



## Parshat Mattot

No 1076:

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### STARTING POINT

#### The Repentance of the Military Commanders - by Rabbi Amnon Bazak

At the end of the War of Midyan, after taking the booty and setting part of it aside as a gift to G-d, the commanders of the army come to Moshe. "And the commanders of the army, leaders of thousands and leaders of hundreds, approached Moshe and said to him: Your servants counted the warriors under our command, and not one of them was missing. And we offered a sacrifice to G-d: every man who found a golden utensil, a bracelet, or an armband, a ring, an earring, or a nose-ring, will give it as atonement before G-d" [Bamidbar 31:49-50]. What is the meaning of this? Why did the commanders need to repent?

Evidently this event is related to what is discussed right before this, when the men returned from the battle. "And Moshe was angry with the commanders, the leaders of the thousands and the leaders of the hundreds, who returned from the war. And Moshe said to them: Did you let every female live? They were the ones who approached Bnei Yisrael in the affair of Bilam, to cause them to rebel against G-d..." [31:14-15]. Indeed, this was an outrageous act, keeping the Midyanite women alive, even though they were the specific reason the war was fought. G-d had already explained this, as he said to Moshe: "Harass the Midyanites and strike them, for they harassed you, with their traps that they set for you with respect to the affair of Peor and with respect to Kozbi, daughter of the leader of Midyan, their sister" [25:17-18].

Thus, it seems likely that the commanders did indeed feel guilty about what they had done. Their feeling was enhanced by the fact that together with the great victory over Midyan, "not one of them was missing." In spite of the miraculous progress of the war, the leaders of the army did not refrain from taking such problematic captives. Thus, as part of their repentance, they wanted to offer their booty as a sacrifice: a golden utensil, a bracelet, or an armband, a ring, an earring, or a nose-ring. This jewelry was evidently linked to the women of Midyan (see Rashi), and offering it as a sacrifice was a way to counterbalance their previous actions in relation to these women.

Because of this reason, the purpose of the contribution of gold given by the commanders was different than the purpose of the fraction of the booty captured by Bnei Yisrael that was given to G-d. This was "one part in fifty from among the men, the cattle, the donkeys, and the sheep, from all the animals" [Bamidbar 31:30]. It was meant for the Levites. "Give it to the Levites, who keep watch over the Tabernacle of G-d" [ibid]. The gift of gold by the commanders, on the other hand, which was given as part of the repentance for the sin of the Midyanite

# שובת

## יזלז

women, was not set aside for any specific purpose. "Moshe and Elazar the Kohen took the gold from the leaders of thousands and hundreds and brought it to the Tent of Meeting, as a memory for Yisrael before G-d" [31:54]. This is similar to the pans of the community of Korach, which were used to cover the Altar, "a memory for Yisrael, that no foreigner who is not descended from Aharon shall offer incense, and he will not be like Korach and his community." [17:5]. Thus, the gold was also set aside in memory of a sin, but in this case the sinners managed to repent for their actions before it was too late.

### SERMON BY A GUEST

#### Wars of the Jews and the Foreign Nations - by Rabbi Tzion Tawill, Rabbi of Netzarim, Head of Yeshivat "Netzer Mata'ai"

The Almighty commands Moshe, "Take the revenge of Bnei Yisrael from the Midyanites" [Bamidbar 31:2], while Moshe tells the people to "take G-d's revenge of Midyan" [31:3]. Rashi explains this apparent difference as referring to the same thing. "One who stands up against Yisrael is in effect also standing up against G-d." This is similar to the way Rashi interpreted the verse about carrying the Ark. "And your enemies will be scattered – This refers to those who hate Yisrael. Everybody who hates Yisrael also hates the one who created the world." [Rashi, Bamidbar 10:35].

Thus, we see that even if it seems that the reason the other nations fight Bnei Yisrael is for such things as territorial gain, the truth is that the wars fought by the other nations against Yisrael stem from much deeper roots.

In the prayer of Rabbi Nechunia Ben Hakaneh, it is written, "Please, strong one, keep watch over those who seek your uniqueness." Rabbi A.Y. Kook explains, "The community of Yisrael seeks the unity of G-d in the world, in order to unite all the creatures to become one, to do the will of G-d with a pure heart. Because of this idea, which is always present in the hearts of Bnei Yisrael, many others rise up against them and they therefore must be protected from all sides." [Olat Re'iyah].

By its very existence, the nation of Yisrael sends out a message to all the other nations, a message of the unity of G-d. There is an owner of the "palace," and the world is moving in the direction of spiritual progress. There is a path which must be followed by man, society, and the world, and this message is limiting and constricting. The other nations are upset by the obligations of this message, and they fight against Yisrael to prevent us from becoming established in the material world of return of the exiles and territorial gains, to prevent our

influence from increasing. Obviously neither individual people nor entire nations explicitly give this reason for their actions. Their wars against Yisrael have material goals, but in depth "even though they do not see the truth, it is part of their fate."

This concept is used by the Maharal to explain the Talmud, when it gives as one of the signs of redemption that "in the seventh year, there will be wars" [Sanhedrin 97]. Why is war one of the harbingers of redemption? The answer is that when Yisrael's strength increases the resistance of the other nations increases, they have more to fight against and they can identify a specific foe. This is different from the time of hibernation, during the exile. (See Netzach Yisrael, 32-36).

The stronger and more courageous Bnei Yisrael become, the more of them return to their land, and – most important – the stronger is their yearning to return to Jerusalem, the greater will the resistance by the other nations become. It is not in vain that the nations want to take Gush Katif away from us, in order that we will not reach Jerusalem! The Almighty "gives strength to His nation" [Tehillim 29:11], and "He who dwells in heaven will laugh ... at them" [2:4]. He will bring us to all the corners of our land, and He will bring us to stand upright within the land.

## TORAH, SOCIETY, AND GOVERNMENT

### Sinners and Wine - by Rabbi Uri Dasberg

When I was serving as a soldier in the IDF, one of my colleagues once turned to me to ask if I was authorized to open a bottle of wine. I immediately understood that the law that prohibits drinking wine touched by one who desecrates Shabbat was well known. Among all those who were present, I was the only one who had the proper "authorization" to open a bottle of wine.

A sacrifice is not accepted from one who is known to regularly desecrate Shabbat, and if such a person touches wine it becomes forbidden because of a fear that he might have poured some of it as a sacrifice to an idol. The reason for this comparison is that violating the laws of Shabbat can be compared to all the other mitzvot, and one who desecrates it is denying the main principles of faith, of Divine guidance, and of creation. This implies that Gentiles or others who do not pour wine as a libation for idols (such as Arabs, who do not drink wine at all) would not make wine prohibited by touching it. The Rambam rules this way with respect to Kara'ites, and it would seem to apply too in the case of a nonreligious Israeli who does not observe the laws of Shabbat. There is no reason to think that he uses the wine for idol worship.

However, the sages had another reason for forbidding "stam yainom" - normal wine not used explicitly for idol worship. They feared that too close an approach to Gentiles might lead to intermarriage. This was the reason that the rabbis also forbid food cooked by a Gentile and require utensils bought from a Gentile to be immersed in a mikveh. This reasoning applies to every Gentile, whether he pours wine to an idol or not, but it would not seem to be relevant for a Jew, even if he does not observe the mitzvot. This can be seen from the fact that other decrees which are meant to keep us apart from the Gentiles are

not applied to nonreligious Jews. An example of this would be cooking.

With respect to desecrating Shabbat in public, another point might be relevant. In earlier times, when all of the community observed Shabbat, one who violated it in public was purposely desecrating all that was valuable to the community and he could be considered an apostate. Unfortunately, in modern times, there are many people who desecrate Shabbat, and perhaps the way they act can no longer be considered as a challenge to Judaism. In the times of the early sages, a public Shabbat desecrator could be considered "meizid" – a purposeful transgressor – while in modern times he might be considered "one who considers it permissible," which is less serious than a meizid.

Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef writes, "We can see with our own eyes that many of these sinners from Yisrael have repented completely after we accepted them in a pleasant way. This corresponds to the words of our sages, you should always reject them with the left hand while you welcome them with the right." Perhaps touching wine is related to the "right hand" and not to the left.

Reference: Rabbi David Ben Zazon, "Techumin," volume 25, pages 381-391

## MOUNT MORIAH

### Moving from the Tabernacle to the Temple - by Rabbi Yitzchak Levy, Yeshivat Har Etzion

This week we will discuss the significance of the move from the Tabernacle to the Temple.

The Temple on Mount Moriah as a Continuation of the Tabernacle

There is no specific command to build a Temple. The source for the mitzvot for building a House of G-d on Mount Moriah, in Jerusalem, is the commands in the Torah to build the Tabernacle. The sages explain that last phrase in the verse "everything that I have shown you, the form of the Tabernacle and the form of all its utensils, and this is what you should do" [Shemot 25:9] refers to all future generations. In this sense, the permanent Temple is a continuation of the Tabernacle. When King David took it upon himself to begin the planning for the Temple, he was following a Torah command and not responding to a prophet who demanded that he build a new Temple. Rather, it is David who turned to the prophet with his desire to build the Temple.

Thus, while there may be differences between the Tabernacle and the Temple in terms of construction, utensils, and site, these are practical considerations. The construction is a continuation of the Tabernacle, and the roles of the two edifices are similar.

In summary, just as the Tabernacle is a continuation of the events at Mount Sinai, so the Temple is a continuation of the Tabernacle. Mount Sinai can be viewed symbolically as a type

of bread that was made from the dough of Mount Moriah. The fact that the Torah is kept in the Temple and the "Hakhel" gathering which occurs every seven years are both reminders of the original events at Sinai, and they are expressions of the fact that the Temple is directly linked to the Tabernacle and the events at Mount Sinai.

Based on this reasoning, it is clear that the Tabernacle was meant for Bnei Yisrael only and that it is not related to the other nations of the world in any way.

The Temple as a Continuation of the Creation of the World and the Binding of Yitzchak

As opposed to the above reasoning, there are many ways that the Temple on Mount Moriah is not a direct continuation of the revelation at Mount Sinai. Rather, it has novel aspects that are linked to the creation of the world and to the binding of Yitzchak.

The fact that the site of the Holy of Holies includes the "Even Hashetiya," the bedrock which served as the starting point for the creation, means that it is significant in relation to the beginning of the world. From this point of view, the Temple is a place that will in the future be linked to all the nations of the world, who will come to the site and bow down to the Almighty while they recognize His royal authority. This outlook influences the independent sanctity of the site, which stems from the fact that it was chosen by G-d. This is different from the sanctity of Mount Sinai and the sites of the Tabernacle, which do not cause any holiness to be imparted to a specific site.

This approach is first revealed with respect to Avraham at the binding. Avraham, the father of many nations, is commanded to offer Yitzchak as a sacrifice at the site to be shown to him by G-d, at Mount Moriah. On the other hand, the revelation to Yaacov, the father of Bnei Yisrael, takes place at Beit El, a place which is reserved exclusively for the community of Yisrael.

This explains why the Rambam rules that the sanctity of the Temple remains forever, even when the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael as a whole has become invalid. The holiness of the Temple is eternal, and it is related to Adam, Kayin, and Hevel, to Noach and Avraham. This holy status was rediscovered in the days of David and Shlomo.

The Tabernacle and the Temple in the Eyes of Sforno

According to Sforno, the Tabernacle was preferable to the Temple in that it was "commanded according to Moshe" [Shemot 38:21], "the service of the Levites was in the hands of Itamar" [ibid], it was built by Betzalel, and the leaders of the work making all the different parts were the most righteous men in the generation. As opposed to all this, the Temple that Shlomo built was made by workers brought from Tzor. And for this reason, the Temple was destroyed, not like the Tabernacle, which was never taken over by Gentiles. The same is true about the Second Temple, which was made under the command of Koresh, and the workers included men from Tzidon and Tzor. This is what Rabbi Yochanan meant when he

said that the Temple was destroyed because it was built under the auspices of the Persian authorities.

According to Sforno's approach, the fact that the Temple was built by Gentiles is a fault of the Temple which contributed to its eventual destruction. However, in view of the considerations above, it was to be expected that Gentiles participate in building the Temple. The Tabernacle is related exclusively to Bnei Yisrael and it was therefore built by Yisrael, but the Temple is related to the whole world, as is explicitly noted in Shlomo's prayer at the dedication, and therefore both temples were built with the participation of skilled workers from Tzor and Tzidon.

Let us pray that the Temple will be rebuilt soon, in order to serve as a basis for the whole world to reach a true understanding of the royal authority of the Almighty.

## A LESSON FOR THE CHILDREN

### What a Child Can Do (Part 1) - by Rabbi Yikhat Rozen, Merkaz Neria, Kiryat Malachi

Just like every other day, little Johann took his family's herd of cows out to pasture. Johann went out alone in the fields, looking for a good place. He was very far from his village, but he was not afraid. He knew every path and every bush in the area, and he was used to going very far with his cows.

Finally, Johann found what he was looking for. The cows quickly spread out around the land, and started eating the green grass. And Johann sat down, leaning against the high stone wall that he saw. Johann knew very well what this wall was. It was part of the "Great Dam," as it was called by the people of the area. Every child knew that behind this tall wall was a huge lake, with high and terrifying waves.

Johann remembered what his grandmother had told him about the time before the dam was built. Again and again, huge waves would cover the fields, carrying away the cattle and drowning the people. Damage came after damage, and one disaster followed another. Only when the Great Dam was built and the strong flow of water was stopped did life begin to develop in the area. The land dried out and it became good for planting and for human life. Johann leaned on the massive wall and listened to the noise in the area. The twitters of the birds blended in with the mooing of the cows, and all the sounds were absorbed by the deep sound of the powerful flow of water on the other side of the dam.

Suddenly, Johann felt a drop of water on his back. Surprised, he looked up, but he only saw blue sky, not a sign of any clouds. Where did the water come from? While he was still wondering about this, he felt another drop soon after the first one, and then another, and another...

Johann got up and looked all around, and then he was terrified to see the source of the water. A thin crack, no thicker than a hair, had appeared in the wall of the dam, and small drops of water were coming through the crack. Suddenly, he understood: the entire area was in grave danger! This dam held

back millions of tons of water, and it was able to withstand the great pressure of the water only because it was so stable and strong. The water dripping through the crack in the wall would make it wider, and in a short time the whole wall could collapse.

As a proof of his fears, Johann saw the crack widen a little bit. The water had made a path for itself, and there was a hole that allowed a thin stream of water, much faster than before. Johann realized suddenly that the safety of the entire village and possibly the whole region depended only on him. He was the only one who saw the crack, and he was the only one who could cry out for help.

Johann did not stop to think about the cows. He did not think about his knapsack. He did not think about anything else. His only hope was to find somebody who could help him! He needed a grownup, somebody who could close the hole! Only such a person could stop the disaster that might drown the entire region in huge waves of water!

Johann began to run from field to field, like one who was crazy, shouting with all his might. "Help! Can anybody hear me? The village is in danger! The nearby city is in danger!" But his voice was lost in the fields, and he did not hear any answer to his desperate calls.

"Where is everybody when you really need them?" Johann asked himself. "There they sit, in their comfortable houses, and they do not understand the great disaster that might happen any minute! Let somebody come already! At least one person!" But nobody came at all.

Johann looked at the dam, and to his horror he saw that the crack had become a hole, and a strong flow of water was coming out of it. How much time did he have until the entire wall collapsed? He would never be able to reach the village in time. What could he do?

(To be continued...)

(Source: A Dutch folktale)

## THE WAYS OF THE FATHERS (Pirkei Avot)

### Chapter 1 - by Rabbi Yehuda Shaviv

An established custom from as early as the time of the Geonim is to study the tractate of Avot on Shabbat after the Mincha prayer. Eventually, this was changed to the summer alone (RAMA, Orach Chaim 292:2), and some restricted it further to the time between Pesach and Shavuot. This is very reasonable, in that Avot is related to ethics and proper practice, and the best way to prepare for receiving the Torah is to improve our ethics. As we have been taught, Derech Eretz (ethical practice) came before the Torah ("Derech Eretz preceded the Torah by twenty-six generations" [Vayikra Rabba 9:3]).

The first chapter of Avot contains two brief summaries of the way the Torah was distributed. The first Mishna, very quickly takes note of the main stations from Moshe until the Anshei

Knesset Hagedola, before the Second Temple was built. (In Avot D'Rebbe Natan some additional way stations are listed.) The second summary of the process is given in the rest of the chapter, and this lists the generations in much greater detail, starting from the Anshei Knesset Hagedola almost until the last days of the Tana'im, the masters of the Mishna. The Mishna stops at almost every generation and presents typical statements of the great men of the generation (usually three declarations are quoted).

Why did we write above, "almost until the last days of the Tana'im?" This is because Rebbi (a name of respect given to Rabbi Yehuda the Nassi) was pushed off to the beginning of Chapter 2. Perhaps he was placed in Chapter 2 in recognition of the great enterprise of his life, gathering and organizing the Mishna. This gives him the right to start a new chapter in Avot, similar to the way Chapter 1 was organized. In other words, Rebbi can be compared to Moshe himself. Just as Moshe received the Torah and passed it on, thereby achieving the title "Rabeinu," our teacher, so did Rebbe receive the Torah and pass it on, thereby earning his special title. Just like Moshe, who is renowned for his greatness in Torah, leadership, and influencing later generations, so Rebbe shares many of his traits.

Another possible reason for the sequence is the desire to end Chapter 1 with the Mishna of Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel, in order that the end of the chapter should be similar to the beginning. In essence, the chapter begins with the second Mishna (the task of Mishna 1 is as a general introduction to the tractate and possibly to the study of Oral Torah in general). This teaches us the words of Shimon the Righteous, "The world is supported by three things: Torah, service, and kindness." It is similar to the last Mishna in Chapter 1. Once again the rabbi is named Shimon, and he also teaches us that "the world is supported by three things." In this case, he is referring to "justice, truth, and peace."

Clearly, the three elements at the beginning of the chapter are different from those brought at the end, and commentators from all generations have discussed the differences between them. Let it suffice for us to note that the last Mishna, like the first one, teaches us that the ears of the sages were attuned to the question of what maintains the existence of the world. Anybody who wants the world to stand upright must strengthen the pillars on which it rests.

## HOLY AND SECULAR

### The New "Reform" - by Rabbi Amichai Gordin

Note: Ten years ago my father and I watched the pictures of the "ceremony" organized by Avishai Raviv on Mount Herzl of an organization called the "Ayal Youth." My father was angry with Raviv and he firmly declared, "This is a provocation by the Secret Service!" When I heard his words I smiled. I said to him, "Father, we are living in Israel and not in Russia. The Secret Service does not use the methods of the KGB that you are used to seeing!"

The end of the story is well known. From that time on, I have learned my lesson, and now I know enough not to deny any suspicions of provocation. I therefore want to make it clear that what I am writing below is meant only with respect to actions performed by regular people and not in relation to any provocation performed by the "Jewish Section" of the Secret Service.

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A few weeks ago, as part of the struggle against the "disengagement" plan, several Jewish boys caught an Arab youth and threw stones at him in a cruel way that is hard to understand. On the same day, several men dressed in black poured oil and nails on Highway Number 1, between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

Anybody who thinks clearly must be shocked to hear about such activity. I don't think it is necessary to waste words in order to explain the criminal nature of such actions. I want to emphasize another point: There is no halachic justification of any kind to do something that may cause the death of a Jew who is innocently traveling on the highway. Similarly, there is no prominent rabbi who ever gave permission to throw stones at a person who is not putting us in any danger. In addition to the crime and sin involved in such actions, they also involve a problem of undermining the halachic authority of the rabbis of our generation.

If a man would publish a halachic decision authorizing people to drive to a synagogue on Shabbat he would be called "Reform." Even if he would have strong and convincing arguments, the fact that his conclusion is against accepted rulings will be enough to expel him from the accepted community. Anybody who claims that it is permissible to kill an Arab for no apparent reason (I am not referring to legitimate military operations which may cause harm to innocent Arabs, in an effort to prevent terrorism) is making a declaration that is the opposite of what we have been taught by the greatest rabbis of our time. Such a person should also be called "Reform."

The prohibition of murder is no less serious than desecration of Shabbat. Someone who demands that the halacha of murder be changed from what has been accepted by the sages is no different from somebody who claims that the laws of Shabbat should be modified. Such sensitive issues can only be touched upon by such prominent people as Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, Rabbi Elyashiv, and other similar Torah giants. Thus, just as the new "Reform" people would never make their own decisions about Shabbat they should not attempt to make new rules with respect to spilling of blood.

In the era of the Haskalah, the Reform movement was a threat to the traditional Jews. Religious people fought against the Reformers, who changed the laws of the Torah in line with their desires and their gut feelings. And now once again there are people who have arisen as a threat to established halachic authority. They think that the Torah giants do not understand the proper attitude towards the Gentiles, and that these prominent rabbis are wrong. These people permit themselves to perform actions that are prohibited by halacha. They are

convinced that their intuition takes precedence over the halacha.

These people are dangerous to society, since they are associated with murder. They are also dangerous to Judaism, since they choose to totally ignore the normal chain of halachic decision within the nation. It is necessary to expel the new Reformed people from the synagogue, just as the original Reform Jews were expelled two hundred years ago.

Anybody who feels that a specific halachic ruling is not suited to modern times and that it should therefore be modified or cancelled is invited to join the new Reform movement. As far as I know, this movement is always on the lookout for new members.

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I have no way of knowing if those who performed the acts I have mentioned above are agents of the Secret Service or members of the "new Reform" movement. In any case, it is clear that every Orthodox community must expel these people from its midst.

## THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

### Building Bridges to Torah Education Abroad - by the Department of Education, World Mizrahi

School principals and Torah educators from many Jewish communities around the world participated together with hundreds of Israeli teachers in a seminar that took place in Jerusalem. The theme of the seminar was, "The vision and the mission of religious Zionist education in Israel and in the Diaspora." The opening remarks were made by Gad Diya'ie, chairman of the Association of Religious Teachers in Israel.

A panel discussion on the subject, "The link between religious teachers in Israel and their colleagues in the Diaspora," was opened by the chairman of the session, Elimelech Landner, head of the Education Department of the Mizrahi. Eliezer Shefer, chairman of the World Council for Torah Education, noted in his words how important it is to strengthen the links with Jewish communities and schools abroad. Participants in the panel included Shlomo Yishai, Aharon Eldar, Yitzchak Amar, and Rabbi Mordechai Bassar. The moderator of the session was the journalist Sivan Rahav-Meir.

The seminar for the educators from abroad began with an educational tour of the religious school in Ramot B, in Jerusalem. The subject discussed was "Integration between the study of mathematics and Judaism." A second session was held in the Uziel Model School in Jerusalem, on the topic of the approach of religious Zionism. The participants also visited the Emunah College in Jerusalem, where they discussed the uses of Jewish art and drama.

### Educational Pacts Between Israel and the Diaspora

Comprehensive plans were shown in the conference for developing educational links between the schools in Israel and

abroad. The first stage of contact will include several pairs of schools: "Ahavat Yisrael" in Jerusalem will be in contact with the Manhattan Day School in the United States; "Or Torah Stone" in Jerusalem will be linked with the "Kushner" high school in New Jersey; the religious high school in Alon Shevut, in Gush Etzion, will be in contact with "Kerem Menachem," in Nice, France; the religious grammar school in the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem will be linked to "Or Torah," in Nice; and Ulpanat Tzvia in Jerusalem will be in contact with the "Ilan" high school in New Jersey.

## THE CHAIN OF HALACHA

### Some Laws of the Nine Days - by Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon, Rabbi of Southern Alon Shevut and a teacher in Yeshivat Har Etzion

#### The Mishna

According to the Mishna, "When Av begins joy should be decreased. During the week that Tisha B'Av occurs, it is forbidden to cut one's hair and to wash clothing... on the eve of Tisha B'Av, a person should not eat two different cooked foods, nor should he eat meat or drink wine." [Taanit 26b].

There are very few prohibitions in this Mishna, and most of the observances related to this time period are customs. We will present a brief summary of some of our current practices, pointing out which stem from the laws in the Mishna and which have been added at a later time.

#### Clothing During the Nine Days

During the week of Tisha B'Av haircuts and laundry are forbidden. What is included in the prohibition of laundry? The early commentators do not agree. Rashi explains that one who is in mourning is permitted to wear clothing that was washed before his period of mourning began. The rule for the time before Tisha B'Av would be the same, and one should be permitted to wear clothing that was washed beforehand (see Tosafot Moed Katan 24b). However, the Ramban writes that the prohibition is not only to wash during this week but also to wear freshly washed clothes. And most of the early commentators agree with his approach.

The Shulchan Aruch accepts this majority view, and rules that one should not wear any fresh clothing that was washed before the week preceding Tisha B'Av (Orach Chaim 551:3). This law is not an expansion of the original law but follows the law of the Mishna (according to most of the commentators), and this is the custom followed by the Sephardi Jews. The RAMA accepts this, and he adds that this custom starts from the beginning of the month of Av. This is the practice of the Ahkenazi Jews. It is an expansion of the original law.

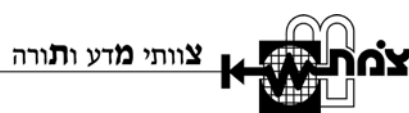
This year, Tisha B'Av starts at the end of Shabbat. This means that for the Sephardim there is no need to observe the laws of the week of Tisha B'Av. However, some of the Sephardim are stringent with respect to this rule (see Ben Ish Chai, Devarim 12).

## Leniency With Respect to Laundry

(1) According to the Tosafot (Moed Katan 24b), the custom with respect to a mourner is that he can change his clothing during the week of mourning if somebody else wears the clean clothes first for half a day or so. This is quoted by Orchot Chaim (page 584) in the name of Rabeinu Peretz, but he writes that it is sufficient to wear the clothing for one hour. This is also accepted by the RAMA (Yoreh Dei'ah 389:1). Thus, the best practice is to wear all the clothing for a short time before the Nine Days. In principal, it is possible to wear the clothing for a short time, but this should be done in a reasonable manner. For example, somebody who usually changes his shirt every day should wear shirts for only half a day for the week before the Nine Days. This will provide him with enough shirts that will not give him the pleasure of wearing a newly-washed shirt. If a person has not prepared shirts in advance, it can be assumed that his old shirt can be changed when it becomes soiled with sweat (see next paragraph).

(2) According to the Shulchan Aruch, clothing in which babies are wrapped (diapers) can be treated leniently (551:14). The RAMA adds that this is true for other children's clothing. The Mishna Berura explains that there is no joy in washing such garments (paragraph 84). That is, such clothing is changed only for cleanliness and not for beauty or comfort. When the issue is not washing but putting on clean clothing, this principal can be adopted. In the common practice of our time, underwear, which we change often because of sweat and dirt, is probably not to be considered as forbidden, and they can be changed as often as needed.

(3) The rabbis do not agree if freshly washed garments can be worn on Shabbat, but the common practice is to be lenient.



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