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# PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

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Parshas Toldos  Rabbi Yossi Lowinger

## Slipping Up

**W**hen Yaakov presented himself before Yitzchak to receive the brachos, the pasuk states: Vayurach Es Raiach Bigadav - he smelled the fragrance of his garments and then he blessed him. The Medrash comments that the term bigadav should not be given its ordinary meaning - his garments - but rather should be read as boagduv, which means his enemies. Under this interpretation, the pasuk is stating that Yitzchok smelled the scent of Yaakov's enemies and then he blessed him. The medrash explains that this puzzling statement refers to the stories of Yosef of Shisa and Yakum of Tzroros.

When the enemies of the Jewish people desired to enter the Temple Mount, they were afraid to violate its holiness and therefore declared, "Let a Jew enter first." They told Yosef of Shisa, "Enter and whatever you bring out is yours." He entered and brought out a golden menorah. They told him, "It is not fitting for a commoner to use this, but enter again and whatever you bring out is yours." He refused saying "Enough that I have angered my Creator once, shall I anger Him a second time?" As a punishment for defying orders, they tortured Yosef of Shisa to death. During the torture, Yosef of Shisa cried repeatedly, "Woe to me that I have angered my Creator." The story of Yakum of Tzroros is of a similar nature. In relating this story the Medrash goes into great detail to describe how Yakum of Tzroros went from the depths of depravity to the heights of martyrdom.

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz points out that a great lesson can be learned from this medrash. Although an individual may sometimes commit tremendous lapses, these very

lapses provide an opportunity for self improvement. The conduct of Yosef of Shisa highlights this lesson. Yosef of Shisa dared to enter the Bais Hamikdosh, something that even the enemies of the Jews were afraid to do. He then removed the menorah. Even the Romans understood that he had no business doing so, and they pointed this out to him. When Yosef realized that even the Romans had a clearer perception and greater respect for the sanctity of the Bais Hamikdosh than he did, it struck him like a bolt of lightning how far he had sunk. This became the catalyst for him to repent, and refuse to enter the Bais Hamikdosh a second time. His resolve was so strong that he was willing to suffer a torturous death at the hands of the Romans rather than enter again. During the torture he cried out, not from pain but of repentance, "Woe to me that I have angered my Creator." Yosef of Shisa's slide into the deepest darkness led him to rise to the greatest heights of mesiras nefesh.

If we occasionally slip and commit an aveira unbecoming of our stature, let us not become depressed and throw in the towel. Rather, we can use this downfall as an opportunity to rise to even greater heights, spurred on by the realization that we can ascend heights of the same magnitude as the depths to which we may have fallen.

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# HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

## Bathing on Shabbos

*Rabbi Pesach Gottesman*

**C**hazal made a gezeira prohibiting bathing in hot water on Shabbos and Yom Tov as a safeguard to prevent people from heating water (see shulchan orech, orech chaim 326). This decree further includes pouring water over oneself (*i.e.*, showering) and going to a sauna. However, the prohibition applies only to washing all or most of the body. Washing one's face, arms, legs, and other limbs is permitted as long as these areas do not comprise a majority of the body. For this reason, one may wash his entire body by washing one third at a time at three separate times during Shabbos.

If a person is in great pain, and bathing will comfort him, the Biur Halacha (*ibid*) permits washing even the entire body in warm water on Shabbos. Shmiras Shabbos Kihilchaso adds that one who showers every day and would be greatly discomforted by not taking a shower on Shabbos may do so using water heated before Shabbos. In the same vein a child who is soiled may be cleaned with hot water on Shabbos.

The gezeira was only enacted with regard to washing in hot water. Therefore, the Shulchan Aruch maintains that one may wash his entire body in cold water. It is unclear, however, at what temperature water is considered sufficiently hot to be subject to the gezeira. Tehila l'dovid quotes the Noda Beyehuda that washing with lukewarm water is permitted. In this context, lukewarm means that the water has no warmth. R' Moshe Feinstein (O.C IV, 74) writes that even warm water is permissible provided that it is cooler than regular bathing water for average people.

Practically speaking, it is difficult to obtain hot water for a shower or bath on Shabbos by turning on a faucet. Since water in the boiler is generally yad soledes, taking water out causes cold water to enter and to be heated by the water in the boiler. Closing the water intake may not be practical because this will reduce the water pressure. If someone turns off the pilot of the boiler before Shabbos and ascertains that the water is not yad soledes, the water could be used under the conditions described above. This approach may also be utilized to wash dishes on Shabbos morning.

Water heated on Shabbos itself, even in a permissible manner, is treated more strictly and may not be used to wash even one limb. Therefore, one who wants to soak his feet may not do so using water heated by a non Jew for a sick person. If one mixes cold water into hot water in a way it doesn't reach yad soledes (110° f), this water may be used on Shabbos (Shmiras Shabbos Kihilchaso ch 14,3). To bathe in a hot spring pool such as those found in Teveria is permitted because it's not for therapeutic purposes (see later for the common customs).

Generally speaking there is no difference between Shabbos and Yom Tov regarding the laws discussed above. An exception is heating water to wash oneself. On Yom Tov it is permitted to heat water for

common necessities such as washing one's face. (shulchan orech (511). Some poskim suggest that heating water and showering is allowed on Yom Tov because showering is considered a common need and is therefore outside the scope of the gezeira. (see SSK ch 14, note 21). Many other poskim, however, take a strong stand against this view. One objection raised is that showering on Yom Tov is not a common necessity for everyone (Harav Shmuel Fuerst Shlita in the name of Hagoan R' Elyashiv Shlita). Another point made by the latter poskim is that there may be other reasons why bathing is forbidden under the gezeira that would apply even if showering is considered a common necessity (see Be'er Moshe Vol 8, 159).

There is an ancient custom mentioned by the Magen Avraham (OC 326,8) to avoid bathing on Shabbos even in cold water. The reasons given are to prevent squeezing water from one's hair or from a towel and to prevent carrying dripping water over four amos outdoors. Whatever the reason, the Aruch Hashulchan (326,9) states that this is the accepted practice and condemns anyone who does not follow this minhag. It stands to reason that bathing in hot spring water is also prohibited by this custom. An exception exists for using the mikvah. The Mishnah Brurah writes that one who is Tamei may use the mikvah, but questions the common practice of going to the mikvah for Tosefes Kedusha alone. Although some people are lenient regarding even a hot mikvah on shabbos (based upon the opinion of the korban nesanel in shabbos ch 2 that a mikvah was not part of the original gezeira), R' Moshe Feinstein (O.C. 4,74) speaks out strongly against this view. He states, however, that if a woman arrives at a mikvah and finds it is hot she may nonetheless immerse.

In any situation where one does wash himself on Shabbos, care must be taken to avoid squeezing water from a towel or one's hair. This is also a concern for someone with a thick beard that holds water. Hagoan R' Shlomo Zalman Zt"l (quoted in S.S.K. 14,1) allows someone with such a beard to wash his face but not his beard. Hagoan R' Moshe Zt"l (O.C.I 133) permits cleaning one's beard with water if the beard becomes dirty and is in need of washing. It is permitted to use a towel to dry one's hair even though towel absorbs the water.

The Rema in Siman 326,10 states that one may not use hard soap on Shabbos since doing so is similar to dissolving snow, which is forbidden. The Magen Avrohom disagrees because no substantial liquid is produced when one uses hard soap. The Mishna Brura quotes the Tiferes Yisroel that using hard soap transgresses the prohibition against Memaraich-smoothing. Although many disagree with this reason (see S.S.K. ch 14 note 49), it remains our minhag not to use hard soap. If there is a great need, however, such as a doctor who cannot obtain liquid soap, some authorities do allow hard soap to be used (S.S.K ch 40,11). Hand sanitizers such as Purrel may be used on Shabbos by anybody.

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