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Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן תקנ"א סעיף ב'

Halacha Highlight

Laundering during the nine days

Shulchan Aruch Siman 551 Seif 3

אסורים לספר ולכבס

It is prohibited to cut one's hair or launder

Shulchan Aruch writes at length about the parameters of the restriction against laundering during the week in which Tisha B'Av falls. Although there may be room for certain leniencies, the custom is to be stringent. The reason is that there are authorities who maintain that all types of laundering outside of Bavel are prohibited. Furthermore, since we launder our clothing with soap or detergent, it may be that even technically it is prohibited. Rema then adds that according to Ashkenazi custom these restrictions apply from Rosh Chodesh.

Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק כ"ט) ruled that in the event that one has only one garment, he may launder that garment from Rosh Chodesh until the week in which Tisha B'Av falls. *Poskim* write that the same *halacha* is true for one who has numerous garments but as a result of the heat all of his garments are dirty. Similarly, one who changes his clothing often because he is uncomfortable wearing the garment more than once (איסטניס) may launder those garments until the week in which Tisha B'Av will occur. This means that a person is not obligated to purchase numerous garments in advance of the nine days in order to avoid having to launder the garments that he has. Even a wealthy person is not obligated to purchase new garments but one should make sure to launder the garments that he will need during the nine days and should not knowingly create a circumstance in which he will be forced to launder the garments that he owns. In the event that a person is travelling during the nine days there is a dispute whether he is obligated to take with him enough clothing to avoid laundering while he is travelling or is he permitted to take a smaller quantity of clothing and when they all become dirty he will wash them (פסקי תשובות אות כ"א).

Stories to Share

Different Customs

ש"ע, ס' תקנ"א, ג': "ואנו נוהגין להחמיר בכל זה מתחילת החדש..."

When someone found out that he was to meet a prospective shidduch during the nine days, he wondered what he should do. His best suit was soiled and he really preferred to wear it over any other garment. Although the mechaber prohibits giving one's washing to a non-Jewish launderer, perhaps he could give it to a Sefardic launderer whose custom did not prohibit washing until the actual week of Tisha B'Av and then wear the freshly laundered suit? When he mentioned this to a friend, the young man pointed out another question. "Who said that one may wear Shabbos clothes for a date during the nine days?

When these questions reached Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashev he was quite emphatic. "There is no dispensation for a Sefardi who is more lenient in these halachos to launder something for an Ashkenazi. (קובץ תשובות, ח"א, ס' ני"ח). But a person who has a shidduch date during the nine days may wear clothing—even Shabbos clothing—which was laundered before Rosh Chodesh Av, if it appears as though this is important for the date. Similarly, he may take a cold shower, if this seems necessary. The reason this is permitted is because going to meet a prospective match is a mitzvah. One may not wear new clothing for this purpose, however."

הלכות ומנהגי בין המצרים, ע' ס"ד, עלון ארוממך, תשס"ע, ע' 11

Overview

Siman 551 Seif 3:

The week in which Tisha B'Av occurs it is prohibited to take a haircut or launder clothing even if one does not intend to wear them now and will wear them after Tisha B'Av. Even if one has only one garment he may not wash it. Similarly, those garments laundered before the week of Tisha B'Av may not be worn or spread on one's bed. Hand towels and tablecloths may also not be laundered or used if freshly laundered. Our כיבוס is permitted but גיהוץ (running a stone over a garment to smooth it) **is prohibited. גיהוץ does not apply to linen garments and only כיבוס is performed and permitted. The only allowance is to do גיהוץ and put them aside until after Tisha B'Av because it is prohibited to wear it during this week. The custom is to prohibit laundering linen garments even with כיבוס whether one will wear it or whether it will be put aside for later. One may not be lenient due to the custom and certainly since it may be technically prohibited since there is an opinion that maintains that "our laundering" refers to the laundering on Bavel where the clothing did not whiten since their water was dirty being that it is not a place with mountains and hills like Eretz Yisroel. Laundering in other countries may be similar to laundering in Eretz Yisroel that is prohibited. There is also an opinion that maintains that גיהוץ utilizes water and ash or *neser* and *boris* and כיבוס utilizes just water. Nowadays that we do not launder with just water it means that our כיבוס is really גיהוץ and technically prohibited even for linen garments at least to launder and wear them.** We are accustomed to be strict about these matters starting from Rosh Chodesh until after the fast unless it is for the sake of a *mitzvah*. For example, a woman who is wearing white may launder and wear white garments or spread a white sheet under her. On Tisha B'Av she should not wear white and should instead wear a clean examined garment. To honor Shabbos one may wear linen and spread out white cloths as one does on other Shabbosos. It is prohibited to give clothing to a gentile launderer to launder after Rosh Chodesh but it is permitted to give it to the launderer before Rosh Chodesh even though she will launder it after Rosh Chodesh.

- There is a disagreement whether one may cut his nails but to prepare for immersing it is certainly permitted. Similarly, to honor Shabbos one may cut his nails on *erev* Shabbos even when Tisha B'Av falls on Shabbos. (M.B. 20)
- "Ours" refers to כיבוס done outside of Eretz Yisroel and one may do כיבוס and put side the garments for after Tisha B'Av. (M.B. 22)
- The leniency is limited to old linen garments. (M.B. 23)
- It is prohibited to wear the garment during the week of Tisha B'Av even if גיהוץ or כיבוס were done before that week. (M.B. 25)
- One who has only one garment may launder it from Rosh Chodesh until this Shabbos. (M.B. 29)
- This laundering may be done even during the week of Tisha B'Av. (M.B. 30)
- If a woman does not have clean clothing many later authorities agree that she may wear a white garment since the decree does not apply when there is a *mitzvah*. Derech Chaim writes that one may have a gentile launder a white garment needed for a *mitzvah*. (M.B. 31)
- The wording implies that one may launder a garment on Thursday or Friday to honor Shabbos but Darkei Moshe writes that the custom is to prohibit this. If one has only one shirt for Shabbos one may be lenient and if the laundering is performed by a gentile it is certainly permitted. Haircutting, however, is prohibited during this week. (M.B. 32)
- The custom is to prohibit changing sheets during this week. (M.B. 33)
- Even if one gave instructions for it to be laundered after Tisha B'Av it is prohibited but Elya Rabba is lenient about giving a gentile a garment during the nine days to launder after Tisha B'Av. (M.B. 34)
- It is also permitted if it will be laundered during the week of Tisha B'Av. (M.B. 35)