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Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן כ"ג סעיף א'-סימן כ"ד סעיף ו'

# Halacha Highlight

## Holding one's *tzitzis* while reading *Krias Shema*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 24 Seif 2

**מצוה לאחוז הציצית ביד שמאלית כנגד לבו בשעת קריאת שמע**

**There is a *mitzvah* for one to hold his *tzitzis* in his left hand by his heart while he reads *Krias Shema***

The Midrash (שוחר טוב תהלים ל"ה:ב') relates that Dovid HaMelech reported that he held his *tzitzis* by his heart with his left hand while reading *Krias Shema*. Bais Yosef references Yerushalmi that explains that when the Gemara states that a child who knows how to wrap himself is obligated to wear *tzitzis* it means that he knows to hold his *tzitzis* while reading *Krias Shema*. Rav Moshe Feinstein (אג"מ ח"א או"ח סי' ג') infers from this that holding one's *tzitzis* is a Biblical requirement. If holding one's *tzitzis* during *Krias Shema* was not a Biblical requirement, the Gemara would not relate a child's obligation in *tzitzis* to holding them during *Krias Shema*.

Shulchan Aruch (סי' ס"א סע' כ"ה) writes that when a person says the words וראיתם אותו he should touch the *tzitzis* in front. This implies that one is not obligated to hold all four *tzitzis* while reciting *Krias Shema*. In our Siman Shulchan Aruch also writes that one should look at the *tzitzis* that are in front. The rationale for taking only the *tzitzis* that are in front is due to the requirement to remain surrounded by *mitzvos* (שאילתות להגר"ח וואלוז'ין אות ו'.) Sha'arei Teshuvah (סי' י' ס"ק י"ג) mentions the custom for one to hold all four *tzitzis* while reading *Krias Shema*.

Mishnah Berurah (סק"ד) writes that one should grasp the *tzitzis* between his fourth and fifth finger. Upon reaching *Parshas Tzitzis* one should also hold them in his right hand and look at them. Sefer Me'Asef L'Chol HaMachanos explains that the correct procedure is for one to hold the root of the *tzitzis* in his left hand and the remaining part of the *tzitzis* in his right hand. Mishnah Berurah concludes that one should continue to hold onto his *tzitzis* until he reads the words נאמנים ונחמדים לעד.

# Stories to Share

## A Knotty Problem

ש"ע כ"ג, ב', ; "ולא הועילו בתקנתן..."

A certain person put on his tallis and went to shul on Shabbos morning as usual. It was a very windy day, and his tzitzis became knotted together. Fearing that any additional knot would invalidate the tzitzis, and knowing that opening a knot on Shabbos is forbidden (רמ"א ס' ש"י"ז) the man immediately rushed back home and put on a spare tallis, but missed about ten minutes of the davening for this. After davening he wondered if this had really been necessary. Had the extra knots really invalidated his tzitzis?

When he put this question to Rav Shamai Kehas Gross, zt"l, he was glad to hear that his tallis had been completely valid all along. "It is clear from the Shulchan Aruch and the Mishnah Berurah in siman 23 that this is not a problem. There we find that some people who could not tuck their tzitzis in decided to tie them together to avoid the prohibition of לועג לרש—of mocking the dead who are unable to fulfill this mitzvah. The Shulchan Aruch concludes that this doesn't help at all. The Mishnah Berurah explains that even if they tie their tzitzis together this in no way invalidates the tzitzis. This is certainly not a permanent knot since they plan on untying it the moment they leave the cemetery. The same is true in your case since you plan on untying the knot after Shabbos."

אורח כהלכה, ע' ל"ח-ל"ט

# Overview

**Siman 23 Seif 1:**

**It is permitted to enter a cemetery wearing *tzitzis* as long as they do not drag on the graves. This ruling applied when they put *tzitzis* on their regular garment but nowadays that we wear a garment specifically for the *mitzvah* it is prohibited even if the *tzitzis* do not drag on the graves. If, however, the *tzitzis* are concealed, it is permitted.**

**Siman 23 Seif 2:**

**Some have the custom to tie together *tzitzis* from two corners when entering a cemetery but such a practice accomplishes nothing.**

**Siman 23 Seif 3:**

**One who stands within four *amos* of a corpse or a grave must follow the same guidelines as one who enters a cemetery. In places where the custom is to remove the *tzitzis* from the corpse in his house it is prohibited for those who carry the casket to wear *tzitzis*.**

- One must also be cautious about wearing *tzitzis* near the grave of a minor but there is no concern when near the grave of a woman. (M.B. 5)

**Siman 24 Seif 1:**

**One who does not wear a four-cornered garment is not obligated to wear *tzitzis*. It is correct for a person to wear a *talis koton* all day in order to remember the *mitzvos*. The five knots represent the five books of the Torah and the four corners the four directions of the world. The garment should be worn on one's clothing and at the very least one should wear a *talis* while reciting *krias shema*.**

**Siman 24 Seif 2:**

**It is a *mitzvah* to hold one's *tzitzis* in his left hand near his heart while reciting *krias shema*.**

- In the name of Arizal it is said that one should hold the *tzitzis* between his fourth and fifth fingers and for the paragraph of *tzitzis* one should also hold them in his right hand and look at them. They should be held until after reciting the words נאמנים ונחמדין לעד and then one kisses the *tzitzis* and them releases them. (M.B. 4)

**Siman 24 Seif 3:**

**One should look at his *tzitzis* while wrapping himself in his *talis* when reciting the *beracha*.**

**Siman 24 Seif 4:**

**Some have the custom to look at their *tzitzis* when they reach the words וראיתם אותו and to put them on their eyes and it is an appropriate practice.** There are also those who have the practice of kissing the *tzitzis* when looking at them.

- In the name of the Ancient Ones it is reported that putting one's *tzitzis* on his eyes when reciting *Parshas Tzitzis* assures one that he will not become blind. (M.B. 7)

**Siman 24 Seif 5:**

**When looking at one's *tzitzis* he should look at the *tzitzis* in front which have multiple allusions to Hashem's Name.**

**Siman 24 Seif 6:**

**The punishment for one who nullifies the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis* is very great and one who is careful in his fulfillment of the *mitzvah* will merit to see the Divine Presence.**

- It is a *mitzvah* to obtain a beautiful *talis* and *tzitzis* but it is prohibited to embroider *pesukim* onto one's *talis*. (M.B. 9)