Preface Laundering Clothes on the Week of Tish'a Be'Av

Day 25

Our Sages taught (*Ta'anit* 26b): "Once the month of Av begins, we decrease activities of joy. During the week in which Tish'a Be'Av occurs, it is forbidden to cut one's hair or to launder clothes." All the *Poskim* cited this Mishna as the halakha, and this is the ruling of the *Shulhan Arukh* (551:3). As such, this is the practice of Sefardic Jews. Rama added that there is a custom to refrain from laundering clothes throughout the Nine Days, and this is the common custom among Ashkenazic Jews.

The Ramban (*sefer Torat Ha'adam* page 82a) ruled that the intent of this halakha is twofold – it is forbidden to launder clothes during these days and it is forbidden during these days to wear clothes that are freshly laundered. This is likewise the opinion of Rashba (responsa #187), Ritba and Rabbenu Nissim (commentary to *Ta'anit* 26b) and Rabbenu Asher (*Ta'anit* chapter 4, *Siman* 32).

The *Tosafot Rid* (commentary to *Mo'ed Katan* 24b) testified that Rashi ruled that a mourner may wear freshly laundered clothes if they were laundered before his mourning began. This is the opinion of the Rambam (*Hilkhot Ta'anit* 5:6) as well according to the interpretation of the *Lehem Mishne* and other *Aharonim*. Accordingly, it should be permissible to wear freshly laundered clothing during the week of Tish'a Be'Av as well. Nevertheless, the *Shulhan Arukh* (551:3) decided in favor of the first, more stringent opinion that it is forbidden to wear freshly laundered clothes during the week of Tish'a Be'Av since this is the ruling of the majority of the *Poskim*. The *Aharonim* concurred with this ruling, and in practice this is the halakha. See below, beginning with halakha 114.

דיני כיבום בשבוע שחל בו תשעה באב

קט. אסור מדברי סופרים לכבס בגדים בשבוע שחל בו תשעה באב, ואפילו אינו רוצה ללובשם עתה אלא לאחר התענית. [ואפילו אין לו אלא חלוק אחד, אסור]. [ש"ע סימן תקנא סעיף ג. הליכות עולם ח"ב עמ' קלט]. וכן אסור לכבס הסדינים, ומטפחות הידים והאף, ומפות השלחן. [ש"ע סימן תקנ"א ס"ג. יבי"א ח"ז חיו"ד סי' מג אות ז]. והדבר ברור שאף במכונת כביסה שמכבסת על ידי פעולת החשמל, אסור לכבס בין לעצמו בין לאחרים. [הליכו"ע שם בהערה. יבי"א שם]. וכן ניקוי יבש בכלל האיסור. [יבי"א שם. אור לציון ח"ג עמ' רמח]

קי. כשחל ט' באב בשבת ונדחה התענית ליום ראשון, מותר לכבס הבגדים בכל ימי השבוע שלפניו, וכן ללבוש בגדים מכובסים, ואין דין "שבוע שחל בו" נוהג בזה, וכסברא ראשונה שהובאה בשלחן ערוך [סימן תקנ"א ס"ד]. [ראה חזו"ע עמ' רכד. יחו"ד ח"ג סי' לט, הליכו"ע ח"ב עמ' קמג]. וראה לעיל הלכה ק'.

קיא. אסור לגדולים לכבס כסות הקטנים בשבוע שחל בו ט' באב [ש"ע סימן תקנ"א סעיף יד]. אולם בגדי ילדים קטנים בני שלש שנים, שדרכם להתלכלך תמיד, מותר לכבסם. וכל שכן שמותר לכבס

Laundering Clothes on the Week of Tish'a Be'Av

Laundering clothes during the week of Tish'a Be'Av

109) Our Sages instituted a rule that it is forbidden to launder clothes after *Shabbat Hazon* during the week of Tish'a Be'Av. This is so even if one does not intend to wear those garments until after Tish'a Be'Av. Even if someone owns only one shirt, it is forbidden for him to launder it. Furthermore, it is forbidden to launder bed linens, hand towels, handkerchiefs or tablecloths.

This prohibition applies to laundering by hand or in an automatic washing machine. It is forbidden to launder clothes whether it is for oneself or for others. Likewise, it is forbidden to dry-clean garments.

When the fast of Tish'a Be'Av is Sunday

110) On those years when 9 Av is Shabbat and the fast is postponed until the next day [and certainly if 9 Av is Sunday] the preceding week does not have the status of "the week of Tish'a Be'Av." Therefore, it is permissible to launder clothing throughout the week and to wear freshly laundered clothing. We practice according to the first opinion cited in the *Shulhan Arukh* (*Siman* 551:4). See above, halakha 100.

Laundering children's clothes

111) It is forbidden for adults to launder children's clothing during the week of Tish'a Be'Av. It is permissible, however, to launder the garments of children aged three years and younger, since they make their clothes dirty constantly.[126] It certainly is permissible to launder cloth diapers. Even in these cases, it is best that one launder the garments

126. The *Levush*, cited in *Mishna Berura* (551:84) explained that this is permitted since laundering children's clothes does not inspire happiness. **(Rabbi Y.B.)**

חיתולים שמלפפים בהם התינוקות. וטוב שיכבסם בצינעא. [חזו"ע עמ' רכו]. ובזמנינו שהכיבוס הוא במכונת כביסה יש להקל לכבס בגדי התינוקות אפילו הרבה ביחד. [חזו"ע עמ' רכז בהערה]

קיב. חליפה של שבת שנפל עליה כתם, ואין לו חליפה אחרת לשבת, מותר לכבס מקום הכתם אף בשבוע שחל בו תשעה באב, שכל שעושה לכבוד השבת מותר (כמ"ש במשנה ברורה סי' תקנא ס"ק לב). [חזו"ע עמ' רלג]. וראה בהערה.

discreetly. Since we use washing machines nowadays, it is permissible to launder a large number of children's garments all at once.

Cleaning stain from a suit

112) If someone's Shabbat suit becomes stained and he has no other suit for Shabbat, he may wash the stain off that spot of the suit even during the week of Tish'a Be'Av. Since it is being done for the honor of Shabbat, it is permissible.[127]

127. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Hazon Ovadya* page 233) wrote that it is permissible to clean a stain from a suit for the honor of Shabbat. The fact that he cited such a halakha is puzzling, since all those *Poskim* who mentioned this halakha (*Mishna Berura*, *Be'er Moshe* and *Avne Yashefe*) are Ashkenazic rabbis ruling according to the Ashkenazic custom not to launder clothes during the entire Nine Days. Following their custom, it makes sense to say that someone may clean off a stain in honor of *Shabbat Hazon*. According to the custom of Sefardic Jews, however, this is a moot point since the prohibition of laundering clothes begins only after *Shabbat Hazon* and there is no longer any consideration of cleaning the stain for the honor of Shabbat. If someone has a stain on his suit and he wishes to clean it off in preparation for the Shabbat following Tish'a Be'Av, he can just as well clean off the stain after Tish'a Be'Av in time for Shabbat.

I asked my colleague Harav She'alti'el Amar, *shalit"a*, about this halakha, and he told me that when he was assisting Maran the Rishon Letziyon in preparing the *Hazon Ovadya* for publication, he asked Maran this very question. Maran replied that "many times a stain needs to be cleaned from a garment without delay and that if the stain is allowed to set it will never become perfectly clean again. Refraining from removing the stain at that time will cause a loss of money and therefore it is permitted during the week of Tish'a Be'Av." According to this, if the person knows that the stain on his suit can just as well be cleaned off a week later, he should wait until after Tish'a Be'Av.

The truth is that if one examines the discussion of the *Poskim* who wrote that one may clean a stain from a garment during the week of Tish'a Be'Av, it becomes clear that it is permitted without the reason of being for the honor of Shabbat. Harav Shelomo Zalman Auerbach (*Halikhot Shelomo* page 421) wrote that it is permissible to wipe off a stain by rubbing it with a moist cloth because "this is not the kind of act of laundering that our Sages forbade during this period." Likewise, the *Kovetz Mevakeshe Torah* (Vol. II, page 456) cited Harav Auerbach as saying that one may remove a stain from a garment on *Hol Hamo'ed* for the same reason. The responsa *Igrot Moshe* Feinstein (Vol. V, #36) and Harav Shemuel Wosner (cited in *Kovetz Mibet Levi* 5752, page 48) ruled as well that one may remove a stain from a garment on *Hol Hamo'ed* for this reason. See also responsa *Be'er Moshe* (Vol. V, #36) and *Shemirat Shabbat Kehilkhatah* (Vol. II, 66:72). Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Hazon Ovadya Yom Tov*, page 200) likewise ruled that one may clean a stain off a garment using cleaning agents on *Hol Hamo'ed* for this very reason. It is clear, therefore, that it is permissible to clean a stain off a garment during the week of Tish'a Be'Av even if it is not for the sake of the honor of Shabbat.

One might argue that although it is permissible on *Hol Hamo'ed*, it should still be forbidden to remove a stain during the week of Tish'a Be'Av since one must not engage in activities that detract from the atmosphere of mourning during these days. This is indeed the opinion of the responsa *Avne Yashefe* (Vol. I, #112:2) and the *Or Letziyon* (Vol. III, page 248). Despite this, since Harav Shelomo Zalman Auerbach ruled that it is permitted in either case, he apparently did not agree that this is reason enough to forbid this act. On this basis, one who wishes to be lenient in this matter has upon what to rely. Harav She'alti'el Amar, *shalit"a*, testified that Maran the Rishon Letziyon agrees with this in practice, and one may clean a stain off a garment during the week of Tish'a Be'Av even if it is not necessary for the honor of Shabbat. Even if someone wishes to disagree with this premise, it is definitely permitted if it is

קיג. הנוהגים איסור בכיבוס בגדים החל מראש חודש אב, אינם רשאים לתת בגדיהם לנוהגים היתר [עד שבוע שחל בו תשעה באב] לכבס הבגדים, אפילו כדי להניחם עד לאחר תשעה באב, כיון שיש להם קורת רוח לראות בגדיהם מכובסים. ומטעם זה אסור לתת לנכרית בגדים לכבסם, ולהניחם עד לאחר תשעה באב. [חזו"ע עמ' רלז]

איסור לבישת בגדים מכובסים

קיד. אסור ללבוש בגדים מכובסים בשבוע שחל בו תשעה באב. ואף הבגדים המכובסים קודם לכן אסור ללובשן בשבוע שחל בו תשעה באב. [ש"ע סימן תקנא ס"ג, חזו"ע עמ' רכט. הליכו"ע עמ' קמ]

וכן אסור להציע המיטה בסדינים מכובסים בשבוע שחל בו ט' באב. וכן אסור להשתמש במטפחות יד ומפות שלחן מכובסות. [ש"ע סימן תקנא ס"ג]. ובכלל זה מגבות מכובסות. [אור לציון ח"ג עמ' רמח]

קטו. כבר נתבאר לעיל [הלכה ק"י] שכשחל ט' באב בשבת ונדחה התענית ליום ראשון, שמותר ללבוש בגדים מכובסים בכל השבוע שלפניו.

Having others launder one's clothes

113) Those people who have the custom of refraining from laundering their clothes throughout the Nine Days may not request someone else who does not have that custom to launder their clothes for them before *Shabbat Hazon*. This is so even if no one intends to wear the clothes being laundered until after Tish'a Be'Av. Since their custom is not to launder their clothes during these days, it is also forbidden for them to have the satisfaction of seeing that their clothes have been laundered during these days. For the same reason, it is forbidden to send one's clothes to a Laundromat service even if one plans to pick up the garments only after Tish'a Be'Av.[128]

Day 26

Wearing Laundered Clothes

Freshly laundered clothes and towels

114) It is forbidden to wear freshly laundered garments during the week of Tish'a Be'Av even if they were laundered beforehand. It is likewise forbidden to use freshly laundered bed linens or hand towels.

When the fast of Tish'a Be'Av is Sunday

115) As explained above in halakha 110, when 9 Av is Shabbat and the fast is postponed until after Shabbat, one may wear freshly laundered clothes throughout the previous week.

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needed for Shabbat or if it is embarrassing to wear the garment with the stain untreated, as is the ruling in the *Or Letziyon* (ibid.). **(Rabbi Y.B.)**

128. The responsa *Shevet Halevi* (Vol. X, #81) discussed whether it is permissible for an Ashkenazic Jew who runs a laundry service to launder the garments of Sefardic Jews after *Rosh Hodesh* Av, since it is permissible for them. **(Rabbi Y.B.)**