



THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

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



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What about taking a cold shower during heat spells?

The previous shiur stated the reasons not to bathe in hot water on Shabbos. None of the reasons are applicable to cold showers or baths, and yet people refrain from that as well. What is the reason for this?

It is customary to refrain from cold showers and baths and the *Magen Avraham*¹ lists several reasons for this.

- **Squeezing wet hair.** Squeezing water from wet hair is rabbinically forbidden and were it permitted to take a cold shower one might squeeze wet hair.
- **Carrying water.** It was normal to bathe in rivers, and emerging from a river with water on one's body and walking four *amos* in a *carmelis* involves a rabbinical prohibition.
- **Floating.** It is rabbinically prohibited to swim on Shabbos lest one fashions a raft.²

Do these reasons mentioned apply nowadays?

Firstly, all reasons mentioned in *Chazal* almost always apply; and if not in one location then in another. For example, one would not necessarily jump into a river on Shabbos in the **city**, but when vacationing in the mountains during a hot summer, one might.

Secondly, squeezing wet hair certainly applies and is the main reason nowadays.

And during a heat spell?

Many *poskim*³ are of the opinion that there is no difference between a bathtub, *mikveh* and shower even as far as washing in cold water is concerned. Rav Moshe Feinstein זצ"ל writes⁴ that one should refrain from taking a cold shower unnecessarily even though it is not brought down in the earlier *seforim* to prohibit a shower.

And yet Rav Moshe writes that when suffering from heat one may take a cold shower.⁵

But the problem of squeezing wet hair remains?

Indeed it does and great caution is needed not to violate an *issur d'rabanan*.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach זצ"ל writes⁶ that squeezing water from hair directly into a towel is permitted, just as we find that one may squeeze a lemon onto fish; in both cases a liquid is not produced. The way to do it is to place a towel on one's hair and slowly and gently rub the towel on the hair. Rubbing hard or quickly can cause water to drip from the hair onto the floor etc. which is prohibited.

Rav Sternbuch *shlita* pointed out that custom is nevertheless to be stringent because it is hard to make sure that water not drip onto the floor.

What other issues are related to showering on Shabbos?

³ מנחת 326:6 in the name of the *Chazon Ish*. שו"ת הלכות יצחק and others.

⁴ *Igras Moshe Orach Chaim* vol. IV *simon* 74 page 145 and *simon* 75.

⁵ See also *SS"K* 14:11.

⁶ *SS"K* 14 footnote 64.

¹ *Simon* 326:8.

² There are cases where swimming would be permitted but that is not the subject in discussion.

Sponges or cloths are prohibited on account of squeezing.⁷ This applies to washing hands and face as well, which is always permitted, albeit not with water heated on Shabbos.

Soap is forbidden to use. Several prohibitions are associated with using soap on Shabbos although not all reasons are always applicable.

- *Molid* – creating. The *Rama* explains⁸ that transforming the solid soap into liquid is *molid* similar to transforming ice into water.
- *Memare'ach* – smoothing.⁹ The soap might have rough edges and rubbing it between one's palms smooths it back into shape.

What about using liquid soap?

It is customary to use liquid soap on Shabbos because both problems mentioned do not exist. However, Rav Moshe Feinstein זצ"ל is stringent even with liquid soap,¹⁰ because the bubbles produced demonstrate that the soap can be spread even thinner than it is, which involves *memare'ach*. Consequently, many dilute liquid soap before Shabbos in order to use it on Shabbos.

May one warm wet hands next to a heater on Shabbos?

Seemingly, if one is careful that the water on one's hands does not cook i.e. it does not attain the temperature of *yad soledes bo*¹¹ it is permitted. It is not so.

The *Rosh* (*perek* 3:9) learns that warming water on one's body next to a fire is equivalent to bathing in hot water that was heated on Shabbos and therefore he writes that one may not even warm one's hands next to a fire subsequent to washing. (This is how the *M"Z* explains the *Rosh*).

⁷ *M"Z* *simon* 326:6

⁸ *Simon* 326:10 and *M"Z* 30.

⁹ *M"Z* *ibid*.

¹⁰ *Igros Moshe Orach Chaim* vol. I *simon* 113.

¹¹ Above 40°C.

One should first dry one's hands and then stand next to a heater.¹²

Vort on the Parsha

First the *posuk* says (25:18) "you will sit safely in the land" and the next *posuk* continues "and the land will give its fruit and you will sit safely on the land", why the repetition?

The *K'sav Sofer* explains that a country can be in turmoil when riddled with dissension, which most often happens from lack of sustenance and source of income. People are jealous of each other, as some have and others do not.

Consequently, neighboring countries would not invade because they have nothing material to gain. On the other hand, a prospering country can be continually at war with countries who covet those resources.

The *posuk* tells us that if you keep *Hashem's* laws you will not have inner strife – you shall sit safely in the land. As a result you will prosper, but need not worry; you will also be safe from outside enemies and sit safely in the land.

Food For Thought

What are the laws related to bathing on Yom Tov?

May one heat water for bathing on Yom Tov?

Are there leniencies on Yom Tov Sheini?

Answers coming be"H next week.

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¹² *Simon* 326:5 and *SS"K* 14:24 and footnote 74.

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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.