



Vayeira

**WASHING IN HONOR
OF SHABBOS KODESH**

UNEDITED INTERNET VERSION

2019

Washing in Honor of Shabbos Kodesh in Deed, Word, and Thought

The Mitzvah to Wash on Erev Shabbos Kodesh

One of the preparations which a person must engage in make himself ready for Shabbos is washing his body. According to the *Tur*, ideally, the *mitzva* is to wash one's entire body, but if one is not able to, he should at least wash his face, hands, and feet.¹ It also says in the *Shulchan Aruch* that "It is a *mitzva* to wash [one's entire body, and if it is impossible for him, he should wash] his face, hands, and feet with hot water on *erev* Shabbos."²

The source of this *mitzvah* is recorded in the *Gemara*: "Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai had the following custom: On *erev Shabbos* they would bring him a vessel full of hot water and he would wash his face, hands and feet."³

Aside from this, we see that the *Gemara*, in three places, records that there was a custom to wash the head in order to honor Shabbos and holidays. The first time is with regard to Hillel Hazakein, who was tested by someone who wanted to anger him on *erev* Shabbos. "That day was *erev* Shabbos and Hillel was washing his head."⁴ The second source in the *Gemara* was with regard to one who came to Rava on the eve of a holiday: "Rava was sitting and washing his head."⁵ The third is brought with regard to Avishai ben Tzeruya: "That day was *erev* Shabbos, Avishai ben Tzeruya was washing his head..."⁶ (should this be: washing the hair ?)

We must understand: Why are we commanded to wash the body with hot water or at least the face, hands, and feet, as a preparation to honor Shabbos?

The simple reason for this is cleanliness. A person should be clean in order to honor Shabbos. Just like we take a shower before getting married, or before a meeting with an important person, or the like, we do the same thing in honor of Shabbos kodesh, the "Shabbos Queen." It is appropriate for a person to wash his body. This is the simple explanation and it is true. But everything has a deeper inner reason.

Avraham's Practice of Washing Feet – A Method of Cleaning Away Idol Worship

As we have done, using our rabbis teachings, we must contemplate the first time washing is mentioned in the Torah in order to understand the concept of "washing" at its root. From there, we will go deeper, with G-d's help.

¹ *Tur Orach Chaim* 260.

² *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 260:1.

³ *Shabbos* 25b.

⁴ *Shabbos* 31a.

⁵ *Beitza* 27b.

⁶ *Sanhedrin* 95a.

The idea of bathing is mentioned for the first time with regard to Avraham in *parshas Vayeira*: “Please take a little water and wash your feet, and rest under the tree.”⁷ The root of the idea of washing is therefore found in Avraham’s words to the three guests who appeared to him as Arabs – “Wash your feet.”

Why did Avraham tell them to wash their feet? The simple reason is that someone who came from the road has dusty feet, particularly in their times, because they used to walk on foot. Avraham therefore suggested that they wash the dust off of their feet. But *Rashi* explains differently there, based on chazal: “He thought that they were Arabs who bow down to the dust on their feet. He was meticulous not to let any object of idol worship into his house. Lot, however, was not meticulous, so he offered to let his guests sleep before he suggested that they wash their feet, as it says ‘Sleep and wash your feet.’”⁸ It is therefore apparent that Avraham asked them to wash their feet in order to remove from them the impurity of idol worship.

Lot however, who was not meticulous, offered to let them sleep before he suggested that they wash was not like Avraham who was meticulous not to let any object of idol worship into his house. Avraham was the first believer to reject idol worship. Therefore, the first thing he said to his guests was to ask them to wash their feet so that they should be clean of the filth of idol worship. Only afterward did he invite them into his home.

It is therefore apparent that this washing was designed as a way of cleansing one’s self from idol worship.

Washing of the Face of Yosef & the Washing of the Hands of the Sons of Aharon, the Kohanim

The washing of Avraham was the washing of the feet. But on *Shabbos kodesh*, the *mitzva* is to wash the entire body, or at least the face, hands, and feet. Where, then, do we find the washing of the face for the first time in the Torah?

The first time was in the context of Yosef’s meeting with his brothers: “And Yosef hurried because his mercy was aroused for his brothers and he wanted to cry, so he went into a private room and he cried there. And he washed his face and went out.”⁹ This is the first time that washing the face is mentioned.

We now see the first time that washing the feet and the face are mentioned. Where is the first time that washing the hands is mentioned in the Torah? This is in *parshas Ki Sisa*, with regard to the Laver: “And Aharon and his sons washed their hands and feet from it [the laver].”¹⁰

We therefore find washing the feet mentioned for the first time with regard to Avraham, who wanted the angels to wash their feet to remove the impurity of idol worship from them. We find washing the face mentioned for the first time with regard to Yosef who washed his face from tears so that his brothers would not see that he had been

⁷ *Bereishis* 18:4.

⁸ *Rashi on id.*

⁹ *Bereishis* 43:30.

¹⁰ *Shmos* 30:19

crying. And we find washing the hands mentioned for the first time with regard to the sons of Aharon, the *Kohanim*, who wash their hands and feet using the Laver for the sake of purity.¹¹

These are the sources for the concept of washing, as the concept is mentioned in the Torah. Let us now try, with G-d's help, to study the concept of washing as a preparation for *Shabbos kodesh*.

The work of the Six Days of the Week Relative to Shabbos Kodesh – the Aspect of Idol Worship

Let us therefore contemplate the depth of the *mitzvah* to bathe in honor of Shabbos and whether part of its purpose is to cleanse oneself of idol worship.

The *Gemara* explains that idol worship (literally, “strange service”) can have two meanings: “One might think that it literally means idol worship, but this is not it. Rather, “strange service” means worship that is strange to him.”¹² On one hand, idol worship has its simple meaning, literal idol worship, where one serves other gods, G-d forbid. On the other hand, this term can refer to a service of G-d which is strange to a person. The *Gemara* further explains that this is what was meant when *Chazal* said, “It is better for a person to hire himself out as an employee of idolatry than to be dependent on other people.” This does not refer to literal idol worship, but rather, “it is like Rav said to Rav Kahana, offer carcasses for sale in the marketplace and take the money (do some labor which is strange to you).”¹³

We therefore see that any type of work or service can be “strange service” when it is strange and foreign to the person. For example, if a shoemaker does the job of a carpenter, the work of carpentry is strange to him. This is not an inherently strange service. But it is strange *to him*.

Literal idol worship is referred to as such for exactly the same reason; because it is strange to the truth. A person should serve only the Creator, and not, G-d forbid, anyone else. Any other service is strange to us and it is therefore defined as “strange service.”

In terms of the six days of the week and Shabbos, it is obvious and clear that our work on the six days of the week is “strange service” relative to *Shabbos kodesh*. It is an aspect of “strange service.” It is not literally the “strange service” of idols, but it is a type of work which is strange for a particular person at a particular time. On *Shabbos kodesh*, one receives an extra *neshama* and he is commanded to rest. If he would do Sunday's work on Shabbos, G-d forbid, this would be a service that is strange to him.

The depth of Bathing on Erev Shabbos – Purification from the Days of the Week

¹¹ *This was not done to purify them from actual impurity. Rather, it was done in order to add holiness. We find a similar concept with regard to the mikvah. One who is impure may immerse in the mikvah but one may also immerse in the mikvah who is already pure if he wants to add purity onto purity. Indeed, many people have the minhag to go to the mikvah on erev Shabbos in order to add holiness.*

¹² *Bava Basra 110a.*

¹³ *Id.*

Shabbos is equal to all of the *mitzvos* of the Torah.¹⁴ Idol worship is also “equal to” all of the mitzvos of the Torah.¹⁵ Based on this, the *Rambam* writes: “Both Shabbos and idol worship individually are equal in weight to all of the other mitzvos in the Torah. Shabbos is the eternal sign between Hashem and us. Therefore, one who transgresses any of the other mitzvos is classified as one of the wicked of Israel, but one who desecrates Shabbos publicly is like an idol worshiper, both of whom are treated like gentiles in all ways.”¹⁶

These two mitzvos have the same weight as the whole Torah;¹⁷ idol worship on the negative side, and Shabbos on the positive side. If one keeps Shabbos, it is as if he fulfilled the whole Torah and one who worships idols is as if he has transgressed the whole Torah.

We can now understand that when Shabbos comes, we must purify ourselves from the labors which we did during the six days of the week. This is the deeper meaning of bathing on *erev* Shabbos, which is the aspect of washing off the work week, which is considered “strange service” relative to Shabbos. The simple reason we bathe is for the sake of simple cleanliness; to be clean in honor of Shabbos, the Shabbos queen. But on a deeper level, we are washing off the weekdays.

This is also the deeper meaning of the washing that we find performed with regard to the Laver. When the *Kohanim* entered the *Beis Hamikdash* to do their holy work, they washed their hands and feet. This purification did not purify the impure. It was a washing for those who were already pure. A *Kohain* who is coming to serve in the *Beis Hamikdash* is commanded to wash his hands and feet. But one who is impure cannot do the service, so it would be pointless for him to wash his hands and feet. On a deeper level, the *Kohanim* washed in order to shake off the secular perspective which exists outside the walls of the *Beis Hamikdash*, and to go inside.

The Washing of Angels – Cleansing themselves in order to Ascend to the Level of Avraham

When Avraham said to the three angels, “Wash your feet,” and afterward, “Go to sleep,” the simple meaning of this is as Rashi explained: He thought that they were Arabs who bow down to the dust on their feet.

We must understand. Who was greater than whom? Was Avraham greater than the angels or were the angels greater than Avraham. In other words, was Avraham considered fortunate that the angels came to him, or were the angels fortunate to come under the shadow of Avraham?

The truth is that each has an advantage over the other. Avraham has a body and a *neshama*. From the perspective of the body, the angels were on a higher level than Avraham, but from the perspective of the *neshama*, Avraham was on a higher level than the angels.

So from the perspective of Avraham’s body, he was fortunate that the angels came to him. But from the perspective of Avraham’s *neshama*, the angels were the fortunate ones.¹⁸

¹⁴ *Yerushalmi Nedarim 3:9.*

¹⁵ *Yalkut Shimoni, Shmos 12:195.*

¹⁶ *Rambam, Mishna Torah, Hilchos Shabbos 30:15.*

¹⁷ *There are others as well. See, Sefer Mitzvos Shkulos by Rav Shlomo Wolbe.*

Therefore, on a deep level, when the angels came to Avraham to visit that *neshama*, they had to cleanse themselves because from the perspective of the *neshama*, they were at a lower level than he, and this is why they had to wash their feet.

The River of Fire – Cleansing the Neshama of the Perspectives of this World

Chazal explain that when the *neshama* leaves this world on its path to ascend to the higher world, it has to pass through the *nahar dinur*, the “river of fire.”¹⁹ This refers even to a *neshama* which did not sin during its life on earth and is not sentenced to *gehinom*, it nevertheless has to pass through the river of fire. Why?

The reason is that even a *neshama* which did not become sullied passing through this world must still cleanse itself of the imprint left by the perspective of this world in which it found itself. This is not purification from sin, because that takes place in *gehinom*.

What, then, is the nature of the cleansing of the river of fire? It is defined in this way: It means becoming cleansed of “worldly vision,” from seeing the world with the perspective of this world, a cleansing of the outlook of this world.²⁰

Bathing in Honor of Shabbos – Cleansing one’s self from Secular Perspectives of the Weekdays

Correspondingly, on the six days of the week, we have the perspective of “doing,” the weekday perspective. When Shabbos comes, one must cross over from the six days of the week and into *Shabbos kodesh*. How do we make this transition? Is it enough that the sun sets, Shabbos enters the world, and that we automatically enter that time?

“One may not come to the king with a garment of sackcloth.”²¹ During the six days of the week, a person has a secular perspective, a perspective which is profane. If we want to truly enter into Shabbos, we must cleanse ourselves of these “garments of sackcloth,” and receive new garments.

To what can this be compared? A person works as a garbage man and he is invited to his nephews wedding. It would not even occur to him that he would go to the wedding right after work. First he must remove his soiled clothing, bathe and clean himself, put on appropriate clothes, and only then will he go to the wedding. He comes wearing different garments. Every time a person transitions from one world to another, he must cleanse himself.

¹⁸ See, *Zohar Vol 1, 98:2*, which says: “‘And behold, three men were standing over him.’ (Bereishis 18:2) Who were the three men? They were Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, who stood above them, on a higher level than them.”

¹⁹ See, *Zohar Vol. 1, 201a*, which says: “At the time when the *neshama* goes out of this world, it undergoes many judgments until it cannot ascend to its place. Afterward, all of those *neshamos* must pass through the ‘river of fire’ which flows, and bathe in that place.”

²⁰ See, *Tikunei Zohar 4:1*, which says: “The *neshamos* are immersed in the river of fire [in order to be cleansed] from their filth which it was sullied by the low world.”

²¹ *Esther 4:2*.

This is a physical analogy but its message is clear. It is impossible to enter into Shabbos kodesh with the weekday garments. In order to go from the world of action into Shabbos, we must cleanse ourselves of the perspective of the six days of the week. On an external level, this is done by washing the whole body, or at least the face, hands, and feet. But on an inner level, this means cleansing oneself of our mundane perspective.

The Face, Hands, and Feet – Washing the Entire Body

When one washes his face, hands, and feet, or his entire body, he is essentially the whole stature of the soul. What is the idea behind washing the face, hands, and feet in particular?

In his explanation of the Torah portion which discusses the Laver, the *Ramban* explains why Aharon and his sons were commanded to wash their hands and feet when they entered the Tent of Meeting: “This washing is a way of showing honor above because whoever approaches the king’s table to eat his bread and drink his wine must wash his hands, because the hands find themselves in many places. It is added here that they had to wash their feet because the Kohanim did their service barefoot and some people’s feet are filthy and have disgusting things on them.”²² This is the simple explanation.

The *Ramban* adds the deeper meaning: “On a deeper level, this *mitzva* relates to the top and bottom of a person. A person’s hands are the highest part of him when he lifts them up and his feet are the lowest. Doing so, in man’s form, alludes to the ten *sefiros* so that the whole body should be between them... Therefore, those who serve the One Above were commanded to wash the hands and feet.”²³ The *Ramban* thus explains that washing the hands and feet is essentially washing one’s entire body.

We learn from this that washing the face, hands, and feet, which one is commanded to do on *erev Shabbos*, is similar to washing one’s entire body as the *Ramban* explained. Washing the hands and feet comprise the entire body because the hands can rise to become the highest part of the body, even above the head, and the feet go down and are the lowest part of the body. This is especially true when we wash the face as well. This is essentially equivalent to washing the entire body.

Washing the hands and feet, there is not a simple act. It is, rather, to fulfill a person’s requirement to bathe the entire body, from the highest part of man to his feet and from his head above, down to the lowest part.

The Hands and Feet Simultaneously – an Expression of Bathing the Entire Person

How did the *kohanim* wash their hands and feet from the Laver?

The *Gemara* explains: “How does one fulfill the *mitzva* of sanctifying [the hands and feet by washing them using the Laver]? One places his right hand over his right foot and his left hand over his left foot and he sanctifies. Rabbi Yossi said in the name of Rabbi Yehuda: ‘He places his two hands, one over the other, over his two feet, one over

²² *Ramban on Shmos 30:19.*

²³ *Id.*

the other, and sanctifies.”²⁴ The washing must take place either hand-foot, hand-foot or both hands and both feet at one time.²⁵

Why were they required to wash the hand together with the foot? *Rashi* there explains “that we require that the hands and feet be washed together, as required by the Torah.”²⁶ In other words, the Torah itself requires that the hands and feet be washed simultaneously, as it says, “And they shall wash their hands and their feet,” implying that the hand and foot must be washed at one time.

According to the simple level of understanding, it is impossible to understand why they were commanded to wash their hands and feet at one time. If the washing was for the purpose of cleansing the dirt off the hands and the filth from the feet, why should it make a difference whether the hands and feet are washed at the same time or whether they are washed separately? But on the deeper level which the *Ramban* discussed, that washing is equivalent to washing the entire body, We can offer a reason. The *kohanim* were not only commanded to wash the hands or the feet alone. Rather, the deeper aspect of the *mitzvah* is washing from the highest part of man to the lowest part.

Therefore, the *mitzvah* is to wash the hand and the foot at one time. This expresses the washing of the whole body from the highest point, which are the hands which can be raised above the head, and down to the lowest point, which is the feet.

We therefore see that washing the hands and feet is the same as washing the entire body. This is the type of washing that the *kohanim* did when they came to the *Beis Hamikdash*. With this we can also understand the deeper meaning of our preparations for Shabbos *kodesh*, which is not supposed to only be the physical preparation of washing the body, or face, hands, and feet, although these are important too. Rather, this washing is also supposed to cleanse our understanding of the whole inner person.

Washing the face – the Secret of Tears

We must now explain the idea of washing the face. We find that the idea of washing the face is mentioned in the story of Yosef during his meeting with his brothers. “And he came into the room and he cried there, and he washed his face and went out.”²⁷ Why did Yosef wash his face and with what did he wash it?

According to the simple meaning, Yosef washed his face because he cried and he did not want his brothers to know this. He therefore washed his face so that his brothers should not see that he had cried. Similarly, on a simple level, he washed with water drawn from the Nile or some other river.

But on a deeper level, Yosef washed his face using his own tears. Let us explain.

²⁴ *Zevachim 19b.*

²⁵ *The Gemara questions this opinion by asking that it ostensibly seems impossible to do this because one cannot do this while standing, even though washing with the Laver is a part of the kohanim’s service and therefore had to be done standing up. The Gemara answers that each kohain received the help of a friend.*

²⁶ *Rashi on id.*

²⁷ *Bereishis 43:30.*

When someone cries, on a physical level he has some inner point which is causing him pain, whatever that might be. He experiences some pain which can no longer be contained by the heart. This pain comes out in the form of crying, in the tears which descend from his eyes.

We find here a very interesting point. When something hurts a person, it hurts him in the heart. The heart contains the element of fire, the faculty of hot excitement. The faculty of water, which is the force of coldness, exists in the mind. The tears, therefore, which are the element of water, are hot. Why? This is because the tears are a product of the crying which comes from the heart.

This is why, when a person cries, the act of crying calms him down. This is the aspect of “When one has an anxiety in the heart, he should talk it out.”²⁸ *Chazal* express this in two ways: “One says he should talk it in his mind and the other one says he should talk it out to other people.”²⁹ In truth, these two methods are really one. How does one talk it out in his mind? By talking it out to others! When something is hurting a person and he speaks about it, this creates a salvation for him.

Similarly, when someone has a pain in his heart, and this comes out with tears, then in a certain way the person is soothed by the fact that the pain has been let out. He should talk it out with his mouth, and similarly, when the worry in a person’s heart bursts forth in the form of tears, the crying itself is also a type of relief, of salvation.

Crying therefore is a revelation of the pain within the heart and when it comes out in one’s tears, he is calmed. But on the other hand, it is known that a child who cries becomes wise. This idea is mentioned by our sages that the more a child cries, the wiser he becomes.³⁰

Why does a child who cries become wiser? What is the connection between crying and wisdom? The location of the eyes corresponds to the place of the brain. When a person cries, this actually causes the waste of the brain to be removed. The tears, therefore, create heat when they come from pain. This is the heat of the heart. But this process creates a connection between the mind and the heart and the mind becomes purified. It comes out that when a person cries, the act of crying purifies his mind according to the sages.

Cleanliness on Shabbos Kodesh – in Act, Word, and Thought

Let us contemplate further. When a person has some negative point, how can he tell where its root is?

We know that the soul has three garments. Their order, from lowest to highest is 1) act, 2) word, and 3) thought. When we see a person doing something wrong with his actions or his words, what is the root of this? The root of the problem is in thought, because if his thoughts had not been faulty, there would have been no source for the negative influence.

The source of repairing a fault, therefore, is also in the thoughts. This is recorded by the early sages: “They are all corrected through thought.”³¹ The correction of every single thing must be in a person’s thoughts.

²⁸ *Mishlei 12:25.*

²⁹ *Yuma 75a.*

³⁰ *See, Imrei Pinchas Hechadash, Parshios, 396, 482, 494, and Adam Lev.*

We normally think that when we see some perversion in action or words, we tend to attribute the problem only to the areas of action or words. Nevertheless, the root of evil really begins in a person's thoughts. The more he purifies his thoughts, the more they will influence his words and his deeds.

We can now see, with regard to the type of cleanliness that we are discussing, that a person must cleanse himself of the six days of the week in order to greet Shabbos. Which level of the garments are we talking about when we say this?

Let us contemplate the words of the sages who explain these ideas one by one.

With regard to deed, it is very clear that there is a concept that one should cleanse his actions on Shabbos. This refers to the thirty nine general categories of labor which are forbidden on Shabbos. It is forbidden for a person to do the same things he does on a weekday. The *Gemara* even says with regard to walking, "And you shall honor it by not going in your usual way..."³² meaning that one should not walk on Shabbos as he does on a weekday."³³ It is forbidden for a person to run on Shabbos in order that the way he walks on Shabbos should not be like it is during the week.

With regard to speech the *Gemara* says, "nor speak a word,"³⁴ means that your speech on weekdays should not be the same as your speech on Shabbos."³⁵

And with regard to thought, the fact is that although weekday thought is not *halachically* forbidden, it causes a person to connect to the physical world even more strongly. It is certainly an attribute of piety not to think about weekday matters at all on Shabbos and this is one of the most difficult aspects of service of Hashem on Shabbos.

It is Impossible to Receive the Divine Influence of Shabbos in Weekday Vessels

We therefore see that one must cleanse himself of the weekday garments of deed, word, and thought for *Shabbos kodesh*. We already mentioned the *Arizal's* teaching that the illumination of Shabbos begins to shine in a person during the three days preceding Shabbos. On Wednesday he receives the *nefesh*, which is the aspect of action, on Thursday he receives the aspect of *ruach*, which is the aspect of speech, and on Friday, he receives the *neshama*, which is the aspect of thought, because the *neshama* resides in thought.

But if we want to merit receiving this extra measure of holiness in deed, word, and thought, we must make these into appropriate vessels. If one receives these three types of this extra level of holiness in weekday vessels, this is similar to a person who pours fine wine into a dirty vessel. In doing so, he ruins all of the wine because of filth in the cup. He must first clean the cup and then he can pour the wine into it.

³¹ *Zohar Pikudei 254b.*

³² *Yeshayahu 58:13.*

³³ *Shabbos 113a.*

³⁴ *Yeshayahu 58:13.*

³⁵ *Shabbos 113a.*

It is therefore clear that the preparations that we do to receive the *nefesh* on Wednesday, the *ruach* on Thursday, and the *neslama* on Friday cannot be a preparation only to receive without also cleaning our vessels of deed, word, and thought.

We must first clean the aspects of deed, word, and thought, and then we can become a vessel in which the holiness of *Shabbos kodesh* can rest. Any effort to receive new holiness without first cleansing oneself is pointless because it will not come.

Preparing the Vessels for the Holiness of Shabbos – On the Weekdays themselves

We find that our preparations for Shabbos fall into three categories. One prepares with actions by doing things to prepare for Shabbos during the six days of the week, just as the *Gemara* says, “Starting on Sunday, look to Shabbos.”³⁶ *Rashi* explains, “Starting on Sunday, pay attention to the upcoming Shabbos.”³⁷ This was stated regarding buying items needed for Shabbos.

With regard to speech, we prepare during the week by doing what the holy seforim say, which is that it is appropriate to verbally say before every act that he is doing it to honor Shabbos.³⁸ Not only that, but there is also a *mitzva* of mentioned Shabbos, which is why, according to some opinions, we say, in the “Song of the Day” every day in the Shacharis service, “Today is one day of Shabbos...” We do this in order to mention Shabbos verbally.

Thought refers to the thought which precedes speech because the preparation for proper speech is in one’s thoughts. It is the concept that one must precede speech so that one should think about what he will say. As it is says in the *Ramaban*’s letter, “Think about what you will say before you say it.”

One must therefore prepare himself for Shabbos with action, speech, and thought. Remember, though, that it is impossible, during the week, to completely clean his words, actions, and thoughts of their weekday nature, because he is still immersed in the six days of the week.

Today, one must therefore increase the number of vessels for holiness: vessels of action, word, and thought. But when Shabbos comes, then a person must remove all of these garments of the six days of the week and only wear the garments of Shabbos.

Removing and Cleaning the Garments of Action, Word, and Deed

³⁶ *Beitza 16a.*

³⁷ *Rashi at id.*

³⁸ *Indeed, it says in the aforementioned Gemara about Shamai Hazakein that when he “found a good animal, he would say, ‘this is for Shabbos.’” Beitza 16a.*

It is a *mitzvah* for a person to have special clothes in honor of Shabbos, as the *Gemara* says, “‘And you shall honor it...’³⁹ means that one’s clothes on Shabbos should not be the same as his clothes on a weekday.”⁴⁰ But just as it is on a physical level, one must remove the previous garments in order to put on new ones.

There is, however, another step after one removes his weekday garments: bathing. One first bathes, and only then puts on the new garments. We see, therefore, that two steps precede putting on the new garments: removing the previous garments and bathing.

Removed itself, as we explained earlier, has three elements: removing the weekday garments of action, word and thought. The cleansing which follows this must also be in all three areas.⁴¹

Cleansing Thought – the Secret of Tears

Cleansing must take place in actions, words, and thoughts. How, though, does one cleanse his thoughts?

One can easily understand the idea of cleansing his actions and words on a simple level. One could fulfill these by washing his body, which carries out his actions, and by brushing the teeth, the place from which speech comes.

Also, starting at noon or at *mincha* time on Friday, one must stop engaging in weekday activities and prepare for Shabbos. It is the same thing with regard to speech. One should speak words related to Shabbos, as it says in the Mishna: “One must say three things in his house on *erev Shabbos* just before it gets dark, ‘Have you tithed,’ ‘Have you made the *eruv*?,’ and ‘Light the Shabbos candle.’”⁴² The very act of speaking with the members of one’s household about the Shabbos preparations on *erev Shabbos* is part of the process of transitioning one’s speech from weekday matters to Shabbos matters. This is also an aspect of cleansing oneself for Shabbos.

But how does one cleanse his thoughts? This is through the secret of tears. On an inner level, one part of *teshuva*, repentance, requires that a person cry over his actions in order to cleanse them. Why is he required to cry?

On a simple level, a person must feel such an intense inner pain that it brings him to tears because if he does not have enough regret over his action such that it does bring him to tears, this is a sign that he has not completely removed the evil from within himself.

One must, therefore, cleanse his thoughts using tears.

³⁹ *Yeshayahu* 58:13.

⁴⁰ *Shabbos* 113a.

⁴¹ *On erev Shabbos, one must immerse in the mikvah at least three times: one immersion to remove the weekday perspective and a second immersion is to acquire the holiness of Shabbos kodesh, as the Arizal explains. It is also brought down in the Arizal’s name that one should not dry himself off from the waters of his immersion because the water with which one washes himself in honor of Shabbos has some holiness. It is good for the person to allow this water to absorb into his body. The waters of the mikvah are therefore waters of cleanliness because we use them to remove our weekday perspective. On the other hand, the mikvah water which absorbs into our bodies is also holy in and of itself. It purifies and sanctifies us.*

⁴² *Mishna Shabbos* 2:7.

Tears – the Mind’s Waste which Manifests itself Outside

Tears are actually the mind’s waste which it expels. There are two types of waste which the mind expels: the hair and tears.

According to the Shulchan Aruch, one must wash his body and get a haircut in honor of Shabbos.⁴³ The deeper meaning of this is that both the hair and one’s tears are the “waste” of the mind. Since the hair is the “waste” of the brain, it is appropriate to have a haircut on *erev Shabbos*.

“A king should have a haircut every day.”⁴⁴ The *Gemara* explains that this is based on the verse, “You shall see a king in his beauty.”⁴⁵ This is, on a deeper level, not only about the superficial beauty of the king. It was also related to cleanliness because the hair, which is a type of filth because it is the “waste” of the brain, should be removed from the king immediately. This itself beautifies him because he has no dirt on him at all.

The removal of the hair is one type of cleanliness because it removes the waste of the brain which comes out in the form of the hair. The second type of cleanliness is the act of crying.

Purifying the Mind and the Thoughts through Tears – the Secret of Teshuva

There are four opportune times for *teshuva*:⁴⁶ 1) every night,⁴⁷ 2) *erev Shabbos kodesh*, 3) *erev Rosh Chodesh*, and 4) *erev Rosh Hashana*. These are the four set times for *teshuva*.

Because *erev Shabbos* is a time for *teshuva*, one already has a framework within which to cleanse the root of his thoughts, which are the source of *teshuva* on *erev Shabbos*, and thereby to cause himself to cry. By crying, one purifies his thoughts.

Before Yosef met his brothers, the Torah tells us that he cried. Why did he cry? According to the simple meaning of the story, he cried because he missed his brothers since he had not seen them for twenty two years.

On a deeper level, however, what caused the separation between Yosef and his brothers? “And Yosef brought their bad speech to their father.”⁴⁸ *Rashi* there explains, “Whatever bad thing that he saw his brothers, the sons to Leah, doing, he told to his father. They ate from a limb which had been removed from an animal while it was still alive, they denigrated the children of the maidservants (Bilha and Zilpa) by calling them ‘slaves,’ and that they were suspect in the area of sexual immorality.”⁴⁹ He saw them eating a limb which had been removed from a living

⁴³ *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 250:1.*

⁴⁴ *Ta’anis 17a.*

⁴⁵ *Yeshayahu 33:17.*

⁴⁶ *Shela Hakadosh.*

⁴⁷ *As brought down in the Zohar, Vol. 3, 178a, which we quoted in the first chapter. See, chapter 1, note 30.*

⁴⁸ *Bereishis 37:2.*

⁴⁹ *Rashi at id.*

animal and denigrating the sons of the maidservants but he did not see correctly. They had a reason for everything that they did. Yosef's mistake was therefore that he looked incorrectly; it was a mistake in the area of thought.

When Yosef reunited with his brothers, therefore, it was not a simple family reunion. It was a deep rectification of the root problem which caused their separation from one another. Before Yosef met with his brothers, he essentially cleaned his thoughts with his own tears.

The holy *seforim* say that when a person cries, he should take some of the tears and spread them over his face and that this is a *segulah* for purity.⁵⁰ Why do tears have the power to purify a person?

Tears are composed of the mind's waste and of the heart's sincere pain. The pain which comes from the heart has the power of removing the waste from the mind. This is purity and that is how tears purify a person.

Cleansing one's Thoughts – Removing the Perspective of the Six Days of the Week

We therefore learn that there are three types of purity in honor of Shabbos: 1) physical purification, cleaning the body physically, 2) purity of speech, and 3) purity of thought. A person purifies his thoughts by cleansing his mind with tears.

One cleanses his thoughts by crying, as we explained. A person's tears cleanse his mind and his thoughts. When a person cries genuinely, his tears purify his mind for holiness because they remove the mind's waste.

When a person cries sincerely for a legitimate reason, then he removes the mind's waste and thereby purifies it. But sometimes, G-d forbid, a person removes goodness from his mind through tears when he cries over something for which he should not cry.

Teshuva and the cleansing of one's thoughts in order to prepare for Shabbos are actually one. When a person reminds himself of his negative points and feels pain over them, he then feels an inner pain and cries over them and is cleansed by this process. On a deeper level, this accomplishes a removal of the perspective of the six days of the week.

These three types of cleansing are the method by which a person prepares himself for Shabbos by removing the perspective of the six days of the week and cleansing himself of weekday physicality.

Consider the following analogy: A man lives in great poverty and has experienced the strain of his poverty his entire life. He always has to consider what to buy, how much, whether to buy at all, etc. One day, things turn around for him and he becomes wealthy. Nevertheless, he continues to live in the same way out of a sense of habit, and he continues to live as if he were poor, considering every purchase carefully.

What should this person do? He has a livelihood but his life has not changed! The answer is that he needs to change his way of thinking. He is accustomed to living in poverty so he learned to think in a certain way. But now that his circumstances have changed, he must abandon this way of thinking.

⁵⁰ *There is also a corresponding Jewish custom to spread around the wine of havdalah after Shabbos.*

Deeper type of Cleansing Thoughts –Revealing a new Understanding in the Mind and the Soul

We have explained that the purpose of bathing on *erev* Shabbos is to cleanse oneself of the six days of the week and that this is done in three ways: cleansing one's actions, speech, and thoughts.

There is, however, a deeper level of cleansing thought, which essentially means that one must receive a new type of thinking. Let us try, with G-d's help, to explain this.

The holy *seforim* explain that there is a *mitzvah* to create novel Torah ideas on Shabbos. What is the deeper meaning of this idea? Why is there more of a *mitzvah* to create novel ideas on Shabbos than on any other day?

Creating a novel idea means revealing something deeper, a deeper perspective. This is the essential point of a novel Torah idea. For example, when someone finds a penny in the marketplace, this is also novel. Until now he did not have this particular penny, and now there is a new reality in which he does have this penny. But can something so trivial really be called a "novel idea?" This is something which a person considers completely insignificant because one penny will not make any difference in a person's life. It is a novel idea, but it has no meaning.

What, then, is a "novel idea?"

When a person makes some relatively major purchase which changes his lifestyle to some extent, like a new washing machine, or the like, which he did not have before, this is a true novelty. It involves a new type of life.

There are, therefore, two types of "novel ideas." Some involve something new for a person but the difference is meaningless to him. There is also a true novelty which changes a person's perspective on life.

According to all opinions, the Torah was given on Shabbos.⁵¹ Shabbos kodesh is the time of rest, a time when one is free to learn Torah.

But on a deeper level, the essential point of Shabbos is that a person must remove his existing weekday perspective and to take on a new perspective, a "novel" understanding. He must take on a new perspective in his soul and in his thoughts. Therefore, aside from the obligation to learn more Torah on Shabbos, there is also a *mitzvah* to create novel Torah ideas on Shabbos.

The extra Soul – A new Soul just like a Convert

The deeper definition of how one cleanses himself on Shabbos is that Shabbos is the time for a person to remove his weekday garments, to cleanse oneself from them, and to put on new garments, and with these garments, he will take on a new perspective.

The source of the new garment is the depth of the inner revelation which is revealed on Shabbos. The garments represent the attribute of "honor," *kavod*. And the *neschama* is also called *kavod*, as it says, "in order that [the soul] sing to you, 'honor!'"⁵² And on Shabbos, there is an inner revelation of the *neschama* so there is a new revelation of garments on Shabbos.

⁵¹ *Shabbos* 86b.

⁵² *Tehillim* 30:13.

Consider the following analogy. When a garage man puts on his work clothes, he looks one way. And when he takes off those clothes and bathes and wears different clothes, he appears completely differently. We see that wearing different clothing creates a completely different appearance.

It is the same thing on Shabbos. Shabbos gives the person a new outlook, a completely new and different perspective which goes far beyond merely adding one additional positive point.

Hashem places an extra *neshama* into a person on *erev* Shabbos.⁵³ What is the extra *neshama*? It is not merely an additional *neshama* over and above the one the person already has. It means a completely different *neshama*. This is the root of the inner *neshama*. It itself is the source for one's novel Torah ideas on Shabbos.

Consider the example of a person who converts. At the beginning, he had the *neshama* of a gentile. But once he converts he receives a higher type of *neshama*. It is clear he does not receive merely some additional aspect onto his existing *neshama*. It is a completely different *neshama*! Before, he was a gentile and now he has a Jewish *neshama*. He is a completely different person. The difference is that he now received a completely different *neshama*. This is a completely different perspective on his entire life.

Shabbos – Changing one's Entire Perspective on Life

We now understand that bathing in honor of Shabbos, to use a physical analogy, comes after the removal of one's previous garments and constitutes a cleaning away of one outlook in preparation to take on a new perspective.

Therefore, one may fulfill this by washing the hands and feet, as well as the head, meaning the thoughts. In this way, a person prepares himself to receive the three additional parts of the soul, which are the *nefesh*, *ruach* and *neshama*. But more specifically, we receive an extra level of understanding of the *nefesh*, which is the understanding of action, an extra perspective on *ruach*, which is the concept of speech, and an extra aspect of *neshama*, which is the faculty of thought.

This is the deeper meaning of Shabbos. When Shabbos comes, a person undergoes an essential change in his entire perspective on life. But what is that change?

In order to understand the answer to that question, we must study the garments of Shabbos. We must understand what our Shabbos garments are. With G-d's help, we will discuss this in the next chapter.

⁵³ *Beitza 16a.*