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Reciting the Three Parshiyot of Sh'ma Before Davening

Question: If I wake up soon before the end-time of reciting K'R'I'AT SH'MA (sof z'man K'R'I'AT SH'MA), must I say all three parshiyot before davening? After all, regarding the third parasha, the Torah does not write, "... and when you rise"!

Answer: Actually, according to Torah law, one is not required to recite the Parashat Tzitzit, the third parasha of K'R'I'AT SH'MA, at all. It is one way to fulfill the mitzva of mentioning Y'TZI'AT MITZRAYIM¹ daily,² but this can also be accomplished in other ways³ and, ostensibly, at different times.

However, the gemara⁴ tells a story that complicates the matter. Rabbi

Yehuda HaNasi would teach Torah publicly from early morning, in a manner that did not give him a chance to first daven or recite K'R'I'AT SH'MA. In the midst of his lectures, he would cover his face and recite the first pasuk of K'R'I'AT SH'MA in order to fulfill the mitzva of K'R'I'AT SH'MA in an abbreviated manner without disturbing his teaching. The gemara continues that he also would teach a halacha in which he could mention Y'TZI'AT MITZRAYIM "at its time" – that is, the time of K'R'I'AT SH'MA.⁵ This seems to indicate that mentioning Y'TZI'AT MITZRAYIM, which we fulfill with Parashat Tzitzit, should also be done before SOF Z'MAN K'R'I'AT SH'MA.

However, there are also indications that one does not have to recite Parashat Tzitzit before SOF Z'MAN K'R'I'AT SH'MA. For example, during the parts of the tefilla before P'sukei d'Zimra in the beginning of Shacharit, we recite the first pasuk of SH'MA.⁶ The Rama⁷ recommends the minhag to say, BARUCH SHEM K'VOD... following the pasuk, as usual. This indicates our interest that it serve as a fulfillment of K'R'I'AT SH'MA, which is worthwhile since SOF Z'MAN

¹. Liberation from Egypt.

². See *Berachot* 12b.

³. See *Berachot* 21a.

⁴. *Berachot* 13b.

⁵. Rashi ad loc.

⁶. Most of our *siddurim* follow the *minhag* to recite the entire first *parasha* at that juncture (see *Magen Avraham* 46:16).

⁷. *Orach Chayim* 46:9.

K'RI'AT SH'MA sometimes passes before we reach K'RI'AT SH'MA in the davening.⁸ Notably, this arrangement does not cover the requirement to mention Y'TZI'AT MITZRAYIM.⁹ We must note, however, that this is what is advised in order to deal with the chance that one will miss SOF Z'MAN K'RI'AT SH'MA. When one expects to miss it, he should say all three parshiyot of SH'MA before the end-time of K'RI'AT SH'MA comes.¹⁰

Interestingly, although there are different sources for reading each of the three parshiyot, the Rambam¹¹ discusses them as one unit, which is compatible with the mishna¹² that explains the order of these parshiyot. The Bi'ur Halacha¹³ similarly posits that even if one recites the three parshiyot when they are not sandwiched between the birchot K'RI'AT SH'MA, he should not speak even between the parshiyot.

Fulfilling the mitzva of K'RI'AT SH'MA at its time by reciting it before davening is less than a perfect solution for several reasons, some of

which can be remedied by waking up a little earlier. It is not ideal that when one recites K'RI'AT SH'MA in its normal place in davening, before the Amida, he is not simultaneously fulfilling the mitzva of K'RI'AT SH'MA,¹⁴ and certainly if it is too late at that point to do so. Also, it is generally problematic to recite the full text of K'RI'AT SH'MA, which includes a reference to tefillin, without having tefillin on,¹⁵ and this is usually the case for those who recite a last-minute K'RI'AT SH'MA. If, however, one is unable to both put on tefillin and make it to K'RI'AT SH'MA on time, he can recite K'RI'AT SH'MA anyway.¹⁶ Therefore, if one is able to start davening before sof z'man K'RI'AT SH'MA but will not get to K'RI'AT SH'MA on time, he should make the effort to at least put on tefillin before reciting K'RI'AT SH'MA.

Another matter to consider is Birkat HaTorah. One may not learn before saying Birkat HaTorah, and it is debatable whether reciting K'RI'AT SH'MA in order to fulfill that mitzva is tantamount to learning.¹⁷ It is thus

⁸. *Mishna Berura* 46:31.

⁹. The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chayim* 46:9, claims that this is not a concern because the Exodus is referred to early on in *P'sukei D'Zimra*.

¹⁰. *Pri Chadash, Orach Chayim* 46:9; *Chayei Adam* I:8:7; and *Mishna Berura* 46:31.

¹¹. *Kri'at Shema* 1:2.

¹². *Berachot* 13a.

¹³. 66:5.

¹⁴. *Mishna Berura* 46:31.

¹⁵. *Berachot* 14b.

¹⁶. *Mishna Berura* 58:5; see *Yechaveh Da'at* VI:2.

¹⁷. See *Shulchan Aruch* and Rama, *Orach Chayim* 46:9; see *B'Tzel HaChochma* I:1.

preferable to say Birkat HaTorah beforehand.

