

## Q&A from the Bais HaVaad Halacha Hotline

Wear and Tear

July 27, 2023

**Q** Should I do *kriah* when davening at the *Kosel*?



**A** One who sees Yerushalayim<sup>[1]</sup> or the *mekom haMikdash* in their destruction must perform *kriah* (Shulchan Aruch O.C. 561:2), making a one-*tefach* tear in one garment, e.g., a shirt. If he sees Yerushalayim and then the *mekom haMikdash*, he makes a tear for each, the second at least three finger-widths from the first. But if he tore for the *mekom haMikdash* and only then saw Yerushalayim, it is sufficient to just add a bit to the first tear. If within thirty days he sees these sites again, he need not repeat *kriah*. There is a minhag that many follow that residents of Yerushalayim don't do *kriah* on either site, even after a thirty-day absence.

On the way to the *Kosel* you will see Yerushalayim and most likely also the *mekom haMikdash*. Act according to the above based on what you see and in what sequence.

*Kriah* must be done while standing. Even *bedieved*, if performed while sitting it is invalid and must be repeated. If you go to the *Kosel* by car and can't stop for *kriah* on the way, and by your arrival you already saw both Yerushalayim and the *mekom haMikdash*, tear once for both.

It is cited in the name of the Steipler Gaon that tearing twice is only *lechat'chilah*, and *bedieved*, if one waited to tear until he saw both sites, he has not violated the basic halacha (Orchos Rabeinu Vol. 2 p. 150). It seems that based on this, most people only do one *kriah*, because they often aren't able to tear *kriah* on the way.

Many *poskim* (including the Chazon Ish and Rav Elyashiv) hold that one is exempt from *kriah* on Erev Shabbos after *chatzos*, lest the sadness carry over into Shabbos. (On *motza'ei* Shabbos or Rosh Chodesh, the obligation applies.) And most *poskim* disapprove of the workaround of going to these sites wearing a borrowed shirt.

[1] This refers to parts of Yerushalayim that existed at the time of the *Bais Hamikdash*, e.g., *Sha'ar Yafo* and parts of the Old City. Seeing the golden mosque dome is considered seeing the *mekom haMikdash* rather than Yerushalayim.