The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן תקנ"א סעיף ט"ז

Overview

Siman 551 Seif 16:

There are those who have the custom to not bathe from Rosh Chodesh and others do not refrain other than during the week of Tisha B'Av. Some fast from the 17th of Tamuz until the 9th of Av. For the sake of a *mitzvah* it is permitted to bathe, therefore, a *niddah* may bathe and immerse. Even if she will immerse the night of the 10th she may bathe on *erev Tisha B'Av* if she will be unable to bathe the night of the 10th. It seems that the same is true regarding a woman who is wearing white and she may bathe a little as she would the rest of the year since it is not being done for pleasure; rather it is for the sake of the *mitzvah*. The custom is not to bathe even in cold from Rosh Chodesh and onwards. Even on *erev Shabbos Chazon* it is prohibited to bathe except for one's head, face, hands and feet in cold water. Some are lenient and permit washing one's head with hot water if one is accustomed to do so every Shabbos.

- For medicinal purposes one may bathe in hot water even during the week of Tisha B'Av. (M.B. 88)
- If Rosh Chodesh falls on *erev* Shabbos it is permitted to bathe the entire body in hot water if one always washes with hot water on *erev* Shabbos. (M.B. 89)
- It is not appropriate for Torah scholars to fast from the 17th of Tamuz until the 9th of Av since it will limit their service of Hashem. (M.B. 90)
- It is permitted to wash the head of a child with sores on his head. (M.B. 93)
- It is permitted to wash one's face, hands and feet in cold water. (M.B. 94)
- Even one who always bathes in hot water on *erev* Shabbos may not bathe even in cold water on *erev Shabbos Chazon*. One who immerses every *erev* Shabbos may immerse on *erev Shabbos Chazon* but if one misses immersing because he is busy, he may not immerse. (M.B. 95)
- Chaye Adam writes that one who is accustomed to washing his face, hands and feet in hot water may do so on this Shabbos. (M.B. 97)

Halacha Highlight

Bathing

Shulchan Aruch Siman 551 Seif 16
יש נוהגין שלא לרחוץ מראש חדש
Some have the custom not to bathe from Rosh Chodesh

Shulchan Aruch mentions two customs related to the restriction against bathing. The first opinion maintains that one may not bathe from Rosh Chodesh, whereas the second opinion maintains that the restriction is limited to the week in which Tisha B'Av occurs. Rema writes that the custom is that the restriction against bathing begins on Rosh Chodesh and even bathing in cold water is included in the restriction. However, one may wash his face, hands, and feet in cold water (מ"ב ס"ק צ"ד). He then adds that on *erev Shabbos Chazon* one may not wash more than his head, face, hands and feet and may only use cold water. However, there are some authorities who are lenient and permit washing one's hair with hot water if one is regularly accustomed to do so. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק צ"ז) in the name of Chaye Adam rules that one who regularly washes his face, hands and feet in hot water for Shabbos may do so on *erev Shabbos Chazon* as well.

The restriction against bathing is limited to bathing with the intent to cool down or a pleasure bath. If one becomes dirty in the course of work it is permitted to wash or bathe to remove that dirt, and if hot water is necessary to remove the dirt one may even use hot water. Accordingly, *Poskim* write that in places that become very hot, one who becomes uncomfortable as a result of sweating over the course of the day or is concerned that not bathing would be offensive to others may bathe in order to remove the perspiration. Moreover, when necessary one may even use soap to remove the dust and perspiration. If possible one should use cold water or add as little hot water as necessary to become clean. One must also be mindful not to linger in the shower or bath any longer than necessary to become clean (פסקי תשובות אות מ"ח).

Stories to Share

The Time of the Year

ש"ע תקנ"א, ט"ז: "טוב ליזהר מלומר שהחיינו..."

The time of the year is very significant in the eyes of the halachah. We are adjured to be happy during the festivals and the month of Adar, but we diminish our joy during the month of Av. Elul until Yom Kippur is a somber time. And the time of Sefiras Ha'Omer has its own gravity. Many wonder why this should be. Why should the time of year matter?

Rav Yerucham Levovitz explains, "People hit upon a deep truth when they feel that time is of great significance, since a great part of our avodah revolves around preparing ourselves to receive the positive spiritual influences that descend at particular times of the day, of the week, of the month, and of the year.

"Our sages say that an eclipse represents the inverse of this—a time designated by Hashem during which He expresses his anger, ח"ו. This parallels the affinity that the three weeks of bein ha'meitzarim has for catastrophe, or, להבדיל, the unique energy of contrition and renewal that is especially accessible during Elul. Mitzvos have the power to make us transcend the normal, natural influences of time. This is the concept of אין מזל לישראל. Conversely, one who sins during a particularly inauspicious time is compared to a person who foolishly drops sparks onto bone-dry tinder. Without thinking, he endangers himself and everyone else around him."

As many gedolei Yisroel pointed out, World War I, which was really the prelude to World War II and the destruction of European Jewry, began on Tisha B'Av.

דעת תורה