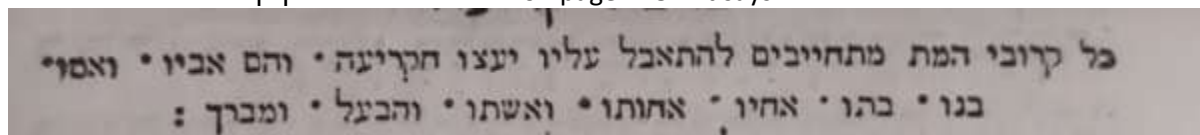


Keringah (קריעה) on the left side

It is our minhag to do the keringah (קרעיה, tearing of the garments) ***always on the left side***. This is different from most other kehilot, who tear on the left side for parents and on the right side for other relatives.

Our minhag is a kind of oral tradition as all written documents on this topic date back, as far as I know, to the last quarter of the 20th century.

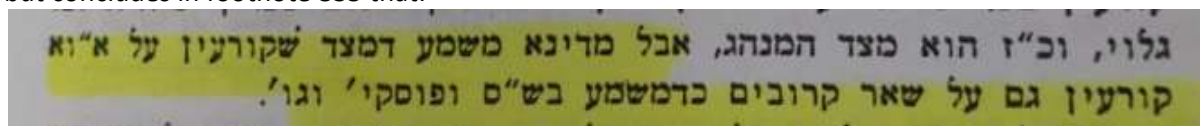
The only old, implicit, source I could find is in the prayer book printed in 1766: ספרדים on page 128-2 it says:



"...all the relatives of the deceased are obligated to mourn will do keringah, and they are his father, his mother, son, daughter, brother, sister and wife and husband and say the blessing."

There is no mentioning of side at all, so no indication that there is deference between parents and other relatives. If there was a difference, it would be mentioned.

in volume 2 on pages 705-706 writes that there are different customs on the keringah, but concludes in footnote 835 that:



"... but from the point of the halachah the side one tears for ones parents is the side one tears for other relatives, as said in the Talmud and by the rulers"

Rabbi Serfaty helped me finding the Talmud passage and Poskim (discoing makers).

In the Talmud **מועד קטן** כו ע"ב is written:

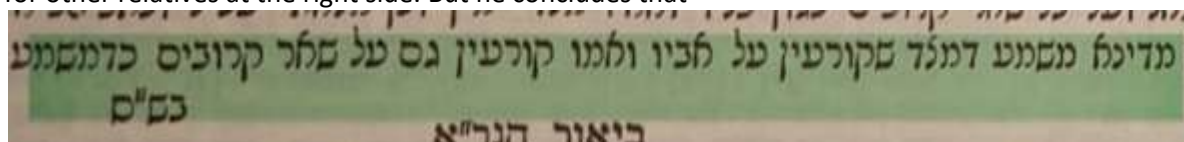


“... if his son died and he tore and then his father died and he extends the tear, he may only repair the upper part but not the lower part” (tear for parents may not be repaired, for other may).

Thus we see that both keringot are done on the same side.

The Talmud continues to say that the tearing for parent must be till the heart, so on the left side.

The ש"ך says in סימן ש"ע י"ט note that the custom is to tear for parents at the left side and for other relatives at the right side. But he concludes that



"... from the halacha it follows that the side torn for his father and his mother is torn for other relatives."

Conclusion: keringah on the left side is original way. Different keringah for parents and other relatives was introduced in later generations, but not adopted in Amsterdam.