



THE SHABBOS WEEKLY
HALACHA SERIES ON HILCHOS SHABBOS

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Is one permitted to wet a clean garment?

The *gemora* in *Zevachim* 94b says that soaking a garment in water is akin to laundering, and therefore forbidden. We find a dispute amongst the *Rishonim* as to whether the *gemora* is referring to a soiled garment or even to a clean one.

We do not have a clear picture as to how the *Mechaber* rules, because in *simon* 302:9 he writes that one may not soak a **soiled** garment, and in *simon* 334:24 he writes that there is a problem to soak even a **clean** cloth in water.

Rav Bentzion Abba Shaul ¹ *Ztz"l* learns that the *Mechaber* holds that soaking only applies to a soiled garment, but says to be stringent and not to soak even a clean garment.

The *Rama* ² brings both opinions, and the *Mishna Berura* ³ says that since soaking a garment involves a Torah prohibition, one should be stringent and not wet even a clean garment.

Therefore the *halacha* is that one may not wet a clean garment with water.

Would it be permitted to make a compress on Shabbos?

A cold compress is often used for the treatment of people with severe headaches.

It is made by soaking a towel in water, squeezing it out and placing it on the forehead. The squeezing is definitely forbidden. The question refers to the actual wetting of the cloth or towel. One method would be to wet ones hands and dry them on a cloth. This is permissible, as we will soon see in the next answer.

Rav Bentzion Abba Shaul *Ztz"l* says that for a sick person it is permitted to soak a clean towel to make a compress. Since this involves a serious offence a Rav should be consulted. ⁴ The optimal advice would be to have a non-Jew make the compress. ⁵

How come I am allowed to dry my hands on a towel on Shabbos? Am I not wetting the towel?

This is based on another concept called "*derch lichluch*", which means that the water is applied in a dirtying manner. When drying hands on a towel, the towel does not become cleaner; on the contrary, it gets dirty. So even though water is coming in contact with the towel, since it is not cleaning the towel, it is permitted. The same rule applies to wiping up spilled water on the floor: even though the water is being absorbed into the towel, since it is done in a "dirtying manner", it is permitted. ⁶

Drying wet dishes with a towel also follows this rule.

¹ *Ohr Letzion* vol.2 36-14, 43-6.

² *Simon* 302:10.

³ *Simon* 320:48.

⁴ For more reference see *SS"K* 33-19.

⁵ *Bi'ur Halacha simon* 302:10 *d'lo*.

⁶ *Rama* 302:10.

If a garment catches fire, may water be poured onto the section that has not yet caught on fire?

Of course we are not referring to life threatening cases where anything must be done to save lives. We are referring to a case where one has the time and the **cool** to concentrate on what he is doing. The *Mechaber* says that if a garment or cloth caught on fire, one is permitted to pour liquid onto the other side of the garment, thereby causing the fire to extinguish when it reaches the liquid.

All liquids, except for water and white wine, soil the garment, and therefore may be poured onto the garment. As for water, it will depend on the opinions mentioned above if one may pour water onto a clean garment. The *Bi'ur Halacha*⁷ says that one should be stringent.

Vort On The Parsha

The *posuk* says: “*Adam* (a person) who brings a sacrifice”. *Rasbi* says that just as *Adam* did not bring a sacrifice bought with stolen money, so too when we bring a sacrifice it must be a “kosher” one. Rav Sternbuch *Sblita* explains that just as *Adam* was as far from stolen property as could be, because everything was his, so too when we bring a sacrifice, it must be in such a way that the sacrifice is not tainted in even the smallest way with something not honest.

⁷ *Simon* 302:9 *sheyesh*.

Food For Thought

May a woman apply blush or powder to her face on Shabbos? Nail varnish to nails?

How come it is permitted to eat red ice-lollies on shabbos, does it not paint the lips red?

If a girl's pleats came undone on shabbos, may they be pleated again?

Why such a restriction on combing hair on Shabbos? What about honoring the Shabbos?

Answers coming next week.

Iggeres HaGra - (part 15)

This is teshuvah. And this is the whole reward of the World-to-Come, as it is written (Mishlei 6:23): "For the commandment is a lamp and the Torah is a light" - but "the way to life is the rebuke that disciplines." And that is worth more than any amount of fasting and self-affliction! For every second that man controls his tongue, he merits some of the "hidden [by Hashem for the righteous] light," something which no angel or [other] creature can imagine (Midrash). And it is stated (Tehillim 34:13,14): "Who is the man who desires life, and loves days that he may see good? Guard your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceitfully." This will atone for any sin and save one from Gehinnom, as we find (Mishlei 21:23): "He who guards his mouth [from too much eating and drinking] and tongue [from idle words] guards himself from trouble." Also (ib. 18:21): "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."

A Refuah Sheleima to Leibish Reuven ben Rochel Tcherka.

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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.