



THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

HALACHA SERIES ON HILCHOS SHABBOS

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These halachos were shown by Rabbi Ostroff to **HaGaon HaRau Moshe Sternbuch, shlita**



Parshas Shemini 5767

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Hilchos Chol Hamoed

May I add regular clothes to the wash?

In the previous shiur we learned that one may not launder regular clothes on *Chol Hamoed* but one may launder baby's and young children's clothes. One may not wash other clothes together with baby clothes or towels because the *g'zeira* applies to each individual item. ¹

What other items are included in the heter of laundering?

Hand and **kitchen** towels that are constantly replaced may be laundered on *Chol Hamoed*. ² The reason ³ for this *heter* is because the *g'zeira* not to launder on *Chol Hamoed* was instituted in order to force people to launder before *Chol Hamoed* and prevent them from leaving their laundry for *Chol Hamoed*. Items that soil constantly and even when laundered prior to *Chol Hamoed* would still require laundering on *Chol Hamoed*, *Chazal* excluded from the *g'zeira*.

What if I normally only replace my hand towels once a week, not every day or alternate days?

Indeed the *Mishna Berura* cites ⁴ the *Magen Avraham* saying that nowadays people only replace towels before Shabbos and one may not launder hand towels on *Chol Hamoed*. Homes where towels are replaced frequently may launder on *Chol Hamoed*.

Which other clothes are included in this category?

¹ See Rav Moshe Feinstein cited in *SS"K* 66 footnote 151.

² *Simon* 534:1. *SS"K* 66:66.

³ *M"B simon* 534:4.

⁴ *Ibid*.

Socks, ⁵ tights and undergarments may be laundered when fresh items are required on a regular basis. However, if one has sufficient items to last the entire Yom Tov and one did not launder them before Yom Tov, they may not be laundered on *Chol Hamoed*. ⁶

May I launder towels or sheets for house guests?

Even though one may not launder one's own towels or sheets on *Chol Hamoed*, one may launder them for house guests. Similarly, a hotel may launder sheets, towels and other such items and is not required to purchase an enormous amount of linen to prevent the need to launder on *Chol Hamoed*. ⁷

A mikveh that provides towels may launder towels on *Chol Hamoed*, when their present supply will not suffice for the entire Yom Tov.

May I call a technician to repair a broken washing machine?

Obviously, we are only referring to a case where laundering is permitted, such as for baby's and children's clothing. The *Sb'miras Shabbos Kehilchasa* ⁸ writes that one may not call a technician to repair a washing machine, but one may place an order for after *Chol Hamoed*. ⁹

May one remove a stain on Chol Hamoed or is it the same as laundering?

⁵ *SS"K* 66:66.

⁶ *SS"K* 66 footnote 260.

⁷ *SS"K* 66 footnote 263 and *tikunim* *ibid*.

⁸ *SS"K* 66:71.

⁹ The *SS"K* footnote 270 cites the *Bi'ur Halacha* saying a Jewish technician may not write the order on *Chol Hamoed*.

One may remove a stain with detergent on *Chol Hamoed* (provided that the garment became stained on Yom Tov, not prior to Yom Tov).¹⁰ One of the reasons for this is because stains are common, similar to the *beter* to launder towels etc. as stated above.

My tablecloth stained and if I don't launder or soak it immediately the stain will not disappear. May it be laundered?

One may take the necessary minimum steps to prevent the stain from becoming permanent, but not more than what is required. For example, if soaking will suffice one should not launder it until after *Chol Hamoed*.¹¹

What is the halacha with regards to shoe polishing?

Most *poskim*¹² permit polishing shoes on *Chol Hamoed* and others rule that one may clean and polish shoes that become dirty on *Chol Hamoed* provided that one does not make them “look like new”.¹³ This is contrary to the opinion of the *Chazon Ish* who held that one should refrain from polishing shoes on *Chol Hamoed*.

May I brush my hat on Chol Hamoed?

Dusting on *Shabbos* is a *machlokes* between the *Mechaber* and the *Rama*¹⁴ and hence this *machlokes* would seem to carry through to *Chol Hamoed*. Yet, based on the *beter* of hand-towel laundering (items that are constantly refreshed may be laundered) one may dust clothes and hats because dust is prevalent.¹⁵ One may therefore brush hats and coats from dust in the regular manner.

We are traveling immediately after Yom Tov, must I take dirty laundry with me?

Yes, I'm afraid so. One may not launder on *Chol Hamoed*.

We find a *machlokes* in the following case: when traveling for Yom Tov with one's young children must one take sufficient clothing to last the entire 7-8 days or may one take a normal amount and rely on the *beter* to launder their clothes.¹⁶

Vort on the Parsha

The *gemora Berachos* 63b says if a pupil accepts the rebuke of his teacher in silence – then he will be rewarded with the ability to distinguish between impure and pure blood, i.e. he will himself become a teacher of *halacha* in Israel. The *Midrash* underlines the greatness of Aharon, Elazar and Itamar in this matter: "The ear that listens to the rebuke of life shall dwell amongst the wise".

Rav Mordechai Miller זצ"ל in Sabbath Shiurim beautifully explains that their greatness lay in their silence, a silence of almost super-human restraint. A teacher of *halacha* must be someone capable of remaining silent, to cultivate a deeper inner intellectual activity, unrelieved by the frequent questionings and objections that are often a psychological escape from the necessity of thought – this pupil will be granted the opportunity of developing this faculty for intense reflection and discrimination, for close uninterrupted study, to a point where his grasp of the fine distinctions of *halacha* will make him a teacher in Israel.

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Please send your comments to ychody@shemayisrael.com

¹⁰ *SS"K* 66:72 and see footnote 272.

¹¹ *SS"K* 66:72.

¹² See *SS"K* 66:48 and footnote 185.

¹³ Rav Sternbuch *shlita* in *Moadim Uzmanim*.

¹⁴ *Simon* 302:1.

¹⁵ *SS"K* 66:74 and footnote 274.

¹⁶ *Machlokes* between Rav Moshe Feinstein and the *Be'er Moshe*, cited in *SS"K* 66 footnote 255.

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If you would like to send a question to Rav Ostroff, you can write to him at shabbosweekly@shemayisrael.com.

Note: The purpose of this series is intended solely for the clarification of the topics discussed and not to render halachic decisions. It is intended to heighten everyone's awareness of important practical questions which do arise on this topic. One must consult with a proper halachic authority in order to receive p'sak.