



Halacha Highlight

A family singing Shabbos *zemiros*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 75 Seif 3

יש לזהר משמיעת קול זמר אשה בשעת קריאת שמע

One must be careful not to hear the voice of a woman singing while reading *shema*

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' ג') writes that one must be careful not to hear a woman singing while reading *shema*. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ז) contrasts the general prohibition against listening to a woman sing and the prohibition against hearing a woman sing while reading *shema*. The general prohibition against listening to a woman sing is limited to those women who are prohibited for the man to marry. In contrast, the prohibition against reading *shema* while a woman is singing applies to all women, even one's wife.

Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ז) explains that the general prohibition of listening to a woman sing includes not only the *arayos*; even a single woman who is a *niddah* falls into this category. Chazon Ish (אורחות רבינו עמי נ"ה) maintained that also included in this prohibition is that a man may not listen to his sister sing since she is one of the *arayos*. Many others disagree and maintain that there is no prohibition for a man to listen to his sister sing. This is similar to the fact that Chazal did not prohibit a person to gaze at his sister (פסקי תשובות אות י"ג). According to the lenient position, it is certainly permitted for someone to listen to his mother, daughter or grand-daughter sing. In the opinion of some *Poskim*, it is even permitted for a man to listen to these immediate relatives sing while he is reciting *Devarim she-b'kedusha* if he is used to their singing voice and it does not lead to improper thought. For this reason many *Poskim* write that there is no prohibition for immediate relatives to sing Shabbos *zemiros* since it will not lead to improper thought. (פסקי תשובות שם הע' 136) Others maintain a more stringent opinion and prohibit even immediate relatives from singing Shabbos *zemiros* with one another (פסקי תשובות שם הע' 137). According to Rav Nossan Gestetner (שו"ת להורות נתן ח"ד סי' ק"יז), each situation must be evaluated on its own terms whether it is appropriate to be stringent or whether it is appropriate to be lenient.

Stories to Share

"The Torah of Your Mother"

מייב סי ע"ה, ס"ק ט"ו: דבמדינות שיצאו הנשים בפאה נכרית יש להם לסמוך...

A certain young woman became a kallah. Although her mother did not wear a sheitel, her husband-to-be expressed a desire for her to wear a sheitel. Although she was perfectly willing to comply, she wondered if this is permitted. After all, since her mother's custom was not to wear a sheitel, didn't going against this violate תורת אמך?

When this question was brought to Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zt"l, he ruled that it depends. "If a bride wishes to wear a sheitel but both her mother and her mother-in-law do not wear one, it is forbidden for her to do so. To abrogate their custom would certainly violate תשובות. But if her mother wears a sheitel she can certainly wear one if she likes. And even if only her mother-in-law

Overview

Siman 75 Seif 2:

It is prohibited to read *shema* in the presence of a woman's hair that is normally covered even if it is one's wife's hair **but it is permitted to read *shema* in the presence of the hair of an unmarried woman that is commonly exposed.** Similarly, it is permitted to read *shema* in the presence of hair of a woman that protrudes from beneath her kerchief and certainly in the presence of a woman wearing "foreign" hair, i.e. a wig, even if it is normally covered.

- ❖ Even if a woman only covers her hair when she goes to the market but at home and in her courtyard she does not cover her hair it is considered an *ervah* and it is prohibited to read *shema* in its presence even if only some of the hair is exposed. (M.B. 10)
- ❖ Reading *shema* in the presence of a married woman's exposed hair is prohibited even if it is common for women to walk in public with their hair exposed. (M.B. 10)
- ❖ An *arusa* must cover her hair even if she is a *besulah*. (M.B. 11)
- ❖ There is a disagreement whether an unmarried woman must keep her hair in braids. (M.B. 12)
- ❖ The Zohar is of the opinion that a woman should not allow even the inside of her house to see her hair and Magen Avrohom writes that it is appropriate to follow the Zohar's position on this matter. (M.B. 14)
- ❖ Any hair that is detached from a woman's scalp is called "foreign" and not included in Chazal's declaration that a married woman's hair is an *ervah*. Other opinions disagree and Pri Megadim rules that in places where the custom is for woman to walk outside without a cover on their wig it is permitted. (M.B. 15)
- ❖ The implication is that a woman may make a wig even out of her own hair but Magen Giborim maintains a stringent position on this matter. He also maintains that where the custom is for women to cover their wig one should comply with that custom. (M.B. 15)

Siman 75 Seif 3:

One must be careful not to hear a woman singing while reading *shema* even if it is one's wife's voice but a voice with which one is familiar is not an *ervah*.

- ❖ *B'dieved* if one read *shema* while a woman was singing he should repeat *shema* without the *berachos*. (M.B. 16)
- ❖ One may not read *shema* even if an unmarried female is singing but if one is not reading *shema* it is permitted as long as she is not an *ervah*. Included in the category of *ervah* is an unmarried woman who may be a *niddah* and even a gentile woman. (M.B. 17)
- ❖ One who is travelling amongst gentiles or even lives amongst gentiles and has no alternative may read *shema* while a woman is singing but should make an effort to not pay attention to the singing voice. (M.B. 17)

wears a sheitel, her husband can request that she wear one. If he does so, she is permitted to rely on the authorities who permit a married woman to wear a sheitel."

משמרת מועד, שבת, דף ס"ד ע"ב, אות י'