
Kavanah in Shema

ברכות דף י"ג: ושלחן ערוך סימן ס"א סעיפים ד'-ח' וסימן ס"ג סעיפים א', ג'-ה' [עפ"י פסקי מ"ב]

רא"ש מסכת ברכות פרק ב סימן ג

והראב"ד ז"ל כתב משום גאון דמהלך צריך לעמוד עד על לבבך כדאמר פ"ק דיומא (דף יט ב) דבפרק ראשון אין לו לרמוז בעיניו וכן כתב רב אלפס ז"ל לקמן בפרקין דאסור לרמוז בכל הפרק משום דחשיב קריאת עראי וכן נמי צריך עמידה משום דלא ליחשב קריאת עראי. והא דלא בעי עמידה בכל הפרשה משום דפסוק דבתריה כתיב ובלכתך בדרך אלמא דקורא במהלך.

רמב"ם הלכות קריאת שמע פרק ב הלכה א

הקורא את שמע ולא כיון לבו בפסוק ראשון שהוא שמע ישראל לא יצא ידי חובתו והשאר אם כיון לבו יצא וכו'.

רמב"ם הלכות קריאת שמע פרק ב הלכה ב

ואסור לקרות קריאת שמע והוא מוטל ופניו טוחות בקרקע או מושלך על גבו ופניו למעלה. אבל קורא הוא והוא שוכב על צדו. ואם היה בעל בשר הרבה ואינו יכול להתהפך על צדו או שהיה חולה נוטה מעט לצדו וקורא.

רמב"ם הלכות קריאת שמע פרק ב הלכה ג

מי שהיה מהלך על רגליו עומד בפסוק ראשון והשאר קורא והוא מהלך וכו'.

רי"ף מסכת ברכות דף ז עמוד ב

מגנא כי מצלי פורתא שפיר דמי מיקרי אע"ג דמצלי אסור.

For how much of שמע קריאת must a person have כוונה?

The רשב"א writes that since קריאת שמע, like תפלה, is unique in that the מצוה is the very acceptance of קבלת עול and singing the praises of Hashem, if the כוונה is absent from any part of the מלכות שמים, one cannot fulfil the מצוה. However, רשב"א qualifies the רשב"א, only the first line is actually דאורייתא and is לעיכובא. [The רבינו יונה indicates, though, that the whole first paragraph is also דאורייתא. In fact, there are those who hold that the second פרשה is also דאורייתא. As for the third, that of יציאת מצרים, all agree that it is דאורייתא.]

For this reason, it is customary to cover our eyes with the right hand and say the first line aloud, so as to arouse כוונה. Likewise, although one is allowed to move about whilst reading the שמע, one must stay still for the first line, which includes שם וגי' ברוך too. The ב"ח follows the stringency of the ראב"ד, who holds that this is not just a matter of כוונה, but also a show that he is not performing the מצוה in a 'temporary' fashion, and thus, one must not move until he reaches על לבבך. Either way, if one chooses to stay still, beyond the required, in order to aid his כוונה throughout, there is nothing

wrong with this; on the contrary, this is praiseworthy [as opposed to the ב"ח]. On the other hand, if a person did not stand still at all, the פרי מגדים writes that he has still fulfilled the מצוה.

If a person is in a car, must he stop the car for שמע?

חז"ל consider one who is riding an animal, as one who is walking. Hence, argues the ט"ז with the ב"ח, since his mind is on his driving, he would have to stop in order to recite the first line of שמע. However, if he was in a wagon or on a ship, since this should not detract from his concentration, he need not stop. The פרי מגדים understands that the difference is in whether he is actually the one driving. However, the אלי רבה sides with a בית יעקב who writes that in a wagon, even the driver does not need to stop, and on an animal, he must stop, even if he is a passenger.

The פרי מגדים rules that in the case of an animal, since one riding is considered as walking, he must stop, even if he was a passenger. However, in any other vehicle, one must only stop for the driver. [This would seem to provide the answer to our question; namely, the driver must definitely stop. However, a passenger would seem to be able to read whilst the vehicle is moving.]

What if a person did not have the right כוונה?

If a person's mind wandered in the first line, or that of ברוך שם וגוי, one must repeat it. The משנה later, warns that doing such a thing, looks like praying to two רשויות, G-D forbid. Therefore, in a case of necessity, such as the above, the אחרונים caution that one should repeat it quietly. [If he is alone, then the משנה ברורה writes that one could say it aloud.] Alternatively, the ט"ז advises, he should wait a little and then repeat it.

When repeating שמע, so that it is not done in the wrong order, he must actually include the whole first paragraph. Therefore, if he is still holding in the first פרשה, he should simply start over. If he is already further on, then he should finish which ever paragraph he is reading, then say שמע and the first פרשה and then complete the third paragraph, if necessary.

Is there any special כוונה one is supposed to have in the first line?

When saying the word יאחדי, contemplate the fact that Hashem is the G-D above, below and in all four directions. Some actually act this out, by moving their head in the various directions. One must be careful, however, warns the עטרת זקנים, not to move the head east, west, north and south, for it appears like a 'cross' ח"י; rather, he should follow around the circle from east to north etc.

In order to achieve this, חז"ל write that one should draw out the דל"ת. The רבינו יונה writes that the כוונה for above and below, should be done on the letter ח"י. The מגן אברהם cites the מגדל עוז, who quotes from his teachers that one should not draw out the אל"ף at all. The ח"י and דל"ת should be

at a ratio of 1:2, respectively. The Vilna Gaon, however, maintains that although, as warned by the גמרא, that one should not snatch the חייית, still all the כוונה should be solely on the letter דלית, as is clear from רש"י and the esoteric sources such as the זוהר הקדוש.

The שלחן ערוך rules that one should not draw it out any longer than is necessary for the above כוונה. However, the פרי חדש argues that it is permitted, if one wishes. Either way, one must be careful not to, in doing so, alter the pronunciation of the word. For example, special care must be paid to end with a דלית and not a ריש, G-D forbid. On the other hand, there is no שוא or צירי at the end.

[For the תימנים who read the דלית as a 'th' sound, this presents no problem. However, to elongate a 'd' sound, without adding a שוא is difficult, if not impossible. Although there are some who change their מסורה for the word אחד, to do like the תימנים, it is worth bearing in mind the words of the מגרות משה, in connection to the importance of מסורה. He writes that since no one, but no one reads the absolute authentic לשון הקודש, our only come-back is the fact that we are simply following our מסורה. He, therefore, warns that if one alters his קבלה, he will have effectively destroyed the above defence for his way of reading. Rather, writes the [סימן ס"א סעיף ז'] שלחן ערוך הרב, one should not lengthen the דלית; he should simply pause before starting וגוי ברוך שם. In this way, he will have enough time, to contemplate the above כוונות in the time he takes to pronounce the דלית and the pause that he makes. This is the intention of the גמרא. See also the אשל אברהם מבוטשאטש who writes that there is no need to actually lengthen any part of the word.]

Can one read the שמע whilst lying down?

It is forbidden to read the שמע, whilst on one's back, front, or even tilted slightly towards his side. If, however, one goes fully on his side, the בית יוסף rules like the רמב"ם and various other ראשונים; it is fine. However, the רמ"א goes with the רבינו יונה who says that there is no difference and he must sit or stand up, unless he is already undressed and it would involve a big bother. Seeing that the later אחרונים are also divided on this issue, the משנה ברורה rules that one should ideally be מחמיר. In practice, one would be יוצא even if he read on his back or front.

If one finds it hard to change his position, he may suffice with just tilting his body a little. The פרי מגדים adds that, if necessary, he may even lie down in that position, לכתחילה, to read the שמע. However, on one's back or front, is forbidden even just to sleep. [If one is not planning to sleep, there is discussion in the פוסקים as to whether this is also forbidden.]

If one finds it hard to concentrate – for example, if he is half asleep – he must only push himself for the first פסוק of שמע.