

# A Torah Minute com™

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## 5781 פרשת דְּבָרִים

### Clean Clothes on Shabbath Hazon

According to the Rama, one should not wear Shabbath clothes on Shabbath Hazon, but should continue wearing the clothes that one wears during the nine days (according to Ashkenazi custom) even though it is Shabbath. Other Ashkenazi authorities dispute this, since signs of mourning are not permitted on Shabbath, and the prevalent custom is to wear Shabbath clothes, which is the opinion of the Gaon of Vilna. Some have the custom of making a change with one garment. Those who have the custom of the Rama, however, should not change their custom.

Sephardim follow the opinion of Maran Beth Yoseph and wear Shabbath clothes on Shabbath Hazon, just like any other Shabbath and do not change any of the items. It should be noted that the prohibition of wearing clean clothes for Sephardim starts after Shabbath Hazon.

(See Rama 551:1. Mishnah Berurah ibid, 6. Kaf Hachayyim ibid, Oth 13)

### Debarim: Reaching a Higher Level of Understanding on Shabbath

"רַב־לֵכְם שָׁבֶת בְּהָר הַזֶּה" (You have dwelt long enough at this mount) (Debarim, 1:6). From this phrase we see an allusion to the fact that on Shabbath a person can raise himself to higher level of Binah (understanding). How do we see this? רַב (which is translated in this phrase as 'long enough'), means "a lot". This hints at the greatness one can achieve. לָכֵם ([for] you), in Gematria, with the Kollel (the numerical value of the word plus 1) equals the total of the Holy Names of G-d, Adnuth and Hawaya.

שָׁבֶת (dwelling) is made up of the same letters as Shabbath, in exactly the same order. The Gematria of בְּהָר (at the mountain), is 207. Add to that the number of letters in the word (3) and we get 210, which is the same Gematria as 10 times the holy name אֱהִיָּה (Eh-yeh). The name אֱהִיָּה, itself, alludes to Binah (understanding), which manifests its light on Shabbath.

During the week there is a constant struggle between the body and soul, but Shabbath is a time where there is peace among them. Shabbath is a special time to study Torah and make one's own Hiddushim (original thoughts on the Torah), without the distractions of the physical world.

(See Sissim Ufrahim on the Torah, Debarim)



מדרש בן איש חי  
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

For the 'Ilui Neshamah of  
Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h.  
יעקב אליהו עבדאללה פרג' חיים בן רחל, ע"ה

## Bathing, Laundry and Hair Cutting When There is No Week of Tish'ah Be-Ab

When Tish'ah Be-Ab falls on Shabbath or Sunday, there is no "Shabu'ah She Hal Bo Tish'Ah Be-Ab" (week of the 9th of Ab). Sephardim, in this case have certain leniencies vis-a-vis Ashkenazim. Sephardim do not do laundry during the week of Tish'ah Be-Ab, and when there is no week of the 9th of Ab, laundry may be done as usual, and clean clothes may be worn, except obviously for Tish'ah Be-Ab itself.

Theoretically, hair cutting may also be done during this week, however, it is common to avoid hair cutting and shaving during the entire week preceding Tish'ah Be-Ab. Ashkenazim do not cut their hair for the entire twenty two days and do not launder their clothes from Rosh Hodesh Ab. As such, these leniencies do not apply to them. (Some Sephardim do not cut hair or shave for twenty two days also).

There are those Sephardim who permit bathing when there is no week of Tish'ah Be-Ab (except for Tish'ah Be-Ab itself). It is appropriate, however, to follow the opinion of the Ben Ish Hai and not permit bathing from Rosh Hodesh, which is also the custom of Ashkenazim. Nowadays, many take a short cold or cooler shower during this time since we are considered to be "Istenis" (fastidious/finicky). In any case, for medical reasons, or for ritual immersion it is permitted. Bathing before Shabbath is permitted at all times.

(See Shulhan 'Arukh with Rama 551:16. Ben Ish Hai, 1st year, Parashath Debarim, Oth 6, 16. Maamar Mordekhai Eliyahu, 25:84-88)

## Salt and Spirituality in Eating

Eating, which is a physical act, also has a spiritual side. One should be more particular about the honor of one's soul than the honor of one's body. Therefore, before eating a meal, one should study some Torah.

When eating a meal, one should always place salt on the table and leave it there till after Birkath Hammazon (Grace after Meals). The bread must be dipped in it as soon as we recite the blessing of Hammosi. The reason is that since, for our sins, the Beth HaMiqdash (Temple) is not standing, the table at which we eat is likened to the altar and the food is in place of the offerings. And it is written, "Upon all your sacrifices you shall offer salt". In addition this a Tiqqun (rectification) to the soul.

If one recites the blessing of Hammosi and finds there is no salt on the table, he must not wait, but breaks and eats the bread immediately. When salt is brought later he should dip the bread in it.

According to the Sod (Kabbalah), the bread must be dipped three times into the salt and there are Qabbalistic reasons for this. It should be noted that the words Lehem (bread) and Melah (salt) are made up of the same Hebrew letters.

(See Ben Ish Hai, 1st year, Parashath Emor, Oth 10. Kaf Hahayim 157, Oth 8 & 9)

## Women's Corner - by Rabbanith Ruth Menashe 'a"h

### A Test of a Nation, Part 1

Assessing just one person's character traits and personality is a challenging task. Evaluating a whole nation is undoubtedly extremely difficult, perhaps even an impossibility. How can one judge and assess millions of people as a group? What values should we look for?

Bil'aam, a non-Jewish prophet, in his famous phrase gave us a clear answer to these questions: מַה טֹב אֹהֶלֶיךָ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁכְּנֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, "How good are your tents, Oh Jacob, your dwelling places, Oh Israel." His observation of the way the twelve tribes encamped brought him to praise the Jewish nation.

Our Rabbis of blessed memory expounded on this phrase with a variety of explanations. One of them states that the openings of the tents of the Jewish people were not facing each other, thereby ensuring the privacy of each family unit. Nobody was concerned with "how green their neighbor's grass was."

(To be continued)