

Have You Ever Wondered...

and הגאון הרב שמואל בן איסא עטיל, *Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky shlita*, *In the Zechus of a Refuah Shleima of my Rabbeim*, *Rav Moshe Heinemann Shlita*, הגאון הרב משה בן פיגלא.

Q: Are there special days on which one does not tear קריעה when visiting the Kosel?

A: The Gemara (*Moed Kattan* 26a) and *Shulchan Aruch* (*OC* 561:2) rule that one who sees the site of the המקדש בית should recite:

בית קדשנו ותפארתנו אשר הללך בו אבותינו היה לשריפת אש וכל מחמדינו היה לחרבה

and then perform קריעה.

It seems from the Poskim (פאת השולחן, הלכות ארץ ישראל סי' ג סע' ב; that it is not necessary to actually see the מקדש / רצפת, the actual ground. Rather, seeing the Dome of the Rock, which is located on the מקום המקדש, or seeing the *Kosel HaMaaravi* is sufficient, whichever one sees first.

One who has seen the מקדש within the previous thirty days does not tear קריעה again.

It is said that when Rav Elyashiv, ז"ל, was younger, he made a point of climbing to the roof of one of the tall buildings in מאה הר הבית every thirty days, where the Dome of the Rock could be seen. Those who live in the Mount Scopus area have numerous vantage points from which they can simply look in that direction and fulfill this requirement.

The מנהג is that בני ירושלים / Jerusalemers do not need to rip even if they haven't been there for thirty days and this custom is followed by many (*Sharei Teshuvah* 561: 2, quoting the *Birkei Yosef* 561:2, *Halichos Shlomo*, *Tefilla*, 23:16, *Ashrei Ha'ish* 73:12).

On חול המועד and שבת, יום טוב, one does not tear קריעה. This is true even if he sees the מקדש again after thirty days have passed (*Ashrei Ha'ish* ibid., *Shulchan Shlomo* 1:73). See *Igros Moshe* (י"ד ח"ג סי' נב סע' ד) who appears to disagree and required tearing on the next visit.

The reasoning is that the צער of seeing the המקדש בחורבנו does not continue after Shabbos or Yom Tov. This differs from hearing about the passing of a close relative on Shabbos, where the pain and אבלות remains very much present afterward, and therefore קריעה is still required.

On ארחות רבינו, Chanukah, however, one does tear (ראש חודש pg. 149; 71:37 אשרי האיש).

There are those who are under the impression that one who visits the Kosel on שבת after חצות does not tear. However, Rav Moshe Feinstein, ז"ל (ibid.) and Rav Elyashiv (61:37 אשרי האיש) write that one

should not rely on this and should tear even at that time. I heard the same from Rav Moshe Heinemann, *shlit"a*, as well.

One explanation given for the origin of this מנהג is that many Yerushalmi Yidden would begin preparing for Shabbos early and would already be wearing their בגדי שבת by midday Friday. Since tearing a Shabbos garment would be particularly problematic, the custom developed not to tear at that time. This reasoning, however, is not necessarily applicable to most people today.

Some have suggested that one can transfer ownership of the garment to another person through a valid קניין before seeing the Kosel. Since the clothing would then no longer belong to him, he would not be obligated to tear it.

However, most Poskim (*Ohr L'Tzion* 3:30:5 and Rav Elyashiv, *Ha'aros Moed Kattan* 20:2) are uncomfortable with doing this simply to avoid the קריעה, since the entire purpose of the tearing is to express אבלות over the המקדש. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, ז"ל (pg. 60 מעדני שלמה) even questions whether this method works altogether.

Therefore, the simplest and best approach is to wear an inexpensive or old shirt that is designated for the קריעה. This ripped shirt can even be reused multiple times, providing that there is a space of at least three finger breadths between each *kriah* (*MB* 561:8).

We are incredibly privileged to have, in our generation, access once again to the Kosel, a place about which Chazal say (מדרש 2:2 רבה, שמות):

מעולם אין השכינה זזה מכותל מערב

"The שכינה never departs from the *Kosel HaMaaravi*."

The Kosel is not merely a historic site. It is a place where תפילות from all over the world ascend to שמים, the closest accessible site to the קודש הקדשים, a place where generations of Jews have poured out their hearts, and the שכינה continues to rest.

Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg, ז"ל, was a massive מתמיד who was very careful not to waste anytime in life. In fact, his son, R' Simcha, the current Rosh Yehshivah of Torah Ohr, shared with me last week that his father at the age of fourteen learned 18 hours a day. When he became a yungerman, he cut back to 17 hours! Yet, Rav Chaim Pinchas is quoted as saying that a person who lives nearby, has the ability to go to the Kosel, and nevertheless allows thirty days to pass without going, should have enough pain over his own מצב to "tear his clothes" over the fact that he has allowed himself to become so disconnected from such a מקום קדוש.

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