

## What's the Truth about ... *Ga'al Yisrael*?



**Misconception:** The modern-day practice of some *shelichei tzibbur*—communal prayer leaders—of ending the *berachah* of *Ga'al Yisrael* in a whisper is a requirement and has been around for generations.

**Fact:** The practice of ending *Ga'al Yisrael* silently seems to have originated relatively recently. Prior to modern times, the *shaliach tzibbur* (*sha"tz*) would recite the entire *berachah* of *Ga'al Yisrael* out loud.<sup>1</sup>

**Background:** In Shacharit,<sup>2</sup> it is important that there be no interruption between the *berachah* of *Ga'al Yisrael*<sup>3</sup> and the beginning of Shemoneh Esrei<sup>4</sup>; this concept is known as “*semichat Geulah leTefillah*” (*Berachot* 42a; *SA, OC* 66:8-9; *SA, OC* 111:1; *SA, OC* 236:2).<sup>5</sup> The Talmud does not offer a reason for this linkage, but it *does* highlight its importance in several places. It declares in the name of the “holy Jerusalem community” that on the days a person links *Ga'al Yisrael* with Shemoneh Esrei, he will be protected from harm (*Berachot* 9b) and will not be bothered by the Satan (*Yerushalmi, Berachot* 1:1). According to Rabbi Yochanan, an individual who links the two in Maariv (and certainly in Shacharit, according to Rashi) will merit *Olam Haba*, the World to Come (*Berachot* 4b); the

Gemara further states that Rav Bruna once said “‘*Geulah*’ [*Ga'al Yisrael*] right before ‘*Tefillah*’ [Shemoneh Esrei]” and smiled the entire day (*Berachot* 9b).<sup>6,7</sup>

The Talmud does not cite a rationale for linking *Ga'al Yisrael* to Shemoneh Esrei; however, later authorities do offer a few reasons. Rashi (*Berachot* 4b, s.v. “*zeh hasomech*”), based on the *Yerushalmi* (*Berachot* 1:1),<sup>8</sup> explains that the *berachah* of *Ga'al Yisrael* is analogous to knocking on a king’s door, while Shemoneh Esrei is comparable to making requests of the king. Thus, reciting *Ga'al Yisrael* and interrupting before Shemoneh Esrei is akin to knocking on a king’s door and then abruptly leaving before the door is opened.<sup>9</sup>

Taking a different approach, Rabbeinu Yonah (*Berachot* 2b in Rif pages, s.v. “*eyzehu*”) explains that *Ga'al Yisrael* expresses our gratitude to God for having redeemed us from Egypt, while Shemoneh Esrei constitutes “service of the heart.” By linking them, we show that we understand that we were freed from Egypt only in order to serve God. Rabbi Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg (*Lifrakim*, 5766, ed. pp. 397-8) explains that *Ga'al Yisrael* relates to the past redemption and that the Shemoneh Esrei is a prayer for the future Redemption. Rabbi Weinberg goes on to say that “a future that is not rooted in the past is unsustainable.”

However, linking the *berachah* of *Ga'al Yisrael* to Shemoneh Esrei would seem to present a halachic quandary,

since one is required to answer Amen to the *berachot* that one hears (*SA, OC* 124:6). There are thus competing desiderata: the need to start Shemoneh Esrei immediately after the *berachah* of *Ga'al Yisrael*, and the requirement to respond Amen to the *sha"tz*’s recitation of *Ga'al Yisrael* (which would seem to constitute an interruption). What is one supposed to do?

The Mechaber and the Rema disagree about how to proceed in this situation (*OC* 66:7, 111:1). The Mechaber rules that one should not respond Amen to *Ga'al Yisrael* (and in the *Beit Yosef* [*OC* 66, 111], he states that this ruling is based on the *Zohar*.)<sup>10</sup> The Rema (and the Tur before him [*ibid.*], who said it was a mitzvah to answer Amen to *Ga'al Yisrael*) views Amen as part of the prayer service and indicates that the custom is to recite Amen. Thus, according to the Rema, answering Amen does not constitute an interruption. Interestingly, while nowadays it is quite common for the *sha"tz* to complete *Ga'al Yisrael* silently, it is clear from both the Mechaber and the Rema that in the times in which they lived, the *sha"tz* would complete the blessing out loud. Indeed, I could not find any early authorities who suggest that the *sha"tz* should end the *berachah* silently.

Complicating matters further, a question arises concerning another Amen. In general, one is not required to answer Amen to one’s own *berachah*. A well-known exception is the

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*berachah* “*Boneh Yerushalayim*” in Birkat Hamazon, where the recitation of Amen serves to separate the first three Biblical *berachot* from the ensuing rabbinic *berachah* (*Be-rachot* 45b). Rashi (ibid., s.v. “*ha*”) explains that one should answer Amen to one’s own *berachah* at the end of any series of *berachot*; this is how the Rif, Rambam and *Shulchan Aruch* rule (*OC* 215:1). The Rema (ibid.) disagrees and limits answering Amen to one’s own *berachah* only when reciting *Boneh Yerushalayim*. Because *Ga’al Yisrael* is part of a series of *berachot*, several authorities rule that one should answer Amen after one’s own recitation of *Ga’al Yisrael* (Rashi, Rosh, Tur, *OC* 66). The *Beit Yosef*, citing Rambam, disagrees (*OC* 66, s.v. “*vegomer*”). To summarize: Some authorities assert that one should recite Amen to one’s own recitation of *Ga’al Yisrael*, others maintain that one should answer Amen to the *chazzan’s berachah* and still others rule that reciting any Amen constitutes an interruption and should not be said.

With all of these various opinions, knowing how to respond when one reaches *Ga’al Yisrael* in *davening* is no simple matter. But the question of whether or not to answer Amen to the *sha”tz* arises only if one has completed his own *berachah* before the *sha”tz*.<sup>11</sup> If one is in the middle of reciting the *berachah* while the *sha”tz* completes the *berachah*, he may not answer Amen because one may not interrupt when in the middle of reciting *Keriyat Shema* u’*Berchotehah* (*Mishnah Berurah* 66:35). The Magen Avraham (66:11), followed by the *Aruch Hashulchan* (*OC* 66:15), the *Mishnah Berurah* (66:35) and others, suggests that one should complete the *berachah* of *Ga’al Yisrael* simultaneously with the *sha”tz* and thereby obviate the obligation to answer Amen.

*Levushai Srad*, quoted by Rabbi Yisrael Chaim Friedman (*Likutei Maharich*, 5724, 1:70b-71) and the *Mishnah Berurah* (66:35), contends that finishing the *berachah* simultaneously with the *sha”tz* does not exempt one from saying Amen. He opines that one should commence *Shemoneh Esrei* with the verse “*Hashem sefatai tiftach*” before the *sha”tz* completes the *berachah* of *Ga’al Yisrael*. At that point, he is exempt from saying Amen since he has already begun *Shemoneh Esrei*. Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein, in the *Aruch Hashulchan* (*OC* 66:14), notes that while it is permissible to answer Amen to *Ga’al Yisrael*, the “common practice is not to.” Rabbi Sraya Duvlitsky notes that while the practice among Belz and Karlin Chassidim is to conclude the *berachah* silently, the *berachah* “has been said out loud in all the *vatikin* [sunrise] *minyanim* in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv for the past fifty years. If the custom seems to be changing, it is because of the new generation that is not aware of what the custom is.” He further suggests that if the *sha”tz* wants to conclude *Ga’al Yisrael* quietly, he must recite the entire *berachah* quietly.<sup>12</sup>

All of these opinions indicate that throughout most of Jewish history, the *sha”tz* recited the entire *berachah* of *Ga’al Yisrael* aloud. Apparently, at some point in recent years, the practice of the *sha”tz* concluding *Ga’al Yisrael* in a whisper came about. This practice appeals to many because it allows one to satisfy most halachic opinions. There is certainly a halachic precedent for reciting a *berachah* quietly in order to ensure that others do not respond Amen.<sup>13</sup> The *Peri*

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*Megadim* (Aishel Avraham 25:10) questions whether one should answer Amen to the *berachah* “*Al Mitzvat Tefillin*” (recited by Ashkenazim when putting on the *tefillin shel rosh*). Because it is unclear whether one is required to answer Amen for this specific *berachah*, the Maharsham (*Da’at Torah*, OC 25:5), quoting the *Teshuvot Ramatz*, opines that one should say the *berachah* quietly so that others will not hear it.<sup>14</sup>

One of the earliest sources to propose the option of stating *Ga’al Yisrael* silently is Rabbi Avraham David Warman (1771-1841; Ukraine; Aishel Avraham Butchach, OC: 66), who writes that when he was the *sha”tz* he would say the entire *berachah* of *Ga’al Yisrael* silently. However, he explains that he did so because he did not want congregants to accidentally interrupt with their recital of “*Baruch Hu u’varuch Shemo*.” Interestingly, he makes no mention of the interruption associated with their answering Amen. The Chatan Sofer<sup>15</sup> actually advocates concluding the *berachah* quietly, adding that the custom should be implemented more widely. However, based on the wording of the Chatan Sofer as well as on other sources, *Iyunei Halachot* (pp. 284-5) suggests that the Chatan Sofer is not advocating what is common today, i.e., concluding the final words quietly, but rather what Aishel Avraham Butchach did, i.e., reciting the entire *berachah* quietly. If this reading is correct, this would eliminate one of the important sources for this practice. Of note is that earlier in his work the Chatan Sofer devotes an entire essay (pp. 83-86) to the topic of linking *Ga’al Yisrael* and *Tefillah* and does not mention anything about saying the *berachah* quietly.

As the practice of having the *sha”tz* quietly recite *Ga’al Yisrael* spread, critics of the custom proliferated as well. The distinguished American *posek* Rabbi Yosef Eliyahu Henkin (1881-1973) strongly condemns the practice in several places (*Eidut LeYisrael*, p. 161; *Teshuvot Ivra* 6:3, p. 8).<sup>16</sup> He objects to this “new custom” because, in his opinion, the *sha”tz* is obligated to recite the *berachot* in *Keriyat Shema* out loud (“*Pores al haShema*”).<sup>17</sup> Rabbi Henkin

maintains that the *sha”tz* should say the *berachot* of *Yotzer Ohr* and *Ga’al Yisrael* out loud, and this *pesak* has appeared in every issue of the widely used *Ezras Torah luach* since 1947. Ideally, he says, the *sha”tz* should recite all of the *berachot* of *Keriyat Shema* out loud, as Sephardim do. Rabbi Henkin explains that if the *chazzan* neglects to say the beginning and end of each *berachah* from *Yotzer Ohr* until *Shemoneh Esrei* out loud “he has failed to fulfill ‘*tefillot hatzibbur* [the obligation of communal prayer].”

Other critics of ending *Ga’al Yisrael* silently argue that it is disrespectful to begin a *berachah* out loud and conclude it quietly. They further argue that if the *berachah* is stated quietly, those at different points of the *tefillah* would be denied the opportunity to answer Amen.

Recently, Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch (*Teshuvot Vehanagot* 1:105) and Rabbi Ezra Bick (“*Chovat Hachazzan Bete-fillah Betzibbur*,” *Alon Shvut* 117 [1987]: 24-38, also appeared in *Keshet Tfutot* [of Yeshivat Har Etzion] 12 [1987]: 4-18) have written in favor of concluding the *berachah* out loud. Rabbi Sternbuch says that despite the “Chatam [sic Chatan] Sofer’s support” of saying it silently, based on other Acharonim he believes the custom should not be practiced. Still others argue that even if the *sha”tz* concludes the *berachah* quietly, this does not resolve any halachic difficulties because if one knows a particular *berachah* is being recited, one is required to answer Amen, even if the entire *berachah* is not audible (Rabbi Binyamin Zilber on *Chayei Adam*, *Beit Baruch* 20:56). Rabbi Shmuel Halevi Vozner (author of *Shevet Levi*; *M’Beit HaLevi* [Tishrei 5755], 6:24) is opposed to ending the *berachah* silently because it is “a slight against the honor of the *berachah*.”

Rabbi Baruch Halevi Epstein (1860-1941; *Baruch She’amar*, 5730/1970, pp. 112-113) provides two additional reasons as to why the *sha”tz* should complete the *berachah* out loud and why congregants should recite Amen. Citing the Rema’s view, he argues that responding Amen does not constitute an interruption. He further contends that the debate between the Rema and the

Mechaber (who rules that one should not respond Amen) is rooted in the different views of the Gemara and the *Zohar*, respectively; he notes that whenever the *Zohar* and the Gemara contradict each other, the rule is to follow the Gemara. He goes on to say that Chazal, who instituted the obligation to recite *Ga’al Yisrael*, knew all about the conflicting halachic issues yet did not mention the option of reciting the *berachah* quietly.

Several recent, well-known *roshei yeshivah* insisted that the *sha”tz* complete *Ga’al Yisrael* aloud and made a point of completing *Ga’al Yisrael* out loud when they *davened* for the *amud* (led the services). These include Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (*Nefesh HaRav*, p. 128; *Machzor Mesorat HaRav*, *Rosh Hashanah*, p. 277); Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum (the Satmar Rebbe; *Minhag Yisrael Torah*, vol. 1, pp. 153-154); Rabbi Shmuel Yaakov Weinberg and Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky (*av beit din* of the Jerusalem Badatz, HaEidah HaChareidis).

There are, however, halachic authorities who defend the practice of reciting the *berachah* quietly. While Rabbi Baruch Halevi Epstein doesn’t support the custom of ending the *berachah* quietly, he states that it was followed by the overwhelming majority of people in his day. Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky (*Iyunei Halachot*, 5763, pp. 282-3; *Ishei Yisrael*, p. 164, end of n. 83) argues that because ending it quietly is an accepted custom, doing so does not indicate any disrespect toward the *berachah*. He also rejects Rabbi Zilber’s argument that one is obligated to say Amen even if he didn’t hear the entire *berachah*.<sup>18</sup> Rabbi Aizik Ausband (*Kovetz Beit Aharon VeYisrael* 4:3[21], Shevat-Adar 5749: 117-118) and Rabbi Ephraim Greenblatt (*Rivevot Ephraim* 1:71; 6:42) respond to many of the objections to ending the *berachah* silently. Defending this practice that they say is standard in the Lithuanian *Yeshivah* world, they argue that ending *Ga’al Yisrael* quietly is based on the opinion of the Gra, who ruled that concluding simultaneously with the *sha”tz* does not obviate one’s obligation to recite Amen. They also cite halachic precedents for ending *Ga’al Yisrael* silently

(although what would be the most significant source seems to be in error).<sup>19</sup>

Recently, for an article he wrote for *Bevoat Kol*, a publication of Yeshivat Horeb (Shemot 5758), Zev Frimer polled several contemporary *posekim* on whether or not to say *Ga'al Yisrael* aloud. In the article, Rabbi Avigdor Halevi Nebenzahl states that because the custom is so widespread, and people today say the *berachah* on their own and do not rely on the *sha"tz* to *daven* in their stead (as was the custom in olden times), there is no reason why the *sha"tz* cannot end the *berachah* silently. Similarly, Sephardi *posekim* Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu (former Sephardi chief rabbi of Israel) and Rabbi Chaim David Halevi rule that for Ashkenazim who follow the Rema (who permits answering Amen) and yet want to avoid any halachic question with regard to *Ga'al Yisrael*, it is preferable that the *sha"tz* end *Ga'al Yisrael* silently.

However, most contemporary Ashkenazi *posekim*, including Rabbi Shmuel Halevi Vozner, Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein and Rabbi Nachum Eliezer Rabinovitch, maintain that the *berachah* should be said aloud. After writing the article, Frimer discussed the topic with former Chief Rabbi of Israel Rabbi Avraham Shapiro, who also objected to the practice of concluding the *berachah* silently.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (*Halichot Shlomo*, vol. 1, pp. 93-94) contends that the *berachah Ga'al Yisrael* should be concluded out loud and that that was the practice in the Gra shul in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Shaarei Chesed, where he *davened*. He was known to frequently quote Rabbi Henkin on this point. In his writings, he also notes that, based on the fact that all the Acharonim labored to find the ideal way to deal with the issue and none suggested ending the *berachah* quietly, it is evident that this is not an appropriate solution. Nonetheless, Rabbi Auerbach told his students that if they are in a shul where the custom is to end *Ga'al Yisrael* quietly, they should do so as well.

To recap: This entire discussion is relevant only to those who follow the Rema; those who follow the ruling of the Mechaber conclude *Ga'al Yisrael* out loud, do not answer Amen and proceed directly to Shemoneh Esrei. However, the Rema ruled that one is required to recite Amen, even though this may appear to be an interruption.<sup>20</sup> Because many congregants want to satisfy most halachic opinions on the matter, various ways of conducting oneself when reciting *Ga'al Yisrael* have evolved. Options include finishing *Ga'al Yisrael* before the *sha"tz* and answering Amen to his *berachah* (like the Rema suggests) or avoiding the obligation to say Amen by beginning Shemonei Esrei before the *sha"tz* concludes *Ga'al Yisrael*, by concluding *Ga'al Yisrael* together with the *sha"tz* or by having the *sha"tz* complete the *berachah* silently.<sup>21</sup>

Rabbi Yaakov Neiman<sup>22</sup> concludes a discussion of this topic with a few words of *musar* for the *sha"tz*. He suggests that the *sha"tz* be instructed to recite the entire section of *Tzur Yisrael* slowly and loudly, thus giving the congregation a chance to conclude this important prayer that ushers in Shemoneh Esrei with a feeling of trust that God will bring the *Geulah*. Indeed, the halachic concept

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of “*semichat Geulah leTefillah*”—linking the *berachah* of *Ga'al Yisrael* to the start of Shemoneh Esrei—can also be interpreted as the following: We must link our prayer for the future *Geulah* (referred to in the opening *berachah* in Shemoneh Esrei) with an acknowledgment of the Divine intervention evident in the previous redemptions. This is especially relevant to our generation, which has witnessed an unprecedented ingathering of the exiles. We must remember to thank God for His role throughout our history—and in our recent history—as we beseech Him to effect the ultimate Redemption. ■

### Notes

1. There is no valid custom of the *sha"tz* simply not finishing the *berachah*.

2. On whether this applies to Maariv, see Tosafot, *Berachot* 4b, s.v. “*d'omar*,” 27b, s.v. “*vehilchata*”; Tur, *OC* 236; *Magen Avraham*, *OC* 236:1 citing Rashba. Certain leniencies therefore apply during Maariv. For example, after finishing the *berachah* of *Ga'al Yisrael*, one may call out “*Ya'aleh Veyavo*” or “*Al Hanissim*” to remind the public to insert those special prayers (*SA*, *OC* 236:2; *Sha'ar Hatziyun* 236:4; *MB* 236:7; *MB* 422:1; *Kaf HaChaim* 236:17).

3. Note that this *berachah* is in the past tense (“*ga'al*”) and refers to the redemption from Egypt. This is in contrast to the seventh *berachah* in Shemoneh Esrei, which concludes with the present/future tense (“*goel*”) and is a prayer for the future. See *Pesachim* 117b; Rashbam, *ibid.*; Tur, *OC* 236; *Mishnah Berurah* 66:33. On what to do if one errs with regard to the tense of either of these two, see Taz (66:6); Avraham Yeshaya Pfoifer, *Ishei Yisrael*, 5758, chap. 32, n. 101; Rabbi Ephraim Greenblatt, *Rivevot Ephraim* 5:51. On the *berachah* of *Geulah* (redemption) at the Passover Seder, see Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin, *Leor Hahalachah*, 5717, pp. 231-240. See also *Magen Avraham* (236: introduction); *Perisha* (236) and *Machatzit Hashekel* (236).

4. The verse “*Hashem sefatai tiftach*,” the blessing of Hashkiveinu and Kaddish are all recited after *Ga'al*

*Yisrael* but are not considered interruptions. According to most authorities, the additional verses beginning with “*Baruch Hashem leolam*” in Maariv are also not considered an interruption. See Tur, *OC* 236; *Shulchan Aruch*, *OC* 236:2.

5. For an interesting discussion of the possible historical development of this concept, see Chaim Menachem Levitas, “*Semichat Geulah LeTefillah*,” *Turei Yeshurun*, Shevat-Adar 5735 (44): 23-26.

6. Tosafot (*Berachot* 9b, s.v. “*kol*”) were bothered by these statements because we say *Tefillah* right after *Geulah*. They thus explain (*Beit Yosef*, *OC* 111, follows this) that these statements refer to not only linking them but to doing so at a *vatikin* minyan (at sunrise).

7. For some thoughts on this topic, see “*Beinyan Semichat Geulah LeTefillah*,” Rabbi David Hakohen Leibowitz, *Am HaTorah* 13 (5740/1979): 5-10; Sefat Emet, *Vayigash* 5665.

8. The *Yerushalmi* also bases the need to link the two on Psalms 19:15 and 20:2.

9. See *Teshuvot Vehanhagot* 4:31.

10. He says that this is also the opinion of Rambam and the Rosh. The Mechaber, in *Maggid Maisharim*, says that an angel instructed him to be careful to not respond Amen. This is also found in the *Elya Rabbah* (*OC* 66:10), which notes that the Shela and Piskei Tosafot also state that one should not answer Amen.

11. Or, after completing his *berachah*, hears it completed by another worshipper—an issue that will not be discussed here.

12. *Kovetz Beit Aharon VeYisrael*, 3:6 (18), Av-Elul 5748, pp. 69-70

13. For a discussion on saying prayers silently, see Professor Daniel Sperber, *Minhagei Yisrael*, vol. 2, p. 37, n. 11; vol. 4, pp. 23-28.

14. Rabbi Shlomo Kluger (*Haelef Lecha Shlomo* 57) disagrees.

15. Not the Chatam Sofer as erroneously stated in *Teshuvot Vehanhagot* 1:105, but the Chatan Sofer (*OC* 2, *Sha'ar Tefillah*: 10, p. 125) as stated in *Rivevot Ephraim*. The Chatan Sofer (Rabbi Samuel ben David Zevi Ehrenfeld; 1835-1883) was the son of the Chatam Sofer's daughter, and in his later years served as the rabbi of Mat-

tersdorf (Moravia/Hungary). See *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 6:508.

16. He further explains his reasoning in an article in *Hapardes*, Elul 5730. It is also discussed by his grandson, Rabbi Yehuda Herzl Henkin, in *Shu"t Bnei Banim*, vol. 1, p. 3.

17. This is a difficult term to translate and is subject to much discussion among Talmudic commentators. See the explanations of *Mishnah Megillah* 4:3 (23b).

18. In Rabbi Kanievsky's discussion of this topic in *Shoneh Halachot* (66:19), he does not mention the option of finishing the *berachah* silently.

19. They cite Rabbi Gedalia Felder (*Yesodei Yeshurun*, vol. 1, p. 284) as quoting Mahari Tirnah as suggesting that the silent completion of *Ga'al Yisrael* is to avoid the requirement of saying Amen. The Mahari Tirnah (see *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 15:1491) lived at the end of the fourteenth century. I thank Rabbi Yehuda Herzl Henkin for pointing out to me that *Sefer Minhagim-Mahari Tirna* does not actually suggest saying *Ga'al Yisrael* silently. It merely quotes the opinions of both Rabbi Amram Gaon, who ruled (not found in current editions of his works) that Amen should *not* be said after *Ga'al Yisrael*, as well as the Tur, who ruled that it *should* be said. He does not decide between the two opinions, nor give any suggestions regarding how to avoid the problem. This same “quote” of the Mahari Tirna is also cited by Professor Sperber (*Minhagei Yisrael*, vol. 4, p. 26, n. 9).

20. See *Minhag Yisrael Torah*, vol. 1, pp. 153-154, and *Ishei Yisrael*, p. 164, par. 24, nn. 83-84, for additional supporters of each side of the debate.

21. Interestingly, many people are more careful about this on Shabbat morning, yet, according to the Rema, there is room to be lenient on Shabbat morning with regard to the obligation to link *Ga'al Yisrael* and Shemoneh Esrei (Rema, *OC* 111:1; *Mishnah Berurah* 66:50). The *Beit Yosef* disagrees (*OC* 111; see *Sha'agat Aryeh* 16) and states that on Shabbat the requirement still holds.

22. *Kovetz Beit Aharon VeYisrael* 4:3 (21) Shevat/Adar I and II 5749, p. 120



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*Parkside Memorial Chapels is one of the most reputable, independent Jewish funeral homes. Still Jewish family owned and operated, it is committed to upholding our traditions, and to treating everyone with dignity and respect.*

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*For any further information or if you have any questions concerning the OU Levaya Program, please call 1.877.LEVAYA.OU (1.877.538.2926) or visit our website at [www.ou.org/programs/levaya](http://www.ou.org/programs/levaya).*