

THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

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Hilchos Chol Hamoed

May one fold clothing on Chol Hamoed?

One may fold clothing on *Chol Hamoed* without restriction, even though folding clothes on Shabbos is prohibited unless certain conditions are fulfilled. Folding clothes is not a *meleches uman* and thus permitted when folding for *Chol Hamoed* or Yom Tov.¹

May I fold clothes that will only be worn after Chol Hamoed or Yom Tov?

Clothes should only be folded when they are to be worn on *Chol Hamoed* or Yom Tov. If however putting clothes into a cupboard and storing them in a tidy manner will appease one's mind, one may do so as it is also *tzorech hamoed*.

Is ironing permitted on Chol Hamoed?

Before we address this issue, it is important to note that washing clothes on *Chol Hamoed* is prohibited save for extenuating circumstances, as will be explained.

Ironing clothes is permitted on *Chol Hamoed* when the clothes are to be worn on *Chol Hamoed* or Yom Tov.² Ironing is not a *meleches uman* and permitted when done *l'tzorech hamoed*.³

Starching shirts and introducing permanent creases is forbidden on account of being a *meleches uman*.⁴

May one launder clothes on Chol Hamoed?

The *Shulchan Aruch* writes that it is prohibited to launder clothes on *Chol Hamoed* and the *Mishna*

Berura explains⁵ that one must wear clean clothes to honor Yom Tov and not rely on the possibility to launder on *Chol Hamoed*. If one were permitted to launder on *chol hamoed*, given that erev Yom Tov is very hectic, one might be tempted to wear any clothing at hand and launder on *Chol Hamoed*. Therefore *Chazal* prohibited laundering on *Chol Hamoed*. We find a similar concept regarding haircuts and shaving.

Where does it say that one **must** wear nice clean clothes on Yom Tov?

The *posuk* says that Yom Tov is **מִקְרָא קָדֵשׁ** – and *Chazal* explain that one must 'make it holy' with food, drink and clean clothes.

I can understand that clean clothes might have a connection to holiness, but food and drink?

This can be explained on different levels. Holiness means separation and difference. When we declare that *Hashem* is Holy it is because he is separated from everything and is not associated with anything we can fathom. Our food and beverages and the manner we eat and drink on Yom Tov (and Shabbos) must be different to weekday food.

A deeper meaning is to realize that the food we eat on Shabbos and Yom Tov is compared to eating from the *mei sheich*. Shabbos and Yom Tov are higher spiritual realms than weekdays and the food we eat on Shabbos and Yom Tov is associated with eating from *Hashem*'s table.⁶

¹ *SS"K* 66:56

² *Simon* 541:3 *Rama*.

³ *M"B simon* 541:9.

⁴ *M"B simon* 541:8 and *SS"K* 66:56.

⁵ *Simon* 534:1.

⁶ One may find these beautiful explanations, and more, in the *Nesivos Sholom* (Slonimer Rebbe) vol. II – Shabbos and *Nefesh Shimshon* (Rav Pinkus זצ"ל) – Shabbos.

What is included in the issur of laundering?

Basically everything.⁷ One may not launder on *Chol Hamoed* for the last day of Yom Tov even though one does not have fresh clothing. One may not hand it to a gentile to launder, even if he will launder for free, nor may one hire a Jew who needs money for Yom Tov expenses.⁸ It is immaterial whether one launders by hand or in a washing machine or if one was unable to launder clothes before Yom Tov due to a hectic schedule.

The only shirts I own are stained and cannot be worn on Yom Tov. I would rather stay home and not go to shul than wear such a shirt. May I wash it?

The *poskim* say that if possible one should purchase clothing, if the expense is not too great, rather than launder.⁹

What if all the hand towels are used up, may I launder them?

Chazal permitted laundering items that constantly become soiled, because the reason for the above *g'zeira* does not apply. As mentioned, *Chazal* did not want us to rely on *Chol Hamoed* laundering and our clothes must be freshly laundered for Yom Tov. This does not apply to items constantly used and dirtied, because even when you launder them before Yom Tov they must be laundered again during *Chol Hamoed*.

Which items fall into this category?

Baby's and children's clothing may be laundered on *Chol Hamoed* because they dirty constantly.¹⁰ One may wash these items in a washing machine and many of these items may be placed into the machine at once.¹¹

The *Oruch haShulchan*¹² says that one may launder children's clothing in public because everyone knows and sees that they are children's clothing and do not cause any suspicion that one is laundering clothes on *Chol Hamoed*. This may

⁷ We will see later what is not included in the *issur*.

⁸ *SS"K* 66:63.

⁹ Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *SS"K* 66 footnote 240 and the *tikunim* in vol. III.

¹⁰ *Simon* 534:1.

¹¹ *SS"K* 66:64.

¹² *Simon* 534:7.

not be applicable nowadays as we *B"YH* don't have to wash clothes in a river, but it would apply to hanging wet laundry outside to dry in the sun.

Vort on the Parsha

The possuk bears witness to Betzalel that he had the power to teach others. Indeed the *Malbim* says that not only was he a master craftsman but he had the ability to teach it to others. Rav Sternbuch *shlita* points out that being able to learn does not necessarily prepare one to teach, because one must be able to understand the pupil and only then teach.

Food For Thought

May I add regular clothes to the wash?

What other items are included in the heter of laundering?

May I launder sheets for house guests?

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

Answers coming be"YH next week .

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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*.