

THE PROHIBITION ON WEARING FRESHLY WASHED
CLOTHES DURING THE WEEK THAT PRECEDES TISHA B'AV

The Rama (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayim* 551:1) rules that it is forbidden to wear special Shabbat clothing on Shabbat Ḥazon (the Shabbat that precedes Tisha B'Av). The *Magen Avraham*, commenting on the Rama's ruling, explains that Shabbat clothes are generally pressed and ironed, and such clothes are prohibited in the week that precedes Tisha B'Av. Thus, even if the clothes have been worn several times previously, they are forbidden during the week before Tisha B'Av since the pressing is still apparent. The question can be posed that in the week that precedes Tisha B'Av, wearing freshly washed clothing, even if not pressed, is forbidden, and if so, why does the *Magen Avraham* explain the Rama's ruling based on the prohibition of wearing pressed clothing and not the more basic category of wearing freshly washed clothing?

The answer to this question can be found in the principle that some of the prohibitions of the week preceding Tisha B'Av are modeled after the laws of *shiva*, while others are modeled after the laws of *sheloshim*. In particular, freshly washed clothes are prohibited only during *shiva*, while pressed clothes are prohibited throughout the *sheloshim* period. Moreover, with regard to the general laws of *avelut*, Shabbat suspends the laws of *shiva*, but not of *sheloshim*. For example, shaving and taking haircuts are forbidden during *sheloshim* and remain forbidden even as preparations for Shabbat. Shabbat thus suspends the prohibition of wearing freshly washed clothing because this prohibition is a law rooted in *shiva*, but Shabbat does not cancel the prohibition of wearing pressed clothing which is rooted in *sheloshim*. This explains why the *Magen Avraham* based the Rama's ruling that wearing Shabbat clothes is prohibited on *Shabbat Ḥazon*, not on the prohibition of wearing freshly washed clothing, but rather on the prohibition of wearing pressed clothing.

The Mishna (*Ta'anit* 26) states, "During the week that precedes Tisha B'Av it is forbidden to take a haircut and wash clothes, but on Thursday it is permitted for the honor of Shabbat." The *Hagahot Ashri* explains that the Mishna means that only washing clothing is permitted on Thursday as preparation for Shabbat, but not taking a haircut. The *Magen Avraham* (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayim* 551:14) explains this distinction between washing clothing and taking haircuts by noting that, as a practical matter,

since people do not generally get a haircut every week before Shabbat, the Rabbis did not make an allowance to get a haircut specifically on the Thursday before Tisha B'Av. However, according to our earlier analysis, the reason for the distinction is obvious. The honor of Shabbat suspends the prohibition of washing clothes which is rooted in *shiva*, but it cannot cancel the prohibition against taking a haircut which is rooted in *sheloshim*.

If the prohibition against wearing freshly washed clothes the week before Tisha B'Av is in fact rooted in the laws of *shiva*, we may ask the following question: Why don't the other prohibitions of *shiva* also apply during the week that precedes Tisha B'Av? For example, wearing leather shoes, learning Torah, and extending greetings are all prohibited during *shiva* and yet they are only prohibited on Tisha B'Av itself and not the during the preceding week. What makes the prohibition of wearing freshly washed clothes unique? The answer is that different prohibitions of *shiva* have different sources and reasons. Specifically, the Rabbis did not extend to the week that precedes Tisha B'Av the laws of *shiva* intended to create a state of discomfort or sadness. The prohibition of washing clothes, however, is based on a different reason. Rashi (*Ta'anit* 29b, s.v. *afilu*) writes that washing clothes is forbidden because "it appears that he is distracting himself by busying himself with washing clothes." Of all the prohibitions of *shiva*, the Rabbis prohibited only washing clothes, an activity which would otherwise disrupt the proper mindset of mourning and concentration on the destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*.

THE PROHIBITION ON HAIRCUTS AND LAUNDRY
DURING THE WEEK PRECEDING TISHA B'AV WHEN
THE OBSERVANCE OF TISHA B'AV IS DEFERRED

When Tisha B'Av falls on Shabbat, the fast is deferred to the next day, the tenth of Av. In this situation, the *Shulhan Arukh* (*Orah Hayim* 551:4) presents a difference of opinion regarding the practice of haircuts and laundry in the week preceding the fast. The first opinion permits laundering and haircutting; the second forbids them.

Many explain that this dispute centers on the nature of the fast when it is deferred. The first opinion believes that originally the fast was to have been on the tenth of Av. This is supported by the Gemara in *Ta'anit* (29a),