

# Visiting the Kosel

- The כותל is a remnant of the walls of הר הבית.
- The Midrash says “the Shechina has never departed from the Kosel” and prayers are more accepted in this area.
- The Gemora (Moed Kattan 26a) say that one must tear one’s garment when seeing Yerushalayim and the place of the Mikdash. This tearing is an expression of our grief over the destruction and our sorrow for the protracted galus. When we tear our clothes over our hearts it is as we are trying to open our hearts to show our pain. One should use this opportunity to think what can be done to rectify the root causes of the destruction, which will in turn facilitate the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash.
- One should tear their outer garment (one may remove his jacket or wear an old shirt) on the left side, with a vertical tear of at least one tefach (~3 inches).
- One must tear Kriah if they have not seen Har Habayis for 30 days. If one went to the Kosel but for got to tear kriah, one should tear next time they go, even if it is within 30 days. If ones visit was on Shabbos or Yom Tov then one need not tear on subsequent visits.
- Some will visit the kosel after midday on Erev Shabbos or Yom Tov in order not tear, however Rav Moshe Feinstein and the Chazon Ish were not sure that one would be exempt from tearing in that situation. Others sell their shirt to a friend, it is doubtful if some subterfuge is effective. One should not seek to find loopholes from this expression of our loss of the Beis Hamidash.
- The area in front of the Kosel has the same Keduash as a shul, therefore one should refrain from: joking around, eating or drinking, and frivolous talking. One should be aware of the sanctity of this place and act accordingly. The custom is that one leaves the kosel, one does not turn their back to the wall.



ציון מדבר היתה ירושלים שממה.

*Tzion is a wilderness, Yerushalayim is desolate.*

בית קדשנו ותפארתינו אשר הללוך אבותינו היה לשרפת אש  
וכל מחמדינו היה לחרבה.

*Our holy, beautiful home where our fathers praised you has become torched with fire  
and all of our presious things have turn into ruins.*

[One should tear their garment at this time.]

**ברוך דין האמת**

*Blessed is the true judge.*

כי כל משפטיו צדק ואמת. הצור תמים פעלו כי כל דרכיו  
משפט. א-ל אמונה ואין עול צדיק וישר הוא. ואתה צדיק  
על כל הבא עלינו כי אמת עשית ואנחנו הרשענו.

*For all of His judgments are just and true. The Rock is perfect in his actions as all of  
His ways are justice. A G-d of faith without injustice, He is righteous and fair. And  
You are righteous in all that has come on us, as You acted truthfully and we have  
caused wickedness.*

שמחינו כימות עניתנו שנות ראינו רעה. יראה אל עבדיך  
פעליך והדרך על בניהם.

*Make us glad like the days you have afflicted us and the years in which we have see  
evil. Let Your work be seen to your students and Your glory to their children.*

ויהי רצון מלפניך שתזכינו ברחמיך הרבים לראות בנין  
המקדש וירושלים וערי ישראל ויהודה כן יהי רצון אמן.  
*And may it be Your will that we may merit, in Your abundant kindness, to see the  
rebuilding of the Holy Temple and Yerushalayim and the cities of Israel and Yehuda.*

**One should then say תהלים עט (מזמור לאסף)**