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{ TOPIC }

The Custom of Tashlich



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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, Shlita* on current issues.

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The Custom of Tashlich

There is a widespread custom on Rosh Hashanah to go to Tashlich and say *tefillos* there. Those who do not go then, go during Aseres Yemei Teshuvah. Where did this custom come from? What are the reasons for this? Should one go to water? Does one have to go to a river or ocean with fish? Which days? What time? Should women go? All these and other issues will be addressed in this article.

The Origin

The custom of Tashlich is not documented in the earlier sources of the Gemara and *Shulchan Aruch*. The earliest source is in the writings of the Maharil¹ where he states the following: the custom is to go to the river on Rosh Hashanah after the *seudah* to throw all our sins away to the sea. Many other *sefarim* bring this custom as well.²

Reasons

There are many reasons³ given for this custom. We will list a few of them: When Avraham was going to the *Akeidah* with Yitzchak, the *satan* tried to stop him by placing a river in front of him. When the water reached Avraham's neck, he raised his eyes to Hashem and *davened*. At this point,

1 *Rosh Hashanah* page 277, 9.

2 *Darchei Moshe*, O.C. 583:2; *Rema* 583:2; *Matei Moshe* 820; *Yosef Ometz* 975, page 216. *Shlah*, *Maseches Rosh Hashanah*, *amud hadin* page 54.

3 For many reasons for this custom see *Toras Ha'olah* pages 73b-74; *Yufei Lelev* 2:583:12; *Minhag Avoseinu B'yadeinu* 1, pages 88-91.

Hashem ordered the *satan* to remove the river. Therefore, we go to the river on Rosh Hashanah as a remembrance of the *Akeidah* (and Hashem will make the *satan* go away from us as well).⁴ Furthermore, we resemble going to the water by throwing our sins away.⁵

Spreading of Custom

Although the custom is not mentioned in the common earlier sources,⁶ this custom is practiced today by both Sephardim and Ashkenazim.⁷ It was not followed in the times of the Rema, whose opinion the Ashkenazim follow. The custom of the Gra⁸ was not to go to a river and say Tashlich. Others say that it is possible the Gra did say Tashlich, but not at a river.⁹

Live Fish

The question arises whether one must go to a river with fish,¹⁰ or if it is sufficient to go to a pond which only has water. The Rema¹¹ (and others¹²) says that one should go to a place with live fish, since it is done to avoid *ayin hara* and hints that we should multiply like fish. The *Matei Moshe*¹³ (and others¹⁴) says that this symbolizes our existence.

4 *Matei Moshe* *ibid.*; *Kaf Hachaim* 583:29.

5 *Elef Hamagen* 598:5. Refer to *Minhag Avoseinu B'yadeinu* 1, page 88.

6 *Keser Shem Tov* 6, page 205.

7 *Ibid.* footnote 1.

8 *Massei Rav* 209, page 21.

9 *Ohr Yisrael* 17, page 206.

10 Refer to *Minhag Avoseinu B'yadeinu* 1, page 92, footnote 49 if one has to actually see the fish or if going to a river which has fish is enough.

11 *Rema, O.C.* 583:2.

12 *Matei Ephraim* 598:4; *Kaf Hachaim* 583:29.

13 820, page 260.

14 *Levush* 586; *Ta'amei Haminhagim* 724, page 319; see *Minhag Avoseinu B'yadeinu* 1, pages 91-92, footnote 45.

Just as fish are caught in a net rather quickly, we too are caught in the net of *din*, and must do *teshuvah* and repent. Furthermore, just like the eyes of the fish are always open, we want Hashem to look at us with open eyes and forgive our sins.¹⁵

Others say we are comparable to fish that cannot live without water. So too, we cannot survive without Torah and mitzvos.¹⁶

Where to Go

From the sources mentioned above, it seems one should go to rivers or lakes.¹⁷ Others mention that there is no difference between a river and a well, as long as one goes out of the city.¹⁸ In many areas where there are no rivers or lakes, such as in Yerushalayim, many have the custom to go to a cistern or even a sink and say Tashlich there.¹⁹

When to Go

The main time for Tashlich is on the first day of Rosh Hashanah.²⁰ Most *poskim* maintain that it should be recited after Minchah before *shkiah*.²¹ The custom is not to be *makpid* on saying Tashlich right before *shkiah*, but anytime beforehand as well.²² However, if one sees that he will

15 *Keser Shem Tov* 6, page 206.

16 *Kaf Hachaim* 583:29; *Minhag Avoseinu B'yadeinu* 1, page 93.

17 *Rema*, O.C. 583:2.

18 *Magen Avraham*, O.C. 583:5.

19 *Kaf Hachaim* 583:30; *Mekadesh Yisrael, Yamim Nora'im* 215.

20 *Shevus Yaakov* 3:42; *Magen Avraham* 583:5; *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 583:7; *Birchei Yosef* 583:6; *Matei Ephraim* 588:6; *Otzer Minhagei Chabad* 1, page 141. The *Yufei Lelev* 2:583:12 says one should go on Yom Kippur but practically this is not done especially since the day is short on time to do things other than *davening*.

21 *Magen Avraham* 6; *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 7; *Matei Ephraim* 588:4; *Otzer Minhagei Chabad* 1, page 141.

22 *Mekadesh Yisrael, Yamim Nora'im* 210.

איך ללמוד? הבעלמואל א"י
אמור של הלכה בלובד... (ברכות ה')



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

not have the time to go after Minchah, he may go before Minchah.²³ Others maintain that it is perfectly acceptable to go after the meal (which is before Minchah).²⁴ One of the reasons to go after Minchah is that Yitzchak established Minchah, and it was on the first day of Rosh Hashanah that Yitzchak was brought on the *Akeidah*.²⁵ Furthermore, Minchah is a time when one's *tefillos* can be answered more than other *tefillos*.²⁶

Some maintain that if one goes on the second day, he should go after *Mussaf*.²⁷ Others have the custom to go to Tashlich as late as Chol Hamoed Sukkos before Hoshanah Rabbah,²⁸ and some even go on Hoshanah Rabbah.

Shabbos

When Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbos, some say that Tashlich should be said on that day,²⁹ while others say that this should not be done³⁰ (mainly out of a concern of carrying³¹). These authorities rule that it should be recited on the second day.³² The *Shevus Yaakov*³³ speaks in strong terms that one should go to Tashlich on Shabbos.

23 *Matei Ephraim* 598:7.

24 *Elef L'mateh* 598:3. Refer to *Minhag Avoseinu B'yadeinu* 1, page 96, 8.

25 *Keser Shem Tov* 6, page 208; *Minhag Avoseinu B'yadeinu* 1, page 97.

26 *Maseches Brachos* 6a; see *Keser Shem Tov* 6, page 208; *Minhag Avoseinu B'yadeinu* 1, page 97. Whether one goes before Minchah or after may depend on the reasons for the custom of Tashlich (see *Minhag Avoseinu B'yadeinu* 1, page 97).

27 *Torah Lishmah*, O.C. 145.

28 *Minhag Avoseinu B'yadeinu* 1, pages 102-103.

29 *Torah Lishmah* 145; *Machzik Brachah* 583:4; *Sha'arei Teshuvah* 598:6; *Moed L'chol Chai* 13:70; *Ben Ish Chai*, *Nitzavim* 1:12; *Matei Ephraim* 598:5. See *Kaf Hachaim* 583:31.

30 *Mekor Chaim* 597:1; *Pri Megadim*, *Eishel Avraham* 583:5; *Birchei Yosef* 583:6; *Yosef Ometz* 17:3; *Elef Hamagen* 598:11.

31 *Ma'amar Mordechai* 583:4; *Keser Shem Tov* 6, pages 206-207.

32 *Matei Ephraim* 598:6; *Otzer Minhagei Chabad* 1, page 146.

33 3:42.

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One who goes on Shabbos should make sure not to carry anything out of the *eiruv*, or throw bread to the fish.³⁴

On the Day When the Thirteen *Middos* Are Said

Many have the custom to go to Tashlich on the day that the thirteen *middos* are recited in a *piyut* during *selichos* of Aseres Yemei Teshuvah.³⁵ This is the custom in many circles such as Munkatch,³⁶ Vizhnitz, Bobov, Skver and others.³⁷ The reason for not going on Rosh Hashanah is due to the lack of time because of the length of the *davening*.³⁸

Throwing Bread to Fish

When one goes to Tashlich on Rosh Hashanah he may not carry along with him bread to throw to the fish.³⁹

Shake Ends of Garments

The custom of some is to shake off the corner of his garment which has *tzitzis*⁴⁰ at Tashlich,⁴¹ while many others say to shake the entire garment.⁴² Some give the reason as an indication of holding one's sins and throwing them away.⁴³

34 *Matei Ephraim* 598:5.

35 Refer to *Otzer Minhagei Chabad* 1, pages 145-146; *Mekadesh Yisrael, Yamim Nora'im* 212.

36 *Darchei Chaim V'shalom* 741. Refer to *Shar Yissochoh* 1, pages 288-289; *Divrei Yisrael* 1:167.

37 *Minhag Avoseinu B'yadeinu* 1, page 101.

38 *Minchas Elazar* 5:27.

39 *Shevus Yaakov* 3:42; *Matei Ephraim* 598:5.

40 *Elef Hamagen* 598:9; *Mekadesh Yisrael, Yamim Nora'im* 213. See *Minhag Avoseinu B'yadeinu* 1, page 106.

41 *Matei Ephraim* 598:4.

42 *Elyah Rabbah* 598:3; *Matei Ephraim* 598:4; *Torah Lishmah, O.C.* 31; *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 129:21; *Darchei Chaim V'shalom* 741. See *Otzer Minhagei Chabad* 1, pages 142-143.

43 *Keser Shem Tov* 6, page 208.

איז עיל להקדיף ה' בעולמו אלפי יאמות של הלכה בלבי... (ברכות ה')

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The *Kaf Hachaim*⁴⁴ says that the garment should be shaken over the water. There are differing opinions as to the proper time during the recital of Tashlich that one should shake his garment.⁴⁵

Women Going to Tashlich

There is a discussion in the *poskim* whether women should go to the rivers and lakes and say Tashlich.

The custom is that women do go to Tashlich. However, in some places women tend to mingle with men. This practice is not advisable, especially on the day where everyone is judged for their actions. This is frowned upon by many, even if no men are present.⁴⁶ Therefore, women should avoid any possibility of inappropriate mingling.⁴⁷ Others say that even if men are present, the fear of judgment of the day will prevent any issues.⁴⁸

Thoughts

When one recites *Tashlich*, he should have in mind that his sins should be removed.⁴⁹

44 583:30.

45 For the opinions on this see *Minhag Avoseinu B'yadeinu* 1, pages 106-107.

46 *Yad Eliyahu* (Rugler) 1, will of author 2.

47 Refer to *Elef Hamagen* 598:7. See *Ohr Yisrael* 17, pages 206-208.

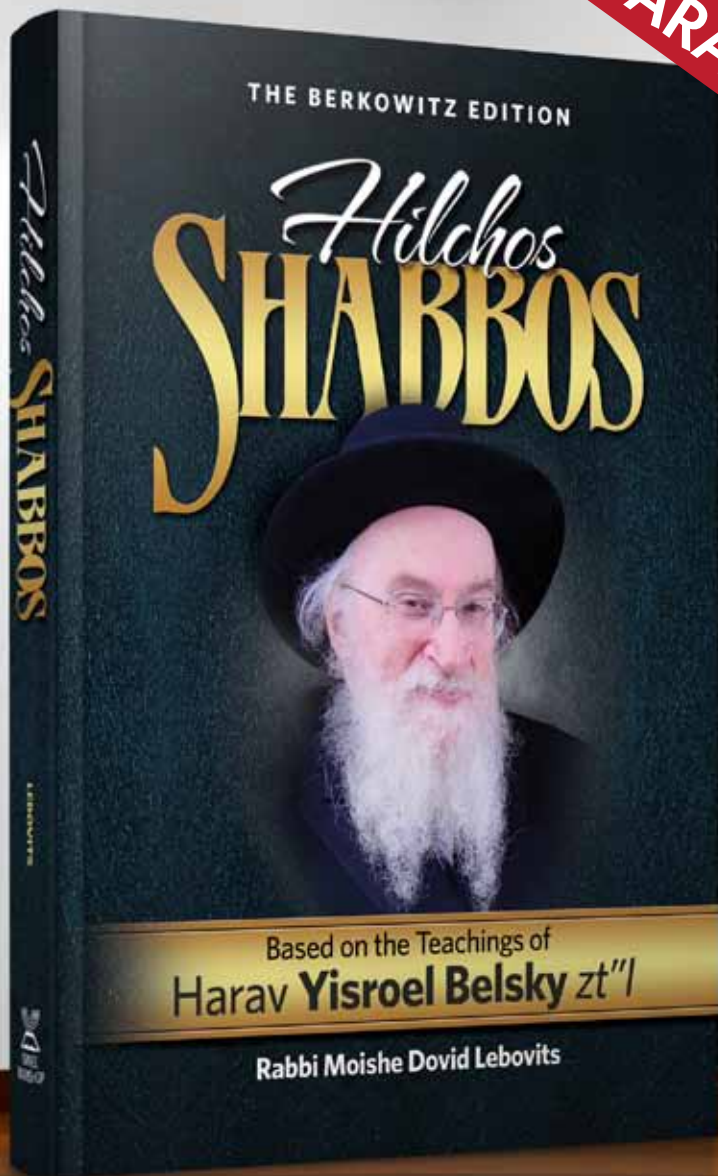
48 *Ginzei Yosef* 101:2, page 232.

49 *Kaf Hachaim* 583:30.

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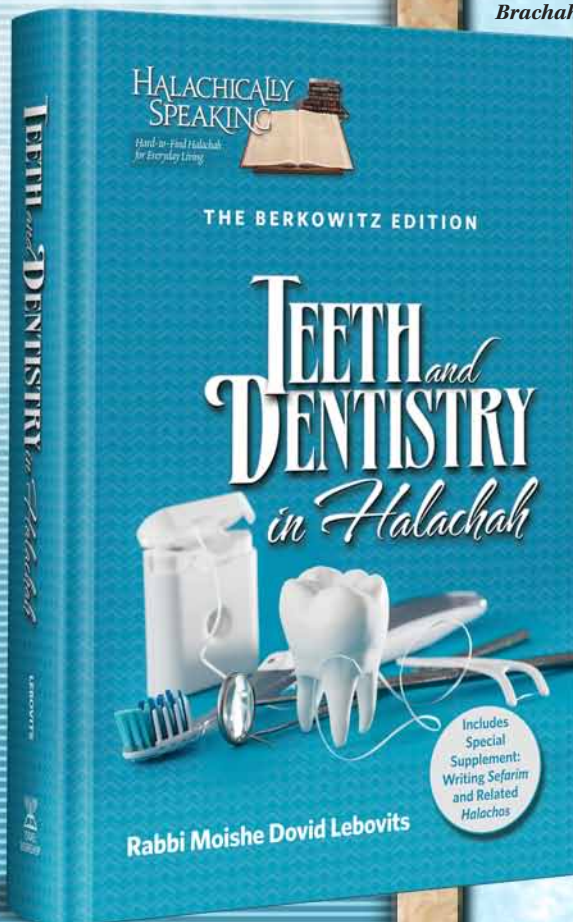


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