



Overview

Halacha Highlight

Siman 61 Seif 22:

Even during *pesukei d'zimra* and *shemoneh esrei* one should be careful to use proper grammar. When reading Torah, *Nevi'im* and *Kesuvim* one should also be careful regarding these matters.

Siman 61 Seif 23:

One must be careful not to soften a letter (i.e. pronounce a letter without a *dagesh*) that should be hard (i.e. a letter that has a *dagesh*) or harden a letter that is supposed to be soft. Similarly, one should not pronounce a נח if it should be נד or pronounce a נד if it should be a נח.

❖ A *sheva nach* appears at the end of a word or in the middle of the word following a short vowel. A *sheva nad* appears at the beginning of a word or in the middle following a long vowel. (M.B. 36)

Siman 61 Seif 24:

One must read *shema* with the *trup* as they are used in the Torah. But in these countries this is not our custom but those who are meticulous are stringent about this.

❖ One must be able to concentrate since *trup* diminishes concentration for those who are not accustomed to read in that manner. (M.B. 38)

Siman 61 Seif 25:

When one reads *לאות על ידך* he should touch his *tefillin shel yad* and when he reads *והיו לטטפת בין עיניך* he should touch his *shel rosh*. When he reads *וראיתם אתו* he should touch his two front *tzitzis* (See above 24:5).

Siman 61 Seif 26:

Some have the custom to read *shema* out loud and some have the custom to read it quietly. Nevertheless, one should read the first *pasuk* out loud and that is our custom.

❖ Whether one could read *shema* for another is debated and most authorities maintain that one does fulfill his obligation by listening to another read but the listener must understand what is being read. (M.B. 40)

❖ The listener must understand what is being read if the reader is reading to only a single person. (M.B. 40)

Reading *shema* with the *trup*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 61 Seif 24

צריך לקרות קריאת שמע בטעמים כמו שהם בתורה

One must read *shema* with the *ta'amim* as one reads from the Torah

The Students of Rabbeinu Yonah (מדפי פ"ב ח: מדפי הר"י) writes that one should read *shema* with the *ta'amim*. He then refers to the Gemara Pesachim (56a) that relates that the sages were unhappy with the way *krias shema* was read by the residents of Yericho and explains that they were reading without the *ta'amim*. This explanation is cited by Tur approvingly. Bais Yosef suggests that perhaps Rabbeinu Yonah was not referring to the *trup* but rather he was emphasizing that one should pause and finish a *pasuk* in the correct place so that one does not corrupt the meaning of the *pesukim*. Furthermore, we do not find nor have we heard of places that had the custom to read *shema* with the *trup* except for recently when some *chazanim* began to read *shema* with the *trup* and it is appropriate to follow this practice since reading *shema* with *trup* is Tur's understanding of The Students of Rabbeinu Yonah.

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' כ"ד) writes that one should read *shema* with the *ta'amim* as it is read in the Torah, meaning with the *trup*. Rema comments that this practice is not the custom of these countries but those who are meticulous in their *mitzva* observance are stringent about this matter. In his commentary to Tur the Rema notes that reading with the *trup* can potentially distract one from properly concentrating on the words if he is not accustomed to reading with the *trup* and that is why someone who wants to act stringently about this matter and read with the *trup* must be certain that he will be able to concentrate on the words.

One of the reasons it is important to read *shema* with the *trup* is that it guides us how to group together words into phrases so that the correct meaning emerges. Sha'arei Teshuvah (ס"ק י"ד) cites authorities who emphasize, for example the necessity to read the word *אני* of the phrase *אני ה' א-לוקים* with a *טרחה*. The reason is that if all three words are read together it would mean that *ה'* is declaring that He is our G-d but others could also be our G-d, *ח"ו*. By reading the word *אני* with a *טרחה* it means that Hashem, He in our G-d, to the exclusion of anything else.

Stories to Share

The Final Shema

ש"ע ס' ס"א, כ"ו: "יש נוהגין לקרות קריאת שמע בקול רם..."

On today's amud we find that one should recite shema in a loud voice. The Kaf Hachaim explains that this arouses one's *kavanah*, as the Shulchan Aruch writes at the beginning of this siman.

A certain student of Rav Yehudah Assad was once on the road. When he passed through a lonely forest he was accosted by a bandit with obviously murderous intentions. The student begged him to at least allow him to say viduy and shema one last time. At first the bandit would not be moved, but eventually he grudgingly acquiesced to give the unfortunate student a quarter of an hour as his final request.

The young man said viduy in a very heartfelt manner. Then he literally bellowed shema, saying it with a level of intensity he had never experienced in his life. After all, this was his last shema!

When he finished he hesitatingly opened his eyes, expecting to see the bandit and to be summarily executed. To his surprise, the would-be murderer was nowhere to be seen. The shaken young man continued on his journey to his teacher and was unmolested for the remainder of his trip.

At the first opportunity, he asked his teacher the meaning of this bizarre experience. As always, Rav Yehudah's words were enlightening. "Have you ever recited shema with *kavanah* like you did during this near-death experience? Hashem is showing you how every person is obligated to recite the shema. He must act as though every one is the last shema of his life!"