The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן תקל"ד סעיף א'

Overview

Siman 534 Seif 1:

Laundering is prohibited during *chol hamoed*. The following people may launder, one who arrives from overseas; one who is released from captivity or prison; one who was banned and was released from the ban by scholars on the *moed*; one who vowed not to launder and petitioned for release from that vow; hand towels; barber capes; bath towels; children's clothing; a woman who found a stain during the *moed*; and someone who has only one garment. All of these people may launder in the normal manner with detergent and cleaning agents, publicly, by the river. However, they may not launder any more than necessary, meaning one garment. Regarding very small children, i.e., those who constantly soil their clothing, it is permitted to launder four or five garments at once since they require many garments at all times. The allowance to launder in public is limited to laundering by the river since clothing launders better by the river but if he will not launder by the river, he must launder in private rather than in public. This appears to me correct.

- Laundering may not even be done to have clean clothing for the *moed*. The reason is that Chazal did not want people to enter the *moed* unkempt. (M.B. 1)
- They become soiled quickly and thus it is permitted to launder them during the *moed*. Those who use new ones only each Shabbos may not launder them during the *moed* since he should launder two before the *moed*. (M.B. 4)
- Bais Yosef writes that nowadays we are stringent regarding bath towels and one should follow this opinion. (M.B. 6)
- The same is true concerning a woman who became a *niddah* on Yom Tov and requires white garments during *chol hamoed*. (M.B. 8)
- Some maintain that this was permitted during the time of the Talmud when it is was evident that the person has only one garment but nowadays one should not be lenient, However, one may be lenient with linen garments. (M.B. 9)
- Magen Avrohom is stringent when it comes to laundering in public since people will not know his personal circumstance. The one exception is hand towels since every person may launder them in public. Other authorities disagree and maintain that since garments become cleaner when laundered by the river and it is for the sake of the *moed*, it is permitted. (M.B. 10)

Halacha Highlight

Laundering clothing in a washing machine

Shulchan Aruch Siman 534 Seif 1

אין מכבסין במועד

It is prohibited to launder garments during *chol hamoed*

Shulchan Aruch rules that it is prohibited to launder garments during *chol hamoed*. Mishnah Berurah (סק"א) explains that the injunction is in force even if one intends to wash the garment so that he could use it during the *moed*. The thrust behind the injunction is to encourage people to launder their clothing before Yom Tov so that they will have clean clothing and will not enter Yom Tov looking unkempt. Below (סע' ב') Shulchan Aruch writes that technically it is permitted to launder linen garments during *chol hamoed*. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ב) offers two explanations for this leniency. Firstly, since linen garments become soiled so easily, even if one laundered them before Yom Tov it is likely that they would become soiled. Secondly, laundering linen garments does not involve much exertion. This implies that the injunction against laundering is due to the exertion involved in the activity.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (ספר הזכרון מבקשי תורה חול המועד עמ' תנ"ו-יב) addressed the question of whether the injunction against laundering includes laundering garments in a washing machine since the activity does not require much effort. He ruled that it is prohibited to launder garments in a washing machine as well. One reason is that the primary thrust behind the prohibition is to assure that people will launder their garments before Yom Tov; accordingly, the injunction will include laundering in a washing machine as well. Moreover, once Chazal prohibited the activity it remains prohibited even if the activity can now be done without exertion. Would anybody claim that the prohibition against plowing is no longer applicable because we now have farm equipment that plows fields easily? Obviously not. So too, laundering remains prohibited despite the ease involved in laundering nowadays.