.

19. *Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham* 90:24; *Mishnah Berurah* *ibid*.

20. *Kaf Hachaim* 90:86.

21. *Lekach Hakemach Hachadash* 90:77.

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friend and stops to converse with him on mundane matters.<sup>22</sup> This should be avoided, as he might come late to shul and it is not proper respect for *davening*.

## Running from Shul

One should not run when exiting shul. This behavior shows disrespect to the shul (or *beis midrash*),<sup>23</sup> as he indicates that waiting around in shul is a burden.<sup>24</sup> One should not take large steps either.<sup>25</sup> In addition, standing at the entrance of shul to leave more quickly is not respectful either.<sup>26</sup>

There is only a problem if one is leaving shul for his personal affairs, but one may run out of shul to learn Torah.<sup>27</sup> It is unclear if he may run for other mitzvos.<sup>28</sup> Other mitzvos can be accomplished later, but every second that he saves for Torah learning can be used for the mitzvah.<sup>29</sup>

If one runs out of shul so that he can come back quickly, then there is a mitzvah for him to run from shul.<sup>30</sup> As long as the congregants remain, they will understand that he plans

22. *Mishnah Berurah* 90:40.

23. *Maseches Brachos*, *Rambam* and *Shulchan Aruch* *ibid*.

24. *Mishnah Berurah* 90:43.

25. *Ibid*.

26. *Lekach Hakemach Hachadash* 90:81.

27. *Maseches Brachos* *ibid.*; *Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham* 90:26; *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 13; *Mishnah Berurah* 43. Refer to *Maharsha Maseches Brachos* *ibid*. See *Elyah Rabbah* 14. So too, to run home on Pesach night to start the Seder quickly (*Haseder Ha'aruch* 1:31:1).

28. If it is noticeable that one is running for an important cause it is permitted, and this is learned from Avraham Avinu when he ran towards the angels although he was talking to Hashem (*Bereishis* 18:2).

29. Refer to *Chai Moshe* 90:12:page 461.

30. *Elyah Rabbah* 90:14; *Magen Avraham* 26.

אין על להקדיף"ה בעולמו אלא יאמרו של הלכה בלביד... (ברכות ה)

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to return to shul and that is the reason why he is running out of the shul.<sup>31</sup>

## Driving vs. Walking to Shul

As mentioned above, there is a mitzvah for one to run to shul. This can be done in a more proficient manner if one walks to shul, and as he comes close to shul, runs. There is a discussion in the *poskim* about what to do if one has a choice to walk to shul and then run as he gets closer, or drive his car and then lose out on the ability to run to shul (if he parks his car close to shul). The *poskim* do mention that if one can walk it is preferable, but if one wishes to drive and park a bit further from the block of the shul and run the rest of the way, he may do so.<sup>32</sup>

כל השווה הלכות בכל יום מובטח לו שהוא בן עולם הבא... (מדה עב)

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31. Ibid.

32. *Tzitz Elizer* 12:17.

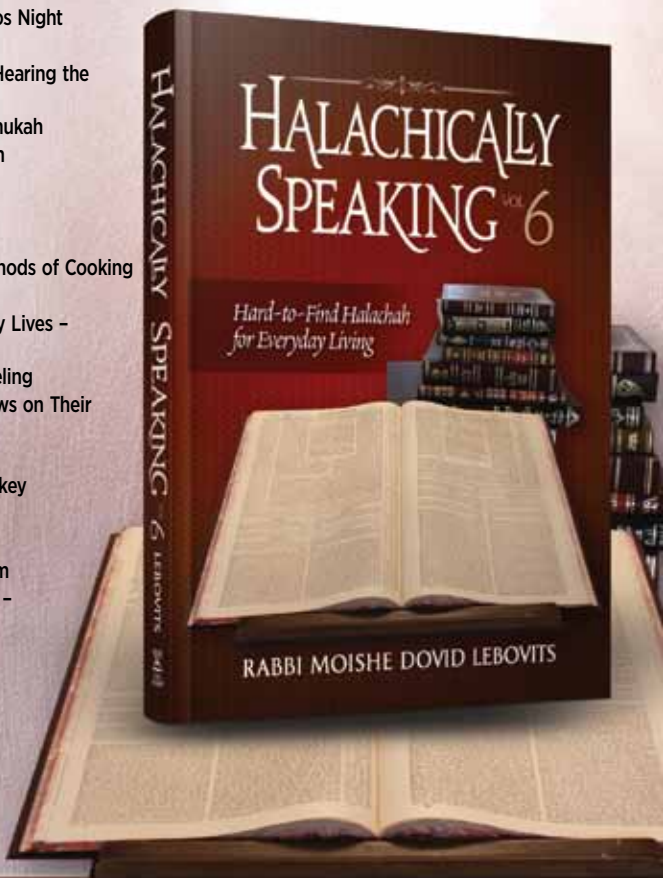
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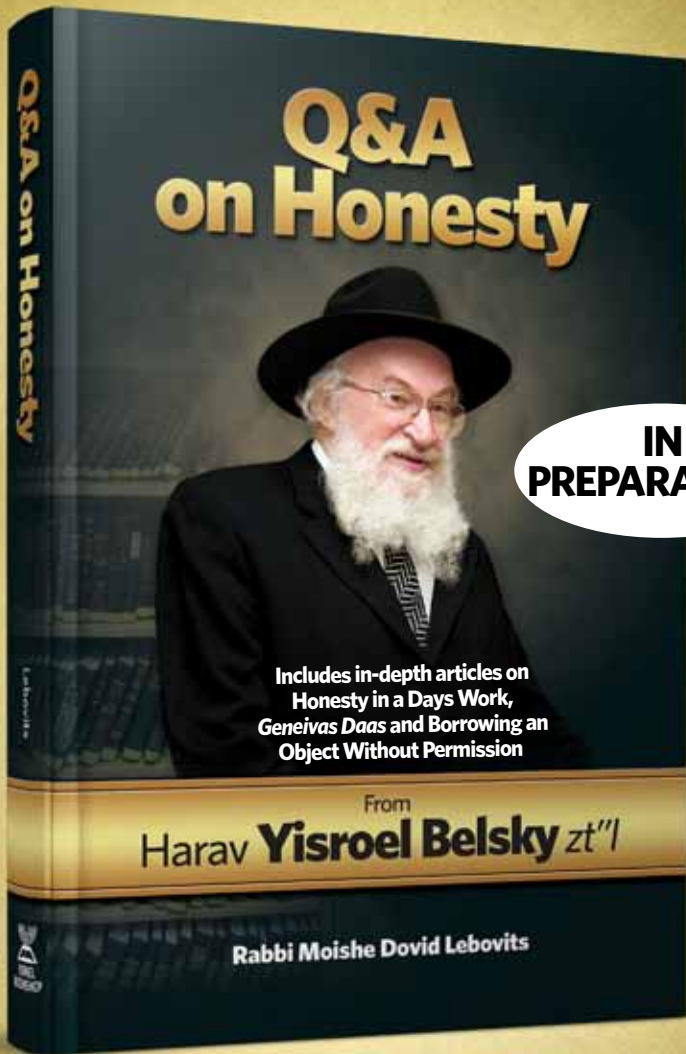
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