

CONG. SHAARE RAHAMIM SERIES

THE ESSES EDITION

טהרת
המשפחה

FAMILY PURITY

A Woman's Guide

RABBI
SHLOMO CHURBA

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ונשיא מועצת חכמי התורה

ירושלים י"ג מנחם סיון JERUSALEM

הסכמה

הוכאו לפני גליונות הספר "טהרת המשפחה", אשר מקיף ומפרט בשפה האנגלית את הלכות נדה, מעשה ידי אומן, נטע נאמן, צנצנת המן, חכו ממתקים וכולו מחמדים, תהלתו בקהל חסידים, שמן תורק שמו, טעמו ונימוקו עמו, כש"ת הרה"ג רבי שלמה שורבה שליט"א, רב קהילת "שערי רחמים" בניו-יורק, אשר נושא ונותן באמונה בדברי רבותינו הפוסקים, ראשונים ואחרונים, חדשים גם ישנים, ונחית לעומקא דדינא, ומסיק שמעתא אליבא דהלכתא. אשרי יולדתו, צינה וסוחרה אמיתו, ולפעלא טבא אמינא איישר חיליה לאוריתא.

יהי רצון שחפץ ה' בידו יצלה לברך על המוגמר בקרב ימים, ועוד יפוצו מעינותיו חוצה בבריאות איתנה ונהורא מעלייא לאורך ימים ושנות חיים בטוב ובנעימים שובע שמחות וכל טוב "והיה כעץ שתול על פלגי מים, אשר פריו יתן בעתו ועלהו לא יבול, וכל אשר יעשה יצליח".

זכריה יוסף



י"ד חשוון תשס"ה

*This Book is Dedicated
in Honor of*

Joe A. Esses

*You are the Patriarch of our family.
Your tireless work on behalf of our
wonderful Community has served
as an inspiration to your children,
grandchildren and
great-grandchildren as well
as to so many others.*

*May you go from strength
to strength to give so much of yourself
without limit and may you be blessed
with many, many years of
Health, Happiness and Success.*

*Abe and Terry Esses
Rochelle and Ronnie Tawil
Sheffy and Victor Sutton
Eddie and Sarah Esses*

Laws of Nidah

Mr. Joe Esses שליט"א

Joe Esses is the Patriarch of our family and in many ways he has also been referred to as one of the Patriarchs of our Community.

We are proud to pray tribute to a person who literally has spent his entire life giving ever so generously of himself solely for the sake of others.

His wise counsel and guidance of our family is eclipsed by his countless number of successful and thriving Community initiatives.

Whether it be his pioneering work in the early days of the Magen David Yeshiva Annual Journal, his dedication to the Magen David Yeshiva Elementary School at both its original Avenue P location as well as its new home on McDonald Ave., or his bold move to go where others failed, to create and build the Magen David Yeshiva Celia Esses High School which today is proud to boast a high achieving student body of almost 600 students, to his devotion to fostering the financial well-being and the new headquarters building of the Hatzalah Volunteer Emergency Service and countless number of significant and meaningful accomplishments, he has always been (and still is) at the ready to break new ground and to forge ahead to unparalleled success.

We applaud him for all of his efforts on behalf of our family and on behalf of our very special Community of which he and we hold very dear.

Our best wishes for success go to Rabbi Shlomo Churba for his untiring efforts to educate and elevate our Community to continue to learn and grow over so many, many years.

Abe and Terry Esses
Rochelle and Ronnie Tawil
Sheffy and Victor Sutton
Eddie and Sarah Esses

*This Book is Dedicated
in loving memory of*

Celia Esses A'H

*Her love and devotion to her
family was total selflessness.*

Her character was sterling.

Her demeanor was regal.

*Her legacy lives on through her
loving children, grandchildren and
great-grandchildren.*

May her memory be a blessing to all.

*Abe and Terry Esses
Rochelle and Ronnie Tawil
Sheffy and Victor Sutton
Eddie and Sarah Esses*

Celia Esses A"H

22 years have passed since the loss of our dear Mother and Mother-in-law, Celia Esses A'H'. Her sustained illness and her passing at the young age of 59 dealt a very difficult blow to our family. For many years thereafter our family was unable to think of anything else other than the deep sense of loss that we were experiencing on a day-to-day basis.

Baruch Hashem, over the years although we continue to feel a strong and lasting sense of loss, we have gained clarity in the realization of how much we and our families gained and continue to gain from her loving care and guidance until this very day.

Mom led our family by serving as a role model for all of us to emulate. Her rare internal and external beauty coupled with her regal manner and graceful presence was well known to all. She was not only a loving mother to us. She was a cherished wife, a loving daughter, a devoted sister as well as loyal friend.

She guided our family in her own very special and caring manner. Her legacy clearly lives on in us and in the lives of our children and grandchildren. She was a true inspiration to all those who knew her.

It is our sincere hope and prayer that the dedication of this holy and important book on matters of Family Life and Family Purity will inspire others to experience the very highest levels of achievement in the same manner as her life continues to inspire us even more every day.

Abe and Terry Esses
Rochelle and Ronnie Tawil
Sheffy and Victor Sutton
Eddie and Sarah Esses

Laws of Nidah

Acknowledgements

Congregation Shaare Rahamim expresses its gratitude to the many individuals whose efforts and gracious assistance have made this publication possible:

Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz of Artscroll Publications, Rabbi Moshe Dombey z"l of Targum Press, and the Ehrman family, of *Si'ach Shoshanim — a Woman's Handbook*, graciously granted permission to include excerpts from their publications in this volume. We are forever grateful to these publishers for their immense contributions to Torah learning generally, and to this work in particular.

We are likewise indebted to the Jerusalem-based **Jewish Marriage Education** institute for allowing us to reprint their collection of citations regarding the medical benefits of family purity. We express our gratitude as well to **Rabbi Kalman Gross** for the permission to print his *taharah* calendar, which serves as an indispensable tool for couples worldwide in their observance of the family purity laws.

Mrs. Rochel Goldbaum, a talented editor and seasoned *Taharat Ha'mishpaha* counselor, has graced this volume with her vast wealth of knowledge, insight and erudition, which is manifest in virtually every page of this work. Her many hours of careful proofreading and valuable input has contributed immeasurably to the quality and clarity of this book.

Rabbi David Silverberg has once again provided us with clear and succinct translations together with a fine polishing of the entire book. His work is highly regarded by us and will be appreciated by the readers of this book.

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Words cannot express our debt of gratitude to **Mr. Nachum Kornfeld of Simcha Graphics**, our loyal, indomitable typesetter, who has displayed unparalleled patience and skill in managing the unmanageable barrage of last-minute modifications and additions to the final draft(s). We commend him for his many hours of work and boundless efforts which have made this project a success.

ישלם ה' שכרם ותהי משכורתם שלמה מעם ה' אלקי ישראל

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Laws of Nidah

Message From the Author, Rabbi Shlomo Churba

It is with both pride and humble gratitude to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* that we present the latest volume in Congregation Shaare Rahamim's widely-acclaimed publication series, *Laws of Family Purity*. Like the previous works, this *sefer* provides a clear, lucid exposition of a challenging, complex yet very relevant area of *Halachah* in a manner that makes it easily understood by those with limited background, yet appreciated by even the seasoned scholar.

The success of these projects is due mainly to the remarkable enthusiasm our community displays for quality Torah literature, which is a clear testament to its devotion to learning and the priority it affords to education and observance. I am truly grateful for the privilege G-d has granted me to serve a community with such a passion for learning and commitment to excellence in religious observance.

Like all areas of *Halachah*, the laws of family purity are subject to differing opinions among the various Rabbinic authorities and conflicting customs and practices among different communities. Hence, although there exists a vast literature dedicated to these laws, these works generally reflect the positions taken by their respective authors and the particular customs observed by each author's community. Today, nearly every Jewish community consists of members from different countries and backgrounds, such that numerous different ritual traditions are represented within each community. We have therefore undertaken this groundbreaking project to compile the laws and customs

Message From the Author

that are common to all traditions, and acceptable by all Halachic authorities throughout the spectrum of the Torah world. Considerable care was taken to formulate and present the *halachot* in a manner suitable for Jews of all traditions.

The Torah introduces the prohibition of *nidah* in the Book of Vayikra (18:19): ואל אשה בנדת טומאתה לא תקרב — “You shall not approach a woman during her state of menstrual impurity.” Several chapters later (20:18), the Torah emphasizes the severity of this prohibition, declaring intentional violators worthy of *karet* — eternal excision from the Jewish people.

The particular gravity of this law is further underscored by a story told in the Talmud (Shabbat 13a) of an exceptionally pious Torah scholar who died as a young man, and his widow wondered why such a righteous scholar would deserve such an untimely death. One day Eliyahu the Prophet visited her and inquired as to the young man’s conduct while she was a *nidah*. She informed him that he refrained entirely from all physical contact and did not as much as think of touching her, but they slept together in the same bed. Eliyahu thereupon declared that the man was indeed deserving of punishment for his violation of the laws of *nidah*, despite the fact that he refrained from physical contact during his wife’s state of impurity. So strict are these laws that even otherwise perfectly righteous men are severely punished for their neglect.

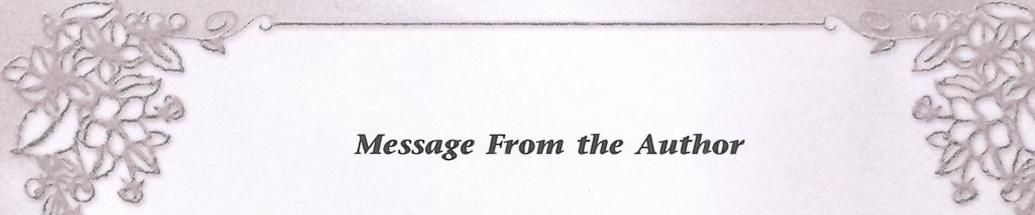
The severity of the *nidah* prohibition gives rise to a certain tension between two conflicting concerns that Halachic authorities must take into account when address-

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ing these laws. On the one hand, of course, the instinctive tendency when dealing with strict laws of this nature is to rule stringently in all situations of doubt so as to avoid any possible transgression. At the same time, however, Judaism has always afforded supreme importance to peaceful relations between husband and wife, and therefore Halachic authorities have always insisted on not rendering a woman a *nidah* unnecessarily. The Talmud (Berachot 4a) tells that King David would declare before God, "All the kings of the east and west sit in honor, in groups, and my hands are soiled from blood, placentas and afterbirths in order to render a woman pure for her husband." Already in the time of King David, Rabbis saw it as their duty to find a Halachic basis for rendering a woman permissible to her husband whenever possible, in order to ensure a happy and healthy marriage, which is the foundation and cornerstone of the Jewish home.

It is precisely this tension that makes the laws of *nidah* so complex. Whereas in other fields of *Halachah* we can easily advise one to act stringently in the interest of guaranteeing proper compliance with the laws, when it comes to *nidah* a Rabbi must take both concerns into account: the strict nature of the prohibition, and the centrality of *shalom bayit* (domestic harmony) in Jewish life.

In light of the particularly complex nature of these *halachot*, it must be emphasized that this work is in no way intended to take the place of Rabbinic consultation; it is meant rather as a guide to the basic requirements and prohibitions relevant to the *nidah* process, and to alert readers to situations that require consulting with a Halachic authority.



Message From the Author

It is my sincere hope and prayer that this volume will help many families in their quest for genuine *taharah*, in the merit of which we will all be deserving of God's "purifying waters" to prepare us for the final redemption, במהרה בימינו, אמן.

Rabbi Shlomo Churba

Laws of Nidah

Introduction

“כשם שהלבנה מתחדשת בכל ראש חודש והכל מתאווין לראותה, כך האשה כשהיא מתחדשת בכל חודש, בעלה מתאווה אליה וחביבה עליו כאשה חדשה”

“Just as the moon renews itself every month, and all are longing to view it, so too, when a woman renews herself each month, her husband is longing for her and she is beloved to him, like a new woman.” (Ohr Zarua)

The Moon Represents Stability, Cyclical Routine, Guidance, Separation, Closeness and Renewal.

Stability. The Jewish woman is compared to the moon. She is the pillar of her home. A woman has the remarkable ability to elevate her marriage and to imbue her home with holiness by observing the laws of *Taharat Hamishpachah* (the laws of family purity). *Taharat Hamishpachah* is so called because these laws bring holiness not only to a woman and her spouse, but to her entire family, thereby permitting the *Shechinah* (G-d's presence) to dwell among them. Through the study of these laws, it is evident how much trust G-d places in the woman and how highly the Torah regards her. The practical observance of this *misvah* is entrusted solely to the Jewish woman. Her word is relied upon absolutely and *halachic* decisions are based upon information she provides. Bringing holiness into the home and into the marriage depends upon the unqualified commitment of the woman. The Torah has placed a great responsibility in her hands, and women are privileged to be the trustees of this fundamental *misvah*. A woman should not

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let this responsibility cause her undue tension and stress. Through the joyous fulfillment of this *misvah* she has the ability to fill her home with tremendous blessing.

Cyclical Routine. A woman's monthly cycle is similar to that of the moon's waxing and waning. The moon seems to move farther away from its partner, the sun, only to come closer to it once again. Its cyclical routine repeats itself month after month. The intimate relationship between a husband and wife is the epitome of holiness and unity. Because this unique bonding is so special, G-d designed a unique plan to preserve this relationship and to achieve the maximum joy and fulfillment that marriage can offer. The laws of *Taharat Hamishpachah* revolve around this intimate relationship between man and wife.

This divinely ordained plan operates in perfect harmony with a woman's emotional, physical and psychological makeup. During the days of the month when a woman has her menstrual period, she is considered a *nidah*. The root of this Hebrew word is *nadad* – *to separate*. While *nidah*, a woman separates from her husband, and physical intimacy is forbidden. As her physical state changes, she prepares herself physically, emotionally and spiritually for the time when she and her husband will unite again. The observance of this *misvah* strengthens the Jewish marriage. Each month, the original love and excitement they shared on the wedding day is renewed.

Even from a purely medical perspective, observing *Taharat Hamishpachah* can be beneficial. Research shows that, generally, a woman's vaginal discharge is mildly acidic and, therefore, antiseptic. In contrast, at the time of her

Laws of Nidah

period, this discharge is alkaline and it takes approximately seven days to regain its normal pH. Thus, during this time, the vagina lacks its natural protection and the risk of infection increases. Furthermore, at the time of menstruation, the uterine lining has been shed and the entire uterine channel resembles an open wound. This leaves it susceptible to the entrance of germs. It takes seven days after the end of the period for the lining to restore its firmness and strength, and thus intimate relations during the time the Torah defines as *nidah* may therefore prove harmful. Finally, a number of medical studies on the incidence of cervical cancer show that it can occur as much as twenty times more frequently among women who don't practice *Taharat Hamishpachah* than among those who do.

"I am G-d who heals you" (Shemot 15:26). G-d has given the Torah's guidelines as a way of life and has promised that fulfilling its commandments will lead to a lifetime of health and prosperity. Nevertheless, we must remember that the reason for observing the *misvot* is not the benefits we will reap from them, but that they are G-d's will.

Guidance. In the dark of night, the moon can be a guiding light, helping people find their destination. Being that the laws of family purity are of a spiritual nature, one needs spiritual guidance in the form of a Rabbi to properly fulfill their requirements. A Rabbi is indispensable for a married couple. Many questions will arise as a couple embarks on the journey of *Taharat Hamishpachah*, and the Rabbi is there to assist and ensure that they reunite as soon as possible. Just as one would not be too self-conscious to reveal private information to their medical practitioner, one should never be too uncomfortable to relay personal facts to a competent,

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sensitive Rabbi. There is no question that is too insignificant or too delicate to bring to his attention. Developing a good rapport with a Rabbi is essential to properly keeping the laws of *Taharat Hamishpachah*.

Separation. The waning of the moon is but a signal that it will soon wax again. At times, taking a step backward helps one better appreciate their spouse, work on the emotional aspect of their relationship, and foster increased affection and appreciation for one another. The Torah's rules provide an opportunity for both spouses to become more aware of the other's natural makeup. During the time that a woman is *nidah* and intimacy is forbidden, different qualities, dimensions and aspects of their relationship which otherwise may never be expressed have an opportunity to flower. A woman should be extra sensitive to her husband at this time, as it is especially difficult for him not to be able to express his feelings through physical actions. The laws of the *harchakot* are designed to help the couple, and they have the power to enhance the entire marriage, particularly the intimate relationship. When kept properly, these laws of separation infuse meaning in their everyday dealings, such as passing an object to one another or sharing one's food.

Renewal. The sighting of the new moon is always exciting, as it is indicative of a new beginning. The new month brings with it new opportunities and feelings of hope. Before a woman can resume intimate relations with her husband, she must immerse herself in the waters of a kosher *mikveh*. Immersion in a *mikveh* is not about hygiene. It is about purity. The waters of the *mikveh* have the power to transform a woman's spiritual status and to sensitize her body to a higher level of holiness. Every month, as a woman emerges

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from the waters of the *mikveh*, she returns to her husband renewed, and is as dear to him as on their wedding day.

Throughout the centuries, wherever Jews have lived, they have constructed *mikvaot*. A kosher *mikveh* is so essential to Jewish life that its construction precedes the building of a synagogue, the purchase of a Torah scroll, or the procurement of educational instruction for the young. One should never delay the performance of a *misvah*; consequently, women should make timely immersion in a *mikveh* a top priority. Living in the modern world, women are faced with employment demands, social obligations, family concerns and, at times, the need to travel. Often it is challenging to juggle all of these commitments together with the spiritual responsibility of *mikveh*. Tremendous blessing is promised to a woman who takes care not to delay her immersion. Her marriage and family life will prosper when this area takes precedence.

Mikveh is a special *misvah* reserved only for women. It is her privilege and she should fulfill this commandment with happiness. It is also a tremendous opportunity for prayer. During this auspicious time when she is cloaked in the waters of the *mikveh*, a woman should seize this powerful occasion and pray with all her heart. Upon arriving home from the *mikveh*, she is like the new moon, presented with bountiful opportunities for a revitalized and invigorated marriage, filled with promise and hope for the future.

Closeness. After preparing physically and emotionally for the days of *taharah*, husband and wife are ready to focus on the *misvah* of *onah* (marital relations), intensifying their connection, strengthening their bond and increasing their

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understanding of one another. Unlike other religions, Judaism teaches that the physical act of intimacy is permeated with sublime *kedushah*. When marital relations are performed in holiness, the *Shechinah* is present. The *Ramban* writes, "the act of union is something holy and pure when performed in the proper manner, at the proper time, and with the proper intentions." This physical and emotional union is the epitome of *kedushah*, provided it is performed within Torah guidelines. By focusing their thoughts on one another exclusively at the time of intimacy, a couple elevates this *misvah* to its highest form and creates an eternal union.

"If a person makes the commandments joyful, G-d will add joy to his life." The key to performing the myriad detailed laws of *Taharat Hamishpachah* with gladness is the recognition of the great privilege that was given to the Jewish woman and the appreciation of this precious gift that has the power to strengthen, invigorate and enliven the Jewish marriage. The meticulous observance of these laws with joy enhances the sanctity of the Jewish home and promotes harmony within its confines. G-d will certainly bless such a home with a full measure of *simchah* that will be perpetuated through many future generations.

אמר רבי חלפתא: אשריה, ואשרי
יולדתה, ואשרי בעלה, ואשרי
משפחתה של כל אשה המשמרת
בנדה. . . . מביאתן לחיי עולם הבא.
(רוקח שי"ח)

**Rabbi Halafta said: Fortunate is
the woman who observes the laws
of Nidah properly, and fortunate
are her husband and family
Bringing them to the everlasting
life of the world to come.**

(Rokeach 318)



Laws of Nidah

Chapter 1

How a Woman Becomes a *Nidah*

A woman becomes a *nidah* anytime she discovers a discharge of blood that originates from her uterus, regardless of whether she is pregnant, nursing or post-menopausal, and regardless of whether or not this occurs at the time of her expected menstrual period. The Hebrew word "*nidah*" (נדה) evolves from the root "n.d.d." (נדד), which means "separate." This status of ritual impurity requires her separation from her husband. Marital relations as well as all physical contact are strictly forbidden. It is therefore imperative that a woman inform her husband as soon as she becomes a *nidah*. This status of *nidah* remains until she follows the prescribed procedures and immerses in a valid *Mikveh*.

Being well acquainted with the laws of *nidah* is essential for every married couple, so that they can ascertain when separation is required. The following are the most common ways a woman becomes a *nidah*; couples are advised to consult with their Rabbi for guidance and assistance:

✧ Menstrual Period

The most common situation that renders a woman a *nidah* is the onset of her menstrual period. A woman should record the date and time of the day when she became aware of her menstrual flow on a Jewish calendar.

How a Woman Becomes a Nidah

✧ ***Hargashah***

Hargashah refers to certain physical sensations a woman may experience:

- ✧ A feeling of the uterus opening within her.
- ✧ A bodily tremble associated with the onset of the flow.
- ✧ A sensation of an internal flow.

It is very unusual nowadays for a woman to experience any of these sensations. A woman who feels she may be experiencing any of the above *hargashot* should consult her Rabbi.

✧ Discovery of a Stain

If a woman finds a blood stain (known as a *ketem*) on her body, clothing, or bedding, without experiencing any sensation, a Rabbi should be consulted.

Among the factors in facilitating the Rabbi's decision are:

- ✧ The color of the stain.
- ✧ Where the stain was found, i.e. on her body, on her clothes-were they white or colored?
- ✧ The prior cleanliness of the material on which the stain was found.
- ✧ The possibility of attributing the stain to external factors (e.g., nosebleed, mosquito bite)
- ✧ The size of the stain

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In order for a stain to render a woman a *nidah*, the stain must be at least the size of a *gris* – a type of bean used in Talmudic times that was approximately the size of an American penny.

The stain must be found on white. If a woman finds a stain on a material of any other color, she does not become a *nidah*. For this reason, women are strongly advised to wear colored undergarments when they are not a *nidah*, in order to avoid complications that arise from the discovery of stains. (A woman must wear specifically white undergarments during the period of the שבועה נקיים.)

It is advisable for women to dispose of toilet paper without looking at it in order to avoid the possibility of discovering a problematic stain. If a woman happens to look at the toilet paper she had used in the restroom and discovers a stain, she must not dispose of it; she should have it examined by a Rabbi who will then determine her status.

✧ Blood Found on a Bedikah Cloth

Whereas stains must generally be the size of a *gris* for a woman to become a *nidah*, the discovery of even the smallest amount of blood on a *bedikah* cloth suffices to render her a *nidah*. Therefore, a woman should not perform internal examinations other than those prescribed unless a Rabbi has instructed her to do so.

✧ Certain Gynecological Examinations

Certain gynecological examinations or procedures may render a woman a *nidah*. A routine gynecological exam in which no instruments are used does not cause a woman to become a *nidah*. When an instrument is

How a Woman Becomes a Nidah

used as part of an exam or procedure, the woman can become a *nidah* under certain circumstances, regardless of whether or not it causes visible bleeding. The patient should inquire as to whether the cervix or uterus has been opened, and about the size of the instrument used. This information should then be discussed with a Rabbi, who will determine her status. A woman does not become a *nidah* as a result of a routine pap smear.

It should be emphasized that the physician may not be relied upon to determine a woman's *halachic* status; a Rabbi must be consulted.

✧ Hymenal Bleeding

A virgin bride becomes a *nidah* immediately after the couple's first marital act. If complete intercourse has occurred, the bride becomes a *nidah*, irrespective of the discovery of hymenal bleeding; if the couple cannot determine whether or not complete intercourse has occurred, a Rabbi should be consulted.

✧ Labor & Childbirth

A woman in labor becomes a *nidah* at the point when the pain and effects of labor incapacitate her, regardless of whether or not any blood is seen. Bleeding renders her a *nidah* at any stage of labor. If a woman's water breaks but no blood appears, she is not considered a *nidah*, but nevertheless a Rabbi should be consulted for guidance.

After childbirth, whether she has a vaginal delivery or a cesarean section, a woman remains a *nidah* until she

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completes the standard *taharah* process. Bleeding generally continues for six weeks after childbirth. A woman may begin the *taharah* process as soon as her bleeding ceases.

A miscarriage likewise renders a woman a *nidah*. If she miscarries within forty days of conception, she may begin the *taharah* process as early as five days after the miscarriage, as long as her bleeding has ceased. If the miscarriage occurs after this point, she waits five days in the case of a male fetus and seven days in the case of a female fetus before performing her *hefsek taharah*.

☒ Through Her Own Admission

A woman's word is trusted completely. Therefore, if a woman says she is a *nidah*, even if it was said in error, a Rabbi must be consulted. Therefore, she must be careful not to say so, unless she is certain of her status.

רבי מאיר אומר: מפני מה אמרה תורה
נדה לשבעה? מפני שרגיל בה וקץ בה.
אמרה תורה, תהא טמאה שבעה ימים
כדי שתהא חביבה על בעלה כשעת
כניסתה לחופה.

(נדה לא:)

**Rabbi Meir said: Why did the Torah
command that a woman be a
Nidah for seven days? Because
otherwise her husband could
become bored and tire of her.
Therefore, the Torah commanded
that she lose her natural state of
purity for seven days. In this way,
she will always be as dear to him
as she was when she entered the
wedding canopy.**

(Nidah 31b)



Laws of Nidah

Chapter 2

The Preliminary Days, The Hefsek Taharah, The Seven Clean Days

There are five steps to the taharah process: The Preliminary Days, the Hefsek Taharah, Seven Clean Days, Preparation, and Immersion in a kosher Mikveh. Every one of these steps must be completed in order to divest oneself of her nidah status.

The Preliminary Days

- ✧ A woman should wait a minimum of five days from the day she becomes a *nidah* before she can begin the *taharah* process.*
- ✧ The day she becomes a *nidah* is counted as the first of the five preliminary days.
- ✧ A day on the Jewish calendar begins at sunset and ends at the next day's sunset. Therefore, even if a woman became aware of her *nidah* status a few minutes before sunset, that day is still considered the first day.
- ✧ If a woman became aware of her *nidah* status within the time period between sunset and nightfall, a Rabbi should be consulted as to when to begin her count.

*Some Rabbinic opinions require her to wait only four days before she begins her seven clean days. However, although there is a clear basis in the Halachah for this more lenient view, our Rabbis have generally encouraged the stricter view.

The Hefsek Taharah

The Hefsek Taharah

- ✧ The *Hefsek Taharah* is the examination that marks the end of the preliminary days; the seven clean days begin the following day. This internal inspection will verify whether or not the bleeding has ceased. A woman can perform the *hefsek taharah*, at earliest, on the fifth day of her preliminary days. It is common for a woman's flow to take more than five days to cease completely. The day she makes her *hefsek taharah* is not counted as one of the seven clean days. Thus, for example, a woman who became a *nidah* on Sunday morning can attempt to perform a *hefsek taharah* as early as Thursday before sunset.

If a couple is experiencing infertility, a Rabbi should be consulted regarding the number of preliminary days.

- ✧ The *hefsek taharah* must be completed before sunset. Ideally, a woman should perform her *hefsek taharah* approximately a half hour before sunset. However, it may be done as early as two hours prior to sunset.
- ✧ If a woman finds it necessary to perform the *hefsek taharah* earlier than this time frame, a Rabbi must be consulted. If a woman was late in making her *hefsek taharah*, she should note the time, and then consult a Rabbi.
- ✧ Sunset varies both daily and according to location. The exact time of sunset can be found on many Jewish calendars.
- ✧ On *Ereb Shabbat*, a woman should preferably make her *hefsek taharah* before candle lighting. If she forgot

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to perform the examination before candle lighting, or if her examinations were unsuccessful, she may conduct a *bedikah* after candle lighting, but she must do so in full compliance with the laws of *Shabbat* (see below), and only until sunset.

The Procedure for the *Hefsek Taharah*

✧ ***Step 1: Washing***

A woman should bathe, shower or just thoroughly rinse the area around and inside the vagina with warm water to remove any residual blood.

After washing, a woman should wait several minutes before proceeding to the next step. If she washes internally with douches and the like, she should preferably wait fifteen minutes. By doing so, any excess water will drain, and the vagina's natural lubrication will return.

When the *hefsek taharah* is performed on *Shabbat*, care must be taken not to violate the *Shabbat* prohibitions. A woman should wash only the minimum area necessary. She must ensure to use only cold water or water that was heated prior to *Shabbat*, and not to use a washcloth. One must also be careful not to rub the area in a manner that will cause hairs to be pulled out.

On days when bathing is forbidden (*Yom Kippur*, *Tishah B'Ab*, and during the first week of mourning), a woman may wash for a *hefsek taharah*, even with warm water, but only the minimum area necessary.

The Hefsek Taharah

✧ **Step 2: The Bedikah**

A *bedikah* is an internal examination that checks for any remaining blood. It is performed with a soft, white, non-synthetic cloth measuring approximately 3x3 inches; these cloths are available at most *Mikvaot*. A woman should examine the cloth to ensure that it has no stains. She should then wrap the cloth around her index finger. While standing, one leg should be lifted onto the edge of the bathtub or toilet seat or she may squat. Her finger should be inserted as far as possible into the vagina, where she then rotates the cloth so that it reaches all the folds and crevices. The examination must be conducted internally; wiping with the cloth as one does with toilet paper does not suffice.

The woman then removes and inspects the cloth, preferably by daylight, to ascertain that no blood is found. If it is not possible to check by daylight, a fluorescent light is sufficient. If a woman finds white, clear, green, blue or pale yellow colors on the cloth, the *bedikah* is considered valid and she proceeds to the next step. Red or black colors render the *bedikah* invalid. All other colors (brown, gold, orange, pink, etc.) are considered questionable. If the *bedikah* is questionable, she may try again to achieve a clean *bedikah* as long as it is completed before sunset. (Women should be advised, however, that excessive inspections may cause vaginal irritation.) Only the last *bedikah* done before sunset will be used to determine her status. If the final *bedikah* is still of a questionable color, it should be brought to a Rabbi to determine whether or not it is acceptable, and she proceeds with

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the *taharah* process while waiting for the Rabbi's decision.

If a woman finds it physically difficult to perform the *bedikah*, she may wet the cloth, and then squeeze it out entirely before performing the *bedikah*. If it is still difficult, she should consult a Rabbi. (On *Shabbat* and *Yom Tob* one may not wet the cloth.)

It is advisable for a woman not to decide by herself that a *bedikah* is unacceptable. It should always be considered questionable until the status of the *bedikah* is confirmed by a Rabbi. Furthermore, couples are urged to avail themselves of the guidance offered by the Rabbis, who are interested in helping to ensure that husbands and wives do not separate unless *halachah* requires that they do so.

□ **Step 3: Moch Dachuk**

After the *bedikah* of the *hefsek taharah* is completed, the *moch Dachuk* is done. A *moch dachuk* is a *bedikah* cloth that is inserted into the vaginal canal just before sunset and left inside until just after nightfall (approximately forty-five minutes). It is preferable to insert the *moch* just before sunset, even if the *hefsek taharah* was done earlier.

On *Shabbat*, a woman may not walk outside with an inserted *moch* in a place where there is no *eiruv*.

The *moch dachuk* should be removed immediately after nightfall. The cloth should be checked under a good fluorescent light. If the *moch dachuk* is of a questionable color, it should be put away in a safe

The Seven Clean Days

place until morning, and should then be shown to a Rabbi.

Women who experience discomfort during this process, such as after childbirth, should consult a Rabbi for guidance.

In a case where the *bedikah* of the *hefsek taharah* is questionable, it is advisable to rotate the *moch*, as then it may be used as the *hefsek taharah*.

As soon as the *hefsek taharah* process has been completed, a woman should change into clean, white undergarments. Throughout the subsequent period of the seven clean days, she must wear white undergarments and inspect them daily.

The Seven Clean Days

The morning after a successful *hefsek taharah* is done, a woman begins counting her seven clean days. Thus, for example, if a woman performed her *hefsek taharah* before sunset on Wednesday, Thursday is the first of the seven clean days and she would immerse in the *mikveh* on the night following the seventh day, Wednesday night of the next week.

A Woman's Requirements During the Seven Clean Days

- ✧ During these seven clean days, a woman wears clean, white underwear, which should be checked daily for any unusual color or staining. If the color or stain is

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questionable, it should be shown to a Rabbi. Some women have a custom to sleep on a white sheet throughout the seven clean days.

- ✧ Every morning upon arising and every afternoon before sunset, she must do a *bedikah*. These *bedikot* are done in the same manner as the *hefsek taharah* examination, except that a woman should not wash the area before inserting the cloth and a *moch dachuk* is not done. The *bedikot* should preferably be done before showering.
- ✧ Each *bedikah* that a woman does is a *misvah*. If she forgot to do a *bedikah* on days two through six of the seven clean days, she should continue her count. If both *bedikot* were forgotten on either the first or seventh day, it can invalidate the *taharah* process and a Rabbi must therefore be consulted. If a woman feels she is unable to perform all fourteen *bedikot*, she should consult a Rabbi for guidance.

Constant Awareness of the Seven Clean Days

- ✧ A woman is not required to verbally count the seven clean days. However, a woman must be aware of the fact that she is counting seven clean days. If a woman stops her counting for any reason (questionable *bedikah*, husband will be away, etc.) and then wishes to resume her count, she must consult a Rabbi. Therefore, if a woman finds a stain on a *bedikah* cloth or on her garment which seems unacceptable, she should not decide definitively that the *shivah nekiyim* have been interrupted; rather, she should consider the pos-

The Seven Clean Days

sibility that the *bedikah* may be acceptable until the Rabbi has confirmed the status of the *bedikah*.

Discovery of a Stain During the Seven Clean Days

- ✧ If a woman discovers a questionable color on a *bedikah* cloth or a stain on her undergarments or linen during this period, it should be shown to a Rabbi.
- ✧ If the Rabbi determines that the spot or stain is indeed blood that would render her a *nidah*, she must begin the entire process anew by performing a new *hefsek taharah* and *moch* as soon as she is able. (She is not required to begin the five preliminary days again.) The seven clean days begin the day following the new *hefsek taharah*.
- ✧ If a woman finds a stain or has a questionable *bedikah* during the seven clean days and cannot get an immediate reply from the Rabbi, she should continue counting and performing *bedikot*. When performing the afternoon *bedikah*, she should have in mind that should the Rabbi determine that the *bedikah* or stain was invalid, this examination should serve as a new *hefsek taharah*. If this turns out to be the case, then the following day's examination constitutes the first *bedikah* of the new period of seven clean days.



אמר דוד לפני הקב"ה: רבונו של עולם,
לא חסיד אני שכל מלכי מזרח ומערב
יושבים אגודות אגודות בכבודם, ואני
ידי מלזמלכות בדם (ובשפיר ובשליא)
כדי לטהר אשה לבעלה.

(ברכות ד.)

**King David said to the Master of
the Universe: Am I not a righteous
person? The Kings of the East and
West sit together in all their glory,
while my hands are stained by
blood to declare a woman pure
and permissible to her husband.**

(Berachot 4a)

Laws of Nidah

Chapter 3

Asking Halachic Inquiries

Speaking to a Rabbi about private and personal matters may be uncomfortable for a woman. In order to accommodate these sensitivities, many Rabbanim allow women to leave problematic bedikah cloths marked with an identifying code in their mailbox. The Rabbi can then be called for an answer. Alternatively, the woman can leave her phone number on the envelope for the Rabbi to call her. It is understandable that a woman is hesitant to show a soiled garment to a Rabbi. However, one must bear in mind that a Rabbi is no less a professional than a physician and treats these matters sensitively and discreetly. Some women may feel uncomfortable divulging personal information to a community member. However, a Rabbi has many other matters on his mind. He usually does not, nor wishes to, remember other people's personal matters. In addition, a Rabbi is one's trusted Torah authority. Even if one's halachic inquiry requires revealing very intimate information, the Rabbi will protect one's dignity and privacy zealously.

A woman should never feel hesitant or reluctant to ask a question for fear of disturbing the Rabbi or of sounding ignorant. A Rabbi who deals with *nidah* questions expects to be called and consulted. The laws of *nidah* are complex and it is understandable that one may ask the Rabbi a seemingly simple question or that one may ask the same question more than once. It is far better to ask than to err.

Asking Halachic Inquiries

Guidelines Regarding Asking Halachic Inquiries

It is useful at this point to note several guidelines concerning asking halachic inquiries in general and *bedikot* and *ketamim* in particular.

- ✧ Whenever one has a questionable *bedikah* cloth or *ketem*, it should be stored properly. A *bedikah* cloth should not be placed on an unclean surface or on a surface where dirt particles may settle on it. It should not be placed, when damp, on a tissue or in an envelope since it may adhere to the surface of the tissue or envelope. It should not be placed in a closed plastic bag since this may cause the color to change unnaturally. Preferably, it should be placed on a clean surface to dry and then placed in an open plastic bag or envelope.
- ✧ *Bedikot* should not be stored for many days. They should be shown to a Rabbi the same day or the next day, if possible. One should not save the *bedikot* of several days to show all at once since stains may change colors over the course of several days.
- ✧ *Bedikot* should be clearly marked, identifying them as a *hefsek taharah*, *moch dachuk*, or a simple *bedikah*. Each *bedikah* should be marked according to the day and time of day it was performed (i.e., a.m., p.m. or Day 1, Day 2). The marking may be done on the corner of the cloth itself or on the envelope. It is useful to prepare two marked envelopes for the Shabbat *bedikot* since one cannot mark the cloths on Shabbat.

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- ✧ When a garment soiled with a *ketem* must be shown to a Rabbi, one can minimize the discomfort by folding the garment in a manner so that the stained section is immediately visible. The garment can then be placed in an unsealed, small plastic (sandwich) bag to be shown to the Rabbi.
- ✧ If the questionable stain on a *bedikah* cloth is not readily apparent, it should be brought to the attention of the Rabbi. If the spot is very small and difficult to locate, it should either be marked with an arrow, have a circle drawn around it, preferably with a blue or green pen, or have a stick-pin placed near the questionable spot. Occasionally, a questionable spot may be on the outer edges, the handle or even the opposite side of the cloth. This should be brought to the attention of the Rabbi. If the *bedikah* cloth was not checked well before use, the Rabbi should be informed. While this usually has no bearing on the halachic inquiry, there are times when it may be important for the Rabbi to know.
- ✧ The Rabbi should be informed whether
 - a) the cloth being shown is a *hefsek taharah* or a *moch dachuk*; otherwise, he may assume that it is a *bedikah* of the *shivah nekiyim*. A Rabbi judges a *hefsek taharah* and a *moch dachuk* with stricter standards than he does other *bedikot*.
 - b) A woman should also inform the Rabbi if the *bedikah* is from the day of, or the days preceding, her expected period. At such times there is a considerable chance that a stain may actually mark the beginning

Asking Halachic Inquiries

of her expected period; while the color may be acceptable, or the *ketem* less than the required size, a stain at these times may signal an imminent flow.

- ✧ The Rabbi should be informed if the woman felt a *hargashah* (a sensation of an internal flow) before she did the *bedikah* or found the *ketem*. Such a *bedikah* or *ketem* is judged more strictly. Similarly, the Rabbi should be notified if the *ketem* was found after marital relations.
- ✧ If there is reason to believe that the stain on the cloth or on her garment came from another source (e.g., she has hemorrhoids, she has a vaginal or urinary-tract infection or irritation, she had undergone a gynecological examination or she is using vaginal suppositories), the Rabbi should be informed. One should never attribute a stain to another source without consulting a Rabbi.
- ✧ A Rabbi should be informed if the halachic inquiry is from a bride before her wedding, a bride recently married, or from a pregnant, post-partum or nursing woman. One should inform the Rabbi if the woman recently underwent a gynecological procedure.
- ✧ A woman who is about to undergo a gynecological procedure should consult a Rabbi beforehand regarding the scheduling of the procedure and how to avoid becoming a *nidah*.
- ✧ A woman who has had unusual difficulty producing a clean *hefsek taharah*, or who often finds stains during her *shivah nekiyim*, should inform her Rabbi.

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A woman who has a vaginal irritation should also notify the Rabbi when she shows him her *bedikah* cloth. A Rabbi may recommend that the woman omit the *moch dachuk* or minimize the number of *bedikot* done during the *shivah nekiyim*. He may instruct a woman to do her *bedikot* in a different manner. One should never decide upon these questions without consulting a Rabbi.

- ✧ A woman undergoing fertility treatment should inform the Rabbi. It is imperative that the taharah process be completed before her ovulation. A Rabbi may rely on more lenient opinions to facilitate a timely *tebillah*.
- ✧ All questionable *bedikot* and *ketamim* should preferably be shown to the Rabbi by day.
- ✧ Once a Rabbi rules that a *bedikah* cloth is unacceptable, one may not show it to another Rabbi unless the second Rabbi is informed of the decision of the first Rabbi. It is generally not a good practice to ask for second opinions. One should present a halachic inquiry to a Rabbi in whom one has confidence and follow his ruling.



אם אתה נזהר היטב בז' ימי הנדות . . .
אתה זוכה . . . לבנים טובים, טהורים,
ידידים, יחידים בדור.

(אור זרוע)

**If you are careful during the seven
days of Nidah . . . you will merit
children who are good, pure,
friendly and unique within their
generation.**

(Or Zarua)

Laws of Nidah

Chapter 4

***Harchakot* — Separations between Husband and Wife**

From the moment a woman becomes a *nidah* until her immersion in a *mikveh*, it is forbidden for the couple to engage in physical intimacy or to act in a manner that might lead to physical contact or arouse attraction. The *harchakot*, or “measures of separation,” define the way a husband and wife relate to one another during this period.

Physical Contact

- ✧ A couple may not touch one another directly or even indirectly, such as by touching the clothing worn by one another.
- ✧ They may not hand an object to one another, regardless of its length and even in an unusual manner; they may transfer an object or child only by setting it down for the other to pick up. Some Rabbinic authorities permit the child to be handed over, if the child reaches out and lifts himself toward the other parent.
- ✧ According to some Rabbinic authorities it is preferable that a couple not sit together on any surface that rocks, moves or does not stand firmly, since they will likely feel each other’s movements. They may sit together on such a surface if there is a large object or

Harchakot — Separations

person in between them. Thus, they may not sit together on a couch with a soft single cushion, unless they are separated by a large object or another individual.

Intimacy

- ✧ Since a husband and wife may not engage in any intimate contact during this period, they must avoid speaking with one another in a way that could arouse strong feelings of affection.
- ✧ A couple must avoid discussing intimate matters, other than those relating to a *halachic* issue.
- ✧ A husband may not gaze at any part of his wife's body that is normally covered.
- ✧ It is preferable that a husband not listen to his wife sing.
- ✧ It is preferable that a husband not intentionally smell his wife's perfume.
- ✧ A husband may give his wife a gift when she is a *nidah*.

Traveling

- ✧ If a husband and wife plan to take a vacation while she is a *nidah*, they should consult a Rabbi for guidance as to how they should conduct themselves during the trip.

In the Bedroom

- ✧ A husband and wife must sleep on two separate, completely detached beds. They may not sleep together on

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a large double bed that does not separate into two beds, even if there is no other bed available, such as in a hotel room. The beds should not touch one another at all, and should be separated by an empty space. Preferably, they should be situated far enough from each other that husband and wife will not touch one another if they out stretch their hands while sleeping. When the beds are not being used, such as during the day, the beds may be moved together.

- ✧ A husband may not sit or lie on his wife's bed when she is a *nidah*, even if she is not present, unless she is out of town. A wife, however, may sit on her husband's bed in his presence, and when he is out of the room, she may even lie on his bed.
- ✧ A husband and wife may not prepare one another's bed for sleeping in the other's presence.

Mealtime

- ✧ When eating together at the same table a husband and wife must make an obvious deviation from the norm to remind the couple of her *nidah* status. (This applies both to eating quick snacks and to sitting down for a full meal.) Some of the options available are:
 1. A *heker*, a noticeable object not necessary for the meal, is placed between their plates.
 2. The husband and wife change their seating positions.
 3. Either one or both uses a placemat provided they are not usually used.

Harchakot — Separations

4. Guests or other family members are present at the meal, preferably sitting between them.

- ✧ The husband and wife may not eat directly from the same dish even if the above conditions are met; they must therefore take food from the serving dish onto their individual plates. This prohibition does not apply to serving dishes of large, dry food items; for example, the husband and wife may take rolls or bagels from the same bread basket and eat them without using individual plates. Likewise, they may take whole fruit — such as apples, oranges or bananas — from a fruit basket and eat it directly. It is also permissible for a couple to share condiments, such as a salt shaker, stick of butter, and bottle of ketchup, etc.
- ✧ A husband may not eat or drink his wife's leftovers. This does not apply if a third party has already partaken from her leftovers, if she has left the room, or if the food or drink was transferred to a different dish. In all of these instances, the husband may eat or drink his wife's leftovers.
- ✧ If a husband begins eating food or drinking a beverage without knowing that it is his wife's leftovers, she need not inform him, and she may allow him to continue.
- ✧ A wife may eat or drink from her husband's leftovers, provided he has finished eating.
- ✧ A couple may not serve or pour for one another unless he/she does so in an unusual manner, such as with his/her left hand, or by placing the dish or cup not directly in front of the other.

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- ✧ A couple may not pour wine for one another when she is a *nidah*. A husband may not send a cup of wine to his wife. If he did send it to her, she may not drink it. A wife may drink from her husband's *kiddush* cup on *Shabbat*, provided that he first places it down on the table, and does not specifically designate it for her. A woman may send her husband wine as long as she does not place it directly before him.

Washing and Bathing

- ✧ A couple may not pour water over any part of the other's body.
- ✧ A husband and wife may prepare the water for one another's bath or shower, only not in his or her presence.
- ✧ A couple may prepare the water for the morning hand washing for one another.

If a Spouse is Ill

- ✧ All the *harchakot* must be observed even if one spouse takes ill and the other is caring for him/her. In such situations, a Rabbi should be consulted for guidance.



תהא האשה צנועה בטבילתה . . . וכן
תהא צנועה בכל מעשייה, כי בזכות
הצניעות בניה כשרים וצדיקים.

(אגרת התשובה לרבינו יונה)

A woman should be modest in her immersion in the mikveh. She should also be modest in all her actions, because in the merit of her tzniot (modesty) her sons will be righteous.

(Iggeret Hateshubah l'Rabbenu Yona)

Laws of Nidah

Chapter 5

Tebillah – Immersion

Once a woman completes the process of *hefsek taharah* and the seven clean days, she must prepare herself for *tebillah* – immersion in a *mikveh*.

The Proper Time for Immersion

- ✧ A woman may not immerse during the daytime hours; *tebillah* must take place on the night following the seventh of the seven clean days, after nightfall. Thus, a woman who did her *hefsek taharah* on Thursday before sunset immerses the following Thursday night.
- ✧ It is very important for a woman to immerse on time and every effort should be made to immerse at the first opportunity allowed for by *halachah*. A woman may never delay immersion without consulting a Rabbi. A husband should likewise endeavor to arrange his travel plans so that he will be home on the first night when his wife can perform *tebillah*.
- ✧ A woman may immerse on every night of the year, except for the nights of *Tishah B'Ab*, *Yom Kippur*, and during the first week of mourning.
- ✧ If a woman was scheduled to immerse before Friday

***Tebillah* — Immersion**

but, for whatever reason, delayed the *tebillah* until Friday night, she may immerse on Friday night.

***Hafifah* — Preparation for Immersion**

Preparation for *tebillah*, a process known as *hafifah*, entails thoroughly cleansing one's entire body and carefully checking for *hasisot* — substances attached to the body that would disrupt the direct contact between the body and the water, and hence invalidate the *tebillah*. Immersion is valid only when the entire body, including one's hair, is completely covered by the waters of the *mikveh*, without any foreign matter attached to or covering the body.

Customs on the Day of Immersion

- ✧ It is customary for a woman to refrain from eating meat on the day of immersion to avoid the risk of meat particles becoming lodged in her teeth. If, however, the day of *tebillah* occurs on *Shabbat* or a festival, she may eat meat and then clean her teeth with particular care and attention.
- ✧ A woman should refrain from kneading dough on the day of her immersion. If, however, she must immerse on Friday night, and she wishes to make bread in honor of *Shabbat*, she may, provided that she takes extra care to wash herself thoroughly afterward.
- ✧ If her hair has to be cut, it should not be done on the day of immersion. Waxing should not be done on the day of immersion.

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- ❖ It is advisable to avoid working with sticky or oily substances (e.g., glitter, ointments, glue, etc.).
- ❖ A woman should try not to wear eye makeup, especially mascara.
- ❖ A woman should not wear a chenille snood.
- ❖ It is customary for a woman to give charity and to say an extra prayer before immersion.

The Proper Time for *Hafifah*

- ❖ A woman should begin her preparations on the seventh day of the seven clean days.
- ❖ Ideally, she should begin her preparations shortly before sunset and continue until after nightfall, at which time the immersion will take place.
- ❖ If a woman's schedule does not allow her to begin the preparations before sunset, she should do one part of the essential preparations during the day (e.g. washing and combing the hair, or cleaning and cutting the nails) and complete the rest of the preparations before immersion.
- ❖ If she is unable to do an essential part of the preparations before sunset, a woman must set aside sufficient time to complete her preparations in an unhurried, relaxed manner. (She should still try to do a small part of the preparation before sunset.)

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The *Hafifah* Procedure

Most women find that the entire *hafifah* process, including the immersion, takes approximately one hour. Preparation for immersion consists of four parts:

- ✿ Bathing
- ✿ Rinsing the Body
- ✿ Combing all Body Hair
- ✿ A Thorough Check of the Body

Bathing

A woman must thoroughly clean herself to ensure the absence of *hasisot*. She should allow herself sufficient time to do a thorough bathing with warm water and soap in order to remove any stains or dirt that can interfere with her immersion.

- ✧ A woman must remove all jewelry, bandages, hairpins etc.
- ✧ All makeup, cream and ointments should be removed.
- ✧ All parts of the body must be washed thoroughly, with careful attention to crevices: neck, underarms, under breasts, navel, anal and vaginal openings, elbows and knees and in-between the toes.
- ✧ Soap and conditioners that tend to leave some substance on the body or tangle the hair may not be used during the *hafifah* process.
- ✧ Fingernails and toenails should be cut until the nail bed, and all dirt, nail polish and false nails should be removed.

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- ✧ A woman should wash her eyes, and remove any discharge from the corners.
- ✧ The ears and nose should be cleaned without penetrating deeply. Earring holes can be cleaned with the post of an earring. The woman should blow her nose and remove any visible discharge.
- ✧ The teeth should be brushed thoroughly with a toothbrush to remove all food particles from in between the teeth. If she flosses regularly such that there is no concern that floss will get caught in her teeth, she should use dental floss to clean between the teeth. Only a Glide-like brand of floss should be used, as others can tear and cause *halachic* problems. Biteplates and false teeth must be removed before immersion.
- ✧ The woman must undo all coils, curls and braids in her hair and thoroughly wash it with warm water and shampoo. Cold water may not be used when washing one's hair before *tebillah*. The hair should be carefully combed before it dries to ensure that no hairs are tangled or stuck to one another. Hair elsewhere on the body should likewise be washed and combed before immersion. Some women have the custom of removing all pubic hair in preparation for *tebillah*. Women with such a tradition should observe this custom; otherwise, pubic hair should be washed and combed.
- ✧ Eyeglasses and contact lenses should be removed before immersion.
- ✧ A woman should relieve herself, when necessary, before immersion.

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Rinsing

A woman is required to rinse off her body by showering.

Combing

All body hair should be combed, after rinsing, while still wet.

Checking

The entire body should be checked visually. Places that cannot be seen should be checked by touch to ensure that there are no *hasisot*.

Although it is customary for all *hafifah* preparations to be done in a *mikveh*, a woman may prepare at home and then go to the *mikveh* to immerse. In such a case, she should *rinse*, *comb*, and *check* herself once again at the *mikveh*.

A woman should take care not to engage in any activity that may undermine her preparations. She should not eat between the preparation and the immersion. In a case of necessity, a Rabbi should be consulted. Drinking water is permitted.

Common *Hasisot*:

- ✧ If her hair is entirely dyed, the dye may remain in the hair during *tebillah*.
- ✧ A scab should be soaked in warm water and removed if possible, (meaning, it will not bleed or hurt upon removal).

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- ✧ Hanging skin or calluses that the woman would ordinarily try to remove should be removed before immersion.
- ✧ Moist pus on one's skin need not be removed. Dried pus should be softened with water.
- ✧ Dried blood must be gently washed off.
- ✧ Closed blisters, pimples, corns or warts are not *hasisot*.
- ✧ A Rabbi should be consulted regarding the following situations: splinters, casts, stitches, lice, temporary dental fillings, braces on the teeth, loose teeth, false teeth, artificial nails, etc.

Tebillah on Friday Night or a Festival

- ✧ If the seventh of the seven clean days falls on Friday or on *Ereb Yom Tob*, a woman may immerse on the night of *Shabbat* or *Yom Tob*. The preparations, however, may not be performed on *Shabbat* or *Yom Tob*; she must therefore complete all of her preparations (*bathing, rinsing, combing* and *checking*) before candle lighting.
- ✧ If a woman does her preparations in the *mikveh* on Friday afternoon, and she cannot return home before the *tebillah* to light candles, she should either have her husband light candles in her stead, or light early (not before *Pelag HaMinhah*) without accepting upon herself the onset of *Shabbat* until the proper time.
- ✧ Upon arrival at the *mikveh*, a woman should reexamine her body. If violating a *Shabbat* or *Yom Tob* prohibition is necessary in order to properly immerse (e.g.

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cutting one's nail), one may enlist the assistance of a non-Jew.

- ✧ She should be careful not to violate any *Shabbat* or *Yom Tob* prohibitions (e.g. squeezing wet hair).

Tebillah on Saturday Night

- ✧ If the *Tebillah* takes place on Saturday night or the night following a festival, a woman should make all of her preparations during the afternoon hours on Friday or the day preceding the festival, before candle lighting.
- ✧ On the night of her immersion, she should brush her teeth, clean her ears, nose and private parts, *rinse* with soap and shampoo, *comb* and *check* herself carefully.
- ✧ If she did not make her preparations in advance, she may bathe and perform all the required preparations on the night of *tebillah*; however, sufficient time must be set aside for an unhurried, relaxed *hafifah*.

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Mosa'e Yom Kippur or Mosa'e Tishah B'Ab

If a woman's *tebillah* is scheduled for the night following the fast of *Yom Kippur/Tishah B'Ab*, she should follow a similar procedure to that required when *tebillah* is performed on Saturday night. The preparations can be done on *Ereb Yom Kippur/Tishah B'Ab* (she may even eat the *Ereb Yom Kippur Seudah/ Seudah Hamafseket* after performing the *hafifah*). After the fast she brushes her teeth, thoroughly rinses, combs and reexamines her body. However, if she did not do her preparations on *Ereb Yom Kippur/ Tishah B'Ab*, she can do the entire *hafifah* on *Mosa'e Yom Kippur/ Tishah B'Ab*.

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Tebillah on the Second Night of Yom Tob

- ⌘ If a woman must immerse on the second night of *Yom Tob*, she makes all of her preparations before candle lighting on the afternoon prior to *Yom Tob*. From that point until her immersion she should be careful to avoid contact with any substance that might stick to or stain her body. Just prior to the *tebillah*, she can wash each part of her body separately with her hands and gently run her fingers through her hair.
- ⌘ In all of these cases, she must remember to continue to perform the required *bedikot* of the seven clean days, particularly the final *bedikah*, before sunset on the seventh day.
- ⌘ When more than two days would separate the preparations from the immersion such as if *Yom Tob* is Thursday and Friday and *Tebillah* is scheduled for Saturday night), there is no advantage to performing the *hafifah* preparations on *Ereb Yom Tob*. Therefore, according to most *Poskim* the *hafifah* is performed on *Mosa'e Yom Tob*.

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Prayer Before Immersion

May it be the will before You that You will have Your *Shechinah* rest among me and my husband, and that You designate upon us Your sacred Name, *Yod-Kei*, and that you bring within our hearts a spirit of purity and sanctity, and keep all bad ideas and thoughts distant from us. And grant us a pure, pristine soul, between me and my husband, that neither of us shall cast our eyes upon anyone in the world, other than my eyes upon my husband and my husband's eyes upon me. It shall be in my eyes as if there is no better, finer, and charming person than my husband, as it is written, "Take heed, O daughter, see and lend your ear, forget your people and your father's home"; and it says, "for he is your master; bow to him." Likewise, it shall be in my husband's eyes as if there is no nicer, charming and worthy woman in the world than me, and all his thoughts shall be of me and not of any other creature in the world, as it says, "You are more beautiful than all people; charm is cast upon your lips"; and it says, "The king shall desire your beauty"; and it says, "Therefore, a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife."

And may it be the will before You, Hashem, God, that our marriage shall turn out well, and be a worthy marriage of love and camaraderie, peace and friendship; a valid marriage in accordance with the law of Moshe and Jewish law; a worthy marriage of fear of Heaven and fear of sin; a marriage of worthy, righteous, faultless, upright children; a marriage of living offspring; a marriage of blessing, as it is written, "Hashem — He shall bless our males, He shall bless the House of Israel"; a marriage in which I will see the fulfill-

תפילה קודם הטבילה

יהי רצון מלפניך, שתישרה שכונתך ביני ובין בעלי, ותיחד עלינו שמך הקדוש יו"ד ה"א, ותכניס בלבנו רוח טהרה וקדושה, ותרחיק ממנו כל מחשבות והרהורים רעים. ותתן לנו נפש זכה וקרה בני ובין בעלי, ולא נתן עינינו אנהנו שנינו בשום אדם בעולם, כי אם עיני כבעלי ועיני בעלי פי, ויהיה בעיני כאלו אין אדם טוב ויפה ובעל חן בעולם כמו בעלי, כדבר שנאמר, שמעי בת וראי והטי אזנה ושכחי עמך ובית אביך. ונאמר, כי הוא ארניך והשתחוי לו. וכן יהיה בעיני בעלי, כאלו אין אשה יפה ובעלת חן והגונה בעולם כמותי, ויהיו כל מחשבותיו פי ולא בשום בריה אחרת בעולם, כדבר שנאמר, יפיפית מבני אדם הוצק חן בשפתותיך. ונאמר, ויתאו המלך יפיה. ונאמר, על פן יעזב איש את אביו ואת אמו ודבק באשתו.

ויהי רצון מלפניך, יי האלהים, שיהיה זונגנו עולה יפה. זונג הגון של אהבה ואהבה, שלום ורעות, זונג כשר בדת משה ויהודית, זונג הגון של יראת שמים ויראת חטא, זונג של בנים הגונים צדיקים ותמימים וישרים, זונג של זרע של קימא. זונג של ברכה, כדבר שנאמר, יי זכרנו יברה, יברך את בית ישראל. זונג שיקים פי הדבר

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ment of that which is said, “Your wife, like a fruitful vine inside your house, your children like olive saplings around your table”; a marriage in which my husband shall rejoice in me more so than all other good he has in the world, as it says, “A house and fortune are inherited from fathers; but a wise woman is from Hashem”; a marriage in which there will never be between me and my husband anger or rage, envy or contention — only love and camaraderie, peace and friendship, humility, modesty and patience; a marriage of love of charity and kindness and favors for people; a marriage of happy, good, living offspring, that there shall be neither in him nor in even one of his organs any damage or deficiency, no wound and no affliction, no disease, malady, pain, discomfort, weakness or failure, and he shall lack no goodness his entire life; a marriage in which You will infuse within us — within our souls, our spirits, our beings and our bodies — sanctity and purity in thought, speech and deed like upstanding Jews; a valid marriage in accordance with the laws of the sacred people of Israel; a marriage of success and blessing — blessings from the heavens above, blessings of the deep crouching below, blessings of the breasts and womb; a marriage of offspring that is sacred and pure, good and beautiful, proper and becoming.

And so, for the sake of unifying *Kudsha Berich Hu* and His *Shechinah*, with awe, trembling and fear, to unite the Name *Yod-Kei* with the Name *Vav-Kei*, I am now ready and prepared to perform immersion in accordance with the law of Moshe and Israel. May it be the will before You, Hashem our God, that You shall purify us and sanctify us with Your

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שְׁנַאֲמַר, אֲשֶׁתָּךְ כְּגִפֵּן פְּרִיָּה בְּיַרְכְּתֵי בֵּיתְךָ, כְּנִיָּךְ בְּשֵׁתְלֵי זֵיתִים סָבִיב לְשִׁלְחָנְךָ. וְזוּג אֲשִׁיחֶיָּה שְׁמַח בִּי בַעֲלֵי יוֹתֵר מִכָּל הַטּוֹבוֹת שֵׁיִשׁ לוֹ בְּעוֹלָם, כְּדָבָר שְׁנַאֲמַר, בֵּית וְהוֹן נִחַלַת אֲבוֹת וּמִי אִשָּׁה מִשְׁפָּלָת. וְזוּג אֲשֶׁלָּא יִהְיֶה בִּינֵי וּבֵן בַּעֲלֵי לְעוֹלָם, לֹא פַעַם וְלֹא רִגְזוֹ, וְלֹא קִנְיָאָה וְלֹא תַחְרוּת, אֲלֹא אֲהַבָּה וְאַחֲוָה שְׁלוֹם וְרַעוּת, וְעֲנוּה וְרוּחַ נְמוּכָה וְסִבְלָנוּת. וְזוּג אֲשֶׁל אֲהַבַת צְדָקָה וּגְמִילוּת חֲסָדִים וְעֲשִׂית טוֹבָה לְבָרִיּוֹת. וְזוּג אֲשֶׁל זְרַע אֲשֶׁל קִיָּמָה בְּרִיא וְטוֹב, אֲשֶׁלָּא יִהְיֶה בּוֹ וְלֹא בְּשׁוֹם אֶחָד מֵאַיְכָרָיו, שׁוֹם נְזֻק וְלֹא חֲסָרוֹן, לֹא פְּנַע וְלֹא גִנַּע וְלֹא מַחֲלָה וְלֹא מַדּוּהָ וְלֹא כָּאֵב וְלֹא צַעַר וְלֹא רַפְיוֹן וְלֹא פְּשָׁלוֹן, וְלֹא יַחְסַר טוֹב כָּל יְמֵי חַיָּיו. וְזוּג אֲשֶׁתְּמִשֵׁיךָ עֲלִינוּ בְּנִשְׁמַתְנוּ וְרוּחַנוּ וְנַפְשָׁנוּ וְגוֹפְנוּ, קִדְשָׁה וְטָהָרָה, בְּמַחְשָׁבָה בְּדַבּוּר וּבְמַעֲשָׂה, בִּיהוּדִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל. וְזוּג כְּאִשְׁרָאֵל קְדוֹשִׁים. וְזוּג אֲשֶׁל תְּצַלְחָה וּבְרָכָה, בְּרַכַת שְׁמַיִם מֵעַל, בְּרַכַת תְּהוֹם רַבְּצַת תַּחַת, בְּרַכַת שְׂדֵים וְרַחֵם. וְזוּג אֲשֶׁל זְרַע קְדוֹשׁ וְטָהוֹר, טוֹב וְיָפֵה, מְתַקֵּן וּמְקַבֵּל.

וּבְכֵן, לְשֵׁם יְחִוּד קְדִישָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא וְשְׂכִינְתֵיהּ, בְּדַחֲלוֹ וּרְחִימוֹ, לְיַחְדָּא שְׁם יו"ד ה"א בְּשֵׁם וְא"ו ה"א, הַרְיֵנִי מוֹכֶנֶת וּמְזַמְנַת לַעֲשׂוֹת טְבִילָה בְּדַת מוֹשֶׁה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל. יְהִי רַצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְיָ אֱלֹהִים, שֶׁתְּטַהְרֵנוּ וְתַקְדְּשֵׁנוּ בְּקְדוּשְׁתְּךָ,

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sanctity, and bestow upon us from You a spirit of purity and sanctity, and be accepting of us and our deeds, and grant us the privilege of performing Your will always, all our lives, and bless us from Your blessings, for You are the source of blessings, blessed in every way. Blessed is Hashem forever, *Amen* and *Amen*!

Prayer for the Husband

May it be the will before You, Hashem our God and God of our forefathers, the God of Avraham, the God of Yitzhak and the God of Yaakov, that You shall always protect, guard and shield my husband from all harm, from all evil and from all illness. Grant him a life of goodness, a long life, a life of wealth and honor; and grant him living offspring and worthy, pious children. Implant within us at all times love and camaraderie, peace and friendship, and firmly establish love for me in my husband's heart, so that he thinks of no other woman in the world than me. And implant within our hearts the love and fear of You, so that we perform Your will and serve You wholeheartedly like upstanding Jews and perform charity and kindness with Your people, Israel. Grant my husband a complete blessing, with abundant strength and peace, as it is written: "May Hashem bless you and protect you; may Hashem shine His face upon you and be gracious to you; may Hashem show you favor and grant you peace." And it says, "Hashem shall protect him, He will sustain him, he will be praised in the land." *Amen*, so may it be His will.

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וְתִשְׁפִיעַ עָלֵינוּ רוּחַ טְהוֹרָה וְקַדְשָׁה מֵאַתָּה, וְתִתְרַצֶּה בָּנוּ
וּבְמַעֲשֵׂינֵנוּ, וְתִזְכְּנוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנְךָ תָּמִיד כָּל יְמֵי חַיֵּינוּ,
וְתִבְרַךְ אֹתָנוּ מִבְּרֻכוֹתֶיךָ, כִּי אַתָּה הוּא מְקוֹר הַבְּרֻכּוֹת,
כְּרוּךְ וּמְבֻרָךְ תָּמִיד, כְּרוּךְ יי לְעוֹלָם אָמֵן וְאָמֵן.

תפילה על הבעל

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵנוּ, אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵהֶם
אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, שֶׁתִּשְׁמֹר וְתִתְנַצֵּר וְתִשְׁמַר תָּמִיד
אֶת בְּעָלִי, מִכָּל נֶזֶק וּמִכָּל רָע וּמִכָּל חָלִי. וְתִתֵּן לִּי חַיִּים
טוֹבִים, חַיִּים אָרְכִים, חַיִּים שְׁלֵם עוֹשֵׁר וְכָבוֹד. וְתִתֵּן לָנוּ זְרַע
שָׁלֵם קַיָּמָא וּבָנִים הַגּוֹנִים וְצַדִּיקִים. וְתִטַּע בֵּינֵינוּ תָּמִיד
אַהֲבָה וְאַחֻוּהַ שְׁלֹום וְרַעוּת, וְתִקַּע אַהֲבָתִי בְּלִבְ בְּעָלִי,
שֶׁלֹּא יִחְשַׁב בְּשׂוּם אִשָּׁה בְּעוֹלָם זוּלָתִי. וְתִטַּע בְּלִבֵּנוּ
אַהֲבָתְךָ וְיִרְאַתְךָ לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנְךָ וּלְעִבְדְּךָ בְּלִבְבָּ שְׁלֵם
כִּי הוּדִים כְּשָׂרִים, וְלַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד עִם עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל.
וְתִבְרַךְ אֶת בְּעָלִי בְּרָכָה שְׁלֵמָה בְּרַב עֵז וְשְׁלֹום, כְּדָבָר
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר, יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ, יָאֵר יי פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי וִיחַנֶּךָ, יִשְׂאֵל
יי פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי וְיִשֵּׁם לְךָ שְׁלֹום. וְנֶאֱמַר, יי יִשְׁמְרֶהוּ וִיחַיֶּהוּ
וְיִשְׁרֶהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ אָמֵן, כֵּן יְהִי רְצוֹן.

Tebillah — Immersion

Prayer Before Immersion

Master of the world, it is revealed and known to You that I have fulfilled Your commandments and I observed the period of menstruation, and I have counted seven clean days, and now, at the proper time, I am ready and prepared to fulfill the *misvah* of immersion in valid waters, in accordance with Your commandment that You have commanded me. I now fulfill this *misvah* for the sake of unifying *Kudsha Berich Hu* and His *Shechinah* in perfect unity, in the name of all Israel, to perfect the root of this *misvah* in a supreme location, and it shall be considered by You as if I have in mind all the intentions worthy of thinking.

And just as I purify my body through water from impurity, so shall You, in Your abundant compassion and abundant kindness, purify my soul from all impurity and filth, and fulfill for us the verse that is written, "I shall pour purifying waters over you and you shall be purified"; and it says, "Hashem is the *mikveh* of Israel."

May it be the will before You, Hashem, our God and God of our forefathers, that the *misvah* of observing the period of menstruation, the *misvah* of counting seven clean days, and the *misvah* of purification and immersion in valid waters, should be regarded, acceptable, and favorable before You, so as to perfect all our blemishes and the blemishes of Adam and Eve, and all the dross shall be separated from the sanctity, that it shall be radiant as light in the place of sanctity.

תפילה לפני הטבילה

רבוננו של עולם, גלוי וידוע לפניך שקנמתי מצותיך בשמירת ימי נדות וספרתי שבועה נקיים, והנה עתה אנכי מוכנת ומזומנת לקיים מצות הטבילה במים הפשרים, במצותך אשר צויתני. והנה אנכי מקימת מצוה זו לשם יחוד גדשך הוא ושכינתיה ביהודא שלים בשם כל ישראל, לתקן שרש מצוה זו במקום עליז, ויעלה לפניך באילו פונתי בכל הפונות הראויות לבון.

ובשם שאנכי מטהרת גופי מן הטמאה במים, כן ברב רחמיך וברב חסדיך תטהר נפשי מכל טמאה וזהמה, וקיים בנו מקרא שכתוב, וזרקתי עליכם מים טהורים וטהרתם. ונאמר, מקוה ישראל יי.

ויהי רצון מלפניך, יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, שתהיה חשוכה ומקבלת ורצויה לפניך מצות שמירת ימי נדות, ומצות ספירת שבועה ימים נקיים, ומצות הטהרה והטבילה במים הפשרים, לתקן את כל פגמינו ופגמי אדם וחוה, ויתפרדו כל הסיגים מן הקדשה, וננה כאור תהיה אל מקום הקדש.

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And may it be the will before You, Hashem, our God and God of our forefathers, that You shall grant me and my husband strength, capability, help and assistance for our marriage, that we will be privileged to have children who are righteous, scholarly and wise in Torah.

Please, Hashem — please save!

Please, Hashem — please save!

Please, Hashem — please grant success!

Please, Hashem — please grant success!

May the pleasantness of Hashem our God be upon us, and the work of our hands be prosperous; the work of hands shall be prosperous.

(Rabbi Yosef Hayyim, Ben Ish Chai)

Laws of Nidah

ויהי רצון מלפניך, יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, ששתתן לי ולאיש
כח ויכלת ועזר וסיוע לזונג שלנו, ונזכה לבנים צדיקים חכמים
ונבונים בתורה.

אָנָּא יי הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא.

אָנָּא יי הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא.

אָנָּא יי תְּצַלִּיחָה נָּא.

אָנָּא יי תְּצַלִּיחָה נָּא.

ויהי נעם אדני אלהינו עלינו, ומעשה ידינו פוננה עלינו,
ומעשה ידינו פוננהו.

Tebillah — Immersion

Supplication After Immersion

Master of the world, with an emotional heart I fulfill the *misvah* of immersion for the sake of purity. I have endeavored to be faithful to Your commandments and I long for the sanctity of Your Name. And just as the waters of the *mikvah* purify me in the spiritual sense, so do I pray to You that You shall wash away from me all sin and iniquity, all melancholy and despair.

Master of the world, in whose hands is the soul of every living creature, favor me and my husband and family, and all my relatives and the entire Nation of Israel, with Your blessings for long life, health, happiness, good fortune and joy from our children, and have Your spirit of purity and sacred *Shechinah* rest upon me.

And may it be Your will that our home shall be a home of peace, love and camaraderie, and Your kindness shall not depart from us ever, and I shall always be worthy of the purity that is proper for the daughters of Your nation, the House of Israel, Amen.

תחינה אחרי הטבילה

רבונו של עולם, בלב רגש אני מקימת מצות טבילה לשם טהרה. השתדלתי להיות נאמנה למצותיך ומקוה לקדושת שמך. וכשם שמי המקוה מטהרים אותי מבחינה רוחנית, כך אני מתפללת אליך, שתישטף מעלי כל עברה ועון וכל עצב ויגון.

רבונו של עולם, אשר בידך נפש כל חי, תחונן אותי ואת בעלי ואת משפחתי ואת כל קרובי ואת כל עם ישראל מברכותך, לחיים ארבים, בריאות, אשר, מזל טוב ונחת מבנים, ותשרה עלי את ריחך הטהור ושכינת קדשך.

ויהי רצון, שיהא ביתנו בית של שלום, אהבה ואהבה, וחסדך לא יסור מעמנו נצח. ואהיה תמיד ראיה לטהרה הראיה לבנות עמך בית ישראל. אמן.

Tebillah — Immersion

The Mikveh

A *mikveh* is simply a pool filled with water, but its construction, the source and quantity of its water, and the manner of filling the pool must conform to the very detailed and complex requirements outlined in *halachah*. The process of constructing and maintaining a *mikveh* must be done under the supervision of, and in consultation with, a competent Rabbinic authority. Regardless of how many times and in how many pools a woman immerses, her *nidah* status remains until she immerses in a kosher *mikveh*.

The Procedure for Immersion

- ✧ Once a woman has undergone all the necessary preparations and is ready to immerse, she goes into the *mikveh* room and recites the blessing. (Ashkenazim have the practice to recite this blessing immediately after immersing, with only the head above water.) The text of the blessing is as follows:

ברוך אתה ה' אלוֹקֵנוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוּוֹנוּ עַל
הַטְּבִילָה

*Baruch Atah Hashem Elokenu Melech Ha'olam Asher
Kideshanu Be'misvotav Ve'sivanu Al Ha'tebillah.*

Blessed are You, Hashem, our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us regarding the immersion.

- ✧ After reciting the blessing, the woman removes her robe and immerses in the *mikveh*.

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- ✧ Different customs exist as to how many times a woman must immerse in the water. If one's custom cannot be determined, a Rabbi should be consulted for guidance.
- ✧ Some women have the custom to add the following prayer while still in the water:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלוקנו ואלוקי אבותינו שיבנה בית המקדש במהרה
בימינו ותן חלקנו בתורתך ושם נעבדך ביראה כימי עולם וכשנים
קדמוניות וערבה לה' מנחת יהודה וירושלים כימי עולם וכשנים
קדמוניות

*Yehi Ratzon Milefanecha Hashem Elokenu V'Elokei
Avotenu She'yibaneh Bet Ha'mikdash Be'mehera
Be'yamenu Ve'ten Chelkenu Be'toratecha Ve'sham
Na'avadecha Be'yirah Kimei Olam U'cheshanim
Kadmoniyot Ve'orvah L'Hashem Minchat Yehudah
V'Yerushalayim Kimei Olam U'cheshanim Kadmo-niyot.*

May it be Your will, Hashem, our God and God of our fathers, that the Temple should be rebuilt speedily, in our days, and place our lot in Your Torah, and there we will serve You with awe as in the days of old and years of antiquity, and the offering of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing to Hashem as in the days of old and years of antiquity.

Tebillah — Immersion

The Proper Position During the Immersion

A woman must immerse in a position that allows the water to come in contact with every part of her body. The following are the guidelines concerning the proper position to assume while immersing:

- ✧ A woman must not hold onto any item or surface while immersing; if she must hold onto something for safety reasons, she must consult a Rabbi before the *tebillah*.
- ✧ Her fingers, arms and legs should be positioned slightly apart from one another.
- ✧ She must keep her body relaxed, with her eyelids and mouth only gently closed.
- ✧ She should lean forward slightly, ensuring not to bend her body to the point where folds will form.

If any part of the woman's body is not completely underwater at the time of immersion, the immersion is entirely ineffective; her *nidah* status remains until she immerses properly. So as to ensure meticulous compliance with these guidelines, a religiously observant Jewish woman, generally known as the *mikveh* attendant, observes the immersion and confirms that it was performed properly.

After the Immersion

- ✧ After leaving the *mikveh*, a woman should wash her hands.
- ✧ She should feel confident and secure that her preparations and immersion was done properly and not ques-

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tion the validity of her *tebillah*. However, if an obvious *hasisah* is found after immersion (i.e., contact lenses were left in, an uncut nail, etc.), a Rabbi should be consulted for guidance.

- ✧ When a woman greets her husband following the immersion, she is required to inform him, either verbally or through hinting, that she has immersed in the *mikveh* and is now *tehorah* (ritually pure).
- ✧ The night of immersion is a private matter between husband and wife and should not be publicized.
- ✧ A woman should not bathe or shower from the time of immersion until after marital relations. If a shower is necessary, a Rabbi should be consulted.



אמר רבי חייא בר אבא אמר רבי יוחנן:
כל הפורש מאשתו סמוך לוסתא הויין
לו בנים זכרים . . . רבי יהושע בן לוי
אמר: הויין לו בנים ראויין להוראה.
(שבועות יח:)

Rabbi Hiya Bar Abba says: If a man separates from his wife close to the time she anticipates her period, he will be blessed with sons. . . . Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi says: He will be blessed with sons worthy of ruling on questions of Torah Law.

(Shabuot 18b)

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Chapter 6

Onot — The Times When a Woman Anticipates Her Period

One of the essential laws of *taharat hamishpachah* is the requirement to abstain from marital relations at the time of the expected period. This is a safeguard against the possibility of menstruation during intercourse, which would violate the grave Torah prohibition forbidding relations with a *nidah*. The following *halachot* are the way in which a couple calculates the anticipated period, so that the couple knows when to abstain.

The *halachot* regarding the days a woman anticipates her period are different for a woman with a regular cycle and for a woman with an irregular cycle. It is imperative that every woman keep her own personal calendar where she records the Hebrew date and the *onah* in which her period began. In a complete 24 hour day, there are two *onot*. The daytime *onah* is from sunrise to sunset and the nighttime *onah* is from sunset to sunrise. The day that a woman anticipates her period is called her *yom havest*.

A woman who is taking any sort of medication or hormonal therapy should consult a Rabbi.

Women with an Irregular Cycle

Many women today do not menstruate in consistent cycles, and thus fall into the *halachic* category of women

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with an irregular menstrual pattern. A woman with an irregular cycle has to anticipate her period on three Hebrew days each month:

1. **Yom Hachodesh**, the “Day of the Month.” A woman should note the Hebrew date of her last period, and mark that same Hebrew date of the following month as her *yom havest*. For example, a woman whose period began on the 5th of *Iyar* should mark the 5th of *Sivan*. If her period began during the daytime *onah* (sunrise to sunset), she marks the 5th of *Sivan* during the day. If her period began during the nighttime *onah* (sunset to sunrise), she marks the 5th of *Sivan* at night.
2. **Onah Benonit**, the “Average Cycle.” The 30th day from a woman’s last period is the “average” day for her to expect her next period. The day on which the previous period began counts as the first of these thirty days. For example, a woman whose period began on the 1st of *Nissan* marks the 30th of *Nissan* as her *yom havest*. If her period began during the daytime *onah*, she marks the daytime *onah*; if her period began at night, she marks the nighttime *onah*. (In some communities it is an accepted custom to separate throughout the entire 24 hour period from sunset to sunset on the 30th day. There are women who have a custom to record the 31st day as well. A Rabbi can be consulted regarding this matter.)
It should be noted that quite frequently the *Onah Benonit* and the *Yom hachodesh* coincide.
3. **Yom Hahaflagah**, the “Day of the Fixed Interval.” A woman should determine the number of days from

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the first day of her last period up to and including the first day of her current period. This is the *haflagah*, or interval number. She then counts from the first day of her current period that interval number of days and marks that day as her *yom havest*. For example, if a woman's period began on the night of the 29th of *Tebet*, and her next period began during the day of the first of *Adar*, she has established an interval of thirty-two days. On the thirty-second day from the first of *Adar*, or on the third day of *Nissan*, she will observe her *yom hahafalah* during the daytime hours.

As soon as a woman begins her cycle, she should make a conscious effort to calculate the three days on which she must anticipate her next period and mark them clearly on her personal calendar. Many *mikvaot* have special calendars to help assist women in making these calculations.

Women with a Regular Cycle

The days of separation are determined differently if a woman has established a regular cycle of menstruation. The following are some of the more common patterns that constitute a "regular cycle":

- ✧ A woman's period begins on the same date of the Hebrew month and during the same *onah* (always during the daytime or always during the nighttime) on three consecutive months.

For example, if a woman's period began during the day of the 14th of *Nissan*, then again a month later, during the day of the 14th of *Iyar*, and then the next month in the daytime hours of the 14th of *Sivan*, she

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has established a regular pattern. She can therefore expect her next period to occur on the 14th of *Tammuz*, and thus observes **only that day** as her *yom havest*.

- ❏ A woman's period occurs at the same interval on three consecutive occasions, all in the same time-frame. For example, if a woman's period began every thirty-two days three times in a row, she can anticipate her next period thirty-two days after her most recent period. This is the **only day** she marks as her *yom havest*.
- ❏ *Veset Haguf*. When menstruation occurs on three successive occasions after a specific physical symptom (e.g. certain kinds of skin rashes, yawns and cramps). A woman should consult her Rabbi and provide him with the exact details so that he can ascertain whether or not she would be considered to have a regular cycle.
- ❏ A woman who notices that her cycle is beginning to follow one of the above patterns should consult her Rabbi to determine whether or not she indeed is considered to have a regular cycle.

Establishing/Uprooting a Regular Cycle

- ❏ A woman who has established a regular cycle must anticipate her period in accordance with this pattern. She no longer records the three *onot* periods required of women with irregular cycles; she marks only the day on which she anticipates her period based on the pattern that she has established.
- ❏ If a woman's period does not occur on the expected

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date according to her regular pattern, she must nevertheless continue to observe that day, in addition to the days of a woman with an irregular cycle.

- ✧ A regular cycle is uprooted when a woman deviates from her established pattern on three consecutive occasions.
- ✧ Once her regular cycle has been uprooted, she no longer needs to anticipate her period based on her previous pattern; she only observes the *yom hachodesh*, *yom haflagah* and *onah benonit*.
- ✧ It is possible for a woman to reestablish her most recent pattern by menstruating on that day in a subsequent month. Therefore, as long as no new pattern has been established, she should keep the records of her most recent pattern.

Requirements of the Yom Havest

- ✧ On the days that a woman has marked on her calendar, a couple must abstain from marital relations. It is commendable, however, for a husband and wife to avoid hugging and kissing or sleeping in the same bed on these days. The laws of the *harchakot* do not apply until the actual onset of menstruation.
- ✧ A woman should do two *bedikot*, one in the beginning of her *onah*, and one at the end of her *onah*. For example, if her *yom havest* is during the daytime, she performs one *bedikah* upon awakening in the morning (after sunrise) and another *bedikah* before sunset. If the separation is observed during the nighttime

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hours, she performs the first examination in the evening, and the second upon arising in the morning.

- ✧ If a woman managed to perform only one examination, it is sufficient. If the entire *onah* passes without her performing even a single examination, then in the cases of *yom hachodesh* and *yom haflagah* she and her husband may nevertheless resume marital relations, assuming, of course, that the woman did not experience any bleeding. But if she failed to perform even a single examination during the *onah benonit*, then relations remain forbidden until she performs a proper examination.
- ✧ A woman with a regular cycle who did not perform any *bedikot* on her *yom havest* must likewise perform a *bedikah* before resuming marital relations.
- ✧ Once she performs the required examinations and there was no evidence of menstruation, the couple may resume marital relations.

The Onat Or Zarua

It is a stringency and a *minhag* in some communities to separate for the *onah* previous to each of the *yimei havest* listed above. For example, if a woman's *yom havest* is on Wednesday, the 5th of *Sivan* during the daytime, she also separates on Tuesday night, the 5th of *Sivan*.



שמח תשמח רעים האהובים כשמחך
יצירך בגן עדן מקדם.

(ברכות קידושין)

**Let the loving couple be very
happy, just as You made Your
creation happy in the Garden of
Eden, so long ago.**

(From the Wedding Blessings)

Chapter 7

Brides and Grooms

The Taharah Process For a Bride

Before her wedding, a bride completes the entire *taharah* process.

Unlike a married woman, a bride does not have to wait the minimum five days after menstruation before performing a *hefsek taharah*. As soon as menstruation stops she may perform the *hefsek taharah* examination and then begin her seven clean days, conducting two *bedikot* on each of the seven days, as detailed in chapter 2. Upon completing her seven clean days she should prepare herself properly for immersion.

It is best for a bride to count the seven clean days and go to the *mikveh* as close to the wedding as possible. However, she should give herself a little leeway in case a problem should arise with her clean count and perhaps start her clean count ten days before the wedding.

A virgin bride may be unable to insert her entire finger into the vaginal canal when performing a *bedikah*. She should take care to only go as deeply as is comfortable for her. If she has difficulty making all the required *bedikot*, a Rabbi should be consulted.

Brides and Grooms

When Should a Bride Immerse?

- ✧ Ideally, a bride should perform *tebillah* on the night prior to her wedding; if this is not possible, she may immerse earlier, but not before four days prior to the wedding. Unlike a married woman, a bride is permitted to immerse during the daytime. If necessary a Rabbi will permit her to immerse on the seventh day. Once she is married, she may immerse only at night.

Scheduling the Wedding

- ✧ A couple should try to schedule the wedding in a manner that will allow the bride to observe the seven clean days and perform *tebillah* before the wedding. All questions regarding the scheduling of the wedding should be referred to a Rabbi.
- ✧ If the wedding cannot be scheduled in this manner, it should nevertheless not be delayed, though different customs exist concerning the procedure for a *hupat nidah* (a wedding while the bride is a *nidah*). The *taharah* process will take place when it becomes possible after the wedding. In such a case, the couple should consult with their Rabbi for further guidance pertaining to the laws of *yichud*.

Separation After the First Intimacy

- ✧ A virgin bride becomes a *nidah* immediately after the first complete intercourse, regardless of whether hymenal bleeding was discovered. If a couple is in doubt as to whether complete intercourse has taken place, they must consult a Rabbi for guidance.

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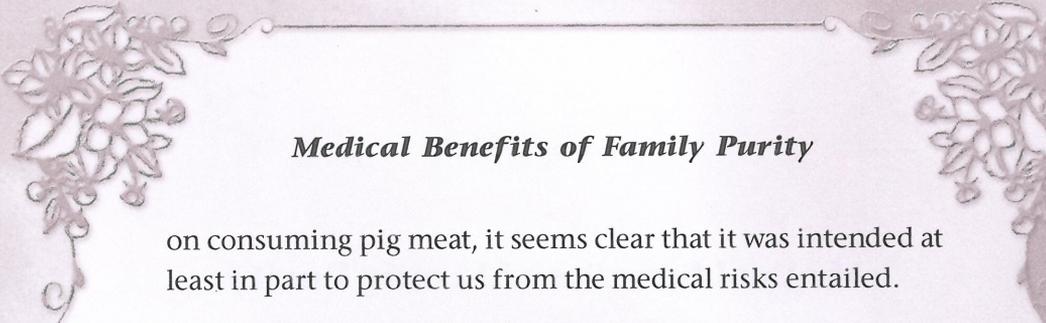
- ✧ After complete intercourse, all the laws of *nidah* apply. After hymenal bleeding, a bride may perform the *hefsek taharah* examination four days after intercourse, rather than waiting the five days that are normally required. If, however, the bride menstruates during this time, she must wait a minimum of five days from marital relations before performing a *hefsek taharah* and observing the seven clean days.

Medical Benefits of Family Purity

A Jew's observance of the Torah's commands should never be contingent upon his ability to comprehend their underlying reasons. When *Am Yisrael* stood at Mount Sinai and declared, "*Na'aseh ve'nishma*" ("We will do and we will hear" – Shemot 24:7), they proclaimed their unconditional commitment to the laws that Hashem was about to present to them. Regardless of whether we can identify the benefits of a *misvah*, we are faithfully committed to observance due to the simple fact that it has been commanded by the Almighty.

Nevertheless, some of the greatest Rabbis of all time toiled to uncover for us the rationale and benefits underlying the *misvot*. The Rambam devotes much of the third section of his *Guide for the Perplexed* to this endeavor, emphasizing that one must strive to understand the *misvot* to the best of his ability. The anonymous *Sefer Ha'hinuch* similarly embarks on an in-depth analysis of the Torah's commands in an attempt to reveal their underlying rationale. And explaining the reasons for *misvot* is among the central themes and objectives of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's famous Torah commentary.

Modern scientific discovery has revealed the medical benefits of a number of *misvot* in the Torah. For example, research has shown a clear link between the consumption of pork and the deadly disease trichinosis. The Torah, given to the Jewish people millennia ago, was aware of the dangers of pork long before modern scientific research. While there undoubtedly are other reasons, as well, behind the Torah's ban



Medical Benefits of Family Purity

on consuming pig meat, it seems clear that it was intended at least in part to protect us from the medical risks entailed.

Similarly, research has revealed significant physical and psychological benefits of abstinence during and after menstruation. Far from being archaic and outdated, the laws of family purity correspond perfectly with modern medical findings concerning women's physiological and psychological condition during this period, as well as marital chemistry generally. Of course, we commit ourselves to the Torah's laws regardless of the medical benefits involved. Nevertheless, these benefits demonstrate the infinite divine wisdom underlying the Torah, and remind us that even when a *misvah* might at first appear irrational, at some point in time its value and benefits will be clearly manifest.

We present in the following pages a series of statements by experts in the fields of gynecology and marital counseling, compiled by the Jewish Marriage Education institute, which confirm the contribution of the family purity laws to a wife's emotional and physical well-being.

Laws of Nidah



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Medical Benefits

**Prof. Howard Kelly – Gynecologist, expert in women's diseases
Johan Hopkins university Baltimore, Maryland (15.9.30)**

"I always associated the good health situation of the Jews in large to their correct intimate lives, to the lack of promiscuity and from the lack of inclination to congestion of the inner organs.

By them – smaller percentage of births needing forceps.

By them – smaller percentage of birth injuries.

By them – smaller percentage of birth operation of the pelvic outlet".

Prof. L. Duncan Bulkley of New York Skin and Cancer Hospital (Non-Surgical Treatment of Cancer 1921)

"The consensus of opinion seems to be that orthodox Jews observing the ritual are much less subject to cancer of the uterus than the rest of any population. They live longer, mostly marry, - birthing is successful by them and the percentage of deaths from diseases of the uterus is small".

"Less cancer of male organs"

Dr. Hiriam Wineberg, Head of Gynecology Dept. Mt. Sinai Hospital, NY (12.7.19)

"The relative infrequency of cancer of the uterus in women of the Jewish race." Found from statistics compiled from 1893-1906 that cancer of the cervix in women in New York City was 20 times as frequent in non-Jewish women as in Jewish women. That is significant - because that was the period in which the peak of immigration from Eastern Europe occurred. The majority of Jewish Women during that period observed the Mosaic Laws of menstruation most faithfully.

Then in the decade from 1909-1918 the rate had dropped to seven and a half times as frequent in non-Jews as in Jews. From 1928-1949 the rate dropped to five times as frequent in non-Jews as in Jews.

Tragic evidence indicates that the Jewess is fast losing her superiority. During the last fifty years the rate of cervical cancer in evidence among non-Jewess and Jewess dropped from 20% to 5%. For many years the relative absence of the disease among Jewish women was attributed to the circumcision of her husband. The absence of a special substance found in the uncircumcised male was deemed sufficient to explain the statistical results. However, in 1967 a study of Moslem women (K.T. Abu Daud, 1967 cancer 10:1706) who also cohabit only with circumcised males, revealed the same incidence of cervical cancer as their Christian neighbors who do not practice circumcision.

Dr. John L. Rice, Health Commissioner of New York City wrote in the Quarterly Bulletin New York City Dept. of Health (vol.3,1993)

"In connection with the discussion of the mortality of cancer of the uterus, the reviewer will again call attention to the fact that cancer of the uterus has a distinctly lower mortality among Jewish women than among non-Jewish. It deserves consideration on the part of students of cancer."

Clellan S. Ford

Comparative Study of Human Reproduction (Yale Univ. Publication 1964).

"Medical science recognizes the possibility that intimate relations during menstruation may harm the woman. The various aspects of the cycle may become altered temporarily so that during menstruation there is high risk that inflammation of the pelvic region may develop."

Dr. Bernard Shapira – Hades University Hospital (1959)

"If it is accepted by specialists in the field of female diseases that cancer of the cervix is common among both cultural and primitive societies. It is rare among Jewish women observant of the laws of purity."

Dr. M. Smitlyn (1921, Brooklyn)

"A woman at this time is "not well". Having relations can cause infection – and this can lead to cancer. The explanation for this is that – at the time of a period plus for seven days after, the discharge from the vagina is alkaline and thus does not kill germs like at other times when the discharge is acidic and kills germs. That is why at this time a woman is more open to infection."

Medical Benefits of Family Purity



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Dr. Alexander Gunn, Look After Your Cervix (Woman's Value, Dec. '86)

"But in fact orthodox Jewish principles which require couples to abstain from intercourse for a certain number of days after the end of menstruation may by playing their part in protecting the woman. The cells on the surface of the cervix are known to be most susceptible to damage just after menstruation."

Psychological Benefits

Dr. White (England):

"Women at this time are depressed psychologically and emotionally as a result of their hormones. They are more sensitive and it is not good for them to be with their husbands."

Dr. Stophes (England)

Non Jewish divorced, did research marriage:

"I paid a high price for my lack of knowledge that is see it as a holy mission to warn other women so they don't fail as I did. I heard about the Jewish laws of family purity. These are the most advanced laws in the world in this area. Those who live their lives according to them are sure to be happy."

Dr. Domeena Renshaw, Head of Intimacy Dysfunction Clinic at Chicago's Loyola University:

"80% of divorces in western society come about because of incompatibility within the couples intimate lives. 50% of couples who remain married have problems in this area."

Dr. Ruth Westheimer – noted USA Therapist

"The Jewish attitude to intimacy is incredibly enlightened. The practice of Nidah - abstention from marital relations for a period after menstruation is the most sophisticated method of maintaining a healthy intimate relationship in long term monogamy I have ever encountered."

The Return of the Hard to Get – Cosmopolitan June 1987

"An orthodox wife does not have relations with her husband from the onset of menstruation until the period has stopped and seven clean days have passed. She then goes to the Mikveh, a ritual cleansing bath, and thereafter relation are resumed.... Several women are quoted:

"It heightens anticipation every month, and it recreates the feeling of a bridal situation for both partners," says one. Another: "It says a man doesn't have unquestionable rights to a woman's body. He can't demand relations at his pleasure."

A third woman says: "You become forbidden fruit within your own marriage! To me that always seems a brilliant psychological device."

A fourth discovered a heartening by-product. "You have the assurance of trusting your husband because he's shown restraint and self control over all these years."

Laws of Nidah

Glossary

Adar — a Hebrew month.

Bedikah — an internal examination.

Erub — and enclosure around an area of public domain which allows one to carry within the enclosed area on Shabbat.

Ereb Yom Tob/Shabbat — the day that precedes a holiday or Shabbat.

Gris — a bean the size of a penny.

Hafifah — the preparations before immersing in a *mikveh*.

Halachot — Jewish laws.

Hargashah — sensation.

Harchakot — laws of separation between husband and wife that are required from the time a woman becomes a *nidah* until after her immersion in a *mikveh*.

Hasisot — interferences.

Hefsek Taharah — an internal examination before the seven day clean count to determine if uterine bleeding has ceased.

Hupat Nidah — A wedding of a bride who is a *nidah*.

Iyar — a Hebrew month.

Kedushah — holiness.

Ketem — a discharge of blood not accompanied by a sensation.

L'chatchilah — the halachically preferred way to do something.

Misvah — commandment.

Glossary

Moch Dachuk — an internal examination performed by inserting a cloth into the vaginal canal before sunset and removed at or by nightfall.

Neshamah — soul.

Nidah — a woman rendered ritually impure by a discharge of uterine blood.

Nissan — a Hebrew month.

Onah — a complete unit of either daytime or nighttime.

Onah Benonit — the average menstrual cycle.

Poskim — halachic authorities.

Shechina — G-d's presence.

Shivah Nekiyim — the seven clean days that a woman must count prior to immersion.

Simcha — joy.

Sivan — a Hebrew month.

Taharat Hamishpacha — family purity.

Tebillah — immersion.

Tehorah — state of ritual purity.

Tishah B'ab — the ninth of Ab, a fast day.

Yom — day.

Yom Hachodesh — the Hebrew date of the month.

Yom Hahaflagah — the interval between the onset of one period and the onset of the next period.

Yom Havest — the day on which a woman anticipates her next period.

Yom Kippur — the Day of Atonement.

Yom Tob — holiday.

Laws of Nidah

Mikveh List

Alabama

Congregation Agudath Israel
3525 Cloverdale Rd.
Montgomery, AL 36111
334-281-7998 or 281-7394

Kneseth Israel Synagogue
3225 Montevallo Rd.
Birmingham, AL 35223
205-879-1664 or 871-3141 (Private)

Alaska

Congregation Lubavitch Shomrei Ohr
1210 East 26th Ave.
Anchorage, AK 99508
907-279-1200 (Rebbetzin Esty Greenberg)

Arizona

Mikvah Society
515 E. Bethany Home Rd.
Phoenix, AZ 85012
602-277-7479

Mikveh Perach Yisroel
Operated by Congregation
Chofetz Chaim of Tucson
Esther Becker — 520-591-7680
Tucson, AZ 85711

Young Israel Synagogue
2442 E. 4th St.
Tucson, AZ 85719
602-881-7956 (Private)

Arkansas

Congregation Agudath Achim
7901 W. 5th St.
Little Rock, AR 72205

501-225-1683

California

Mikvah Taharas Israel
2520 Warring St.
Berkeley, CA 94704
415-848-7221

Teichman Mikvah Society
12800 Chandler Blvd.
North Hollywood, CA 91607
818-506-0996 or 763-0560

Mikvas Chana
24412 Narbonne Ave.
Lomita, CA 90717
213-326-3886 or 326-8234

Mikvah Chaya V'Sarah Leah
3847 Atlantic Ave.
Long Beach, CA 90807
310-427-1360

Los Angeles Mikvah: Mikvat Esther
9548 W. Pico Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90035
310-550-4511

Bais Yehuda
360 N. La Brea Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90036
213-939-4297
Entrance in rear alley (guard on duty)

Beth Jacob Community Mikvah
3778 Park Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94610
510-482-1147
No Attendant on Duty

Chabad House
3070 Louis Rd.
Palo Alto, CA 94303
415-424-9800
Estimated Completion: 1996

Mikveh List

Kneseth Israel Torah Center
1024 Morse Ave.
Sacramento, CA 95864
916-481-1158 or 481-1159

Mikvah Israel
5160 La Dorna
San Diego, CA 92115
619-287-6411

Mikvah Israel: B'nai David of San Francisco
3355 Sacramento St.
San Francisco, CA
94118415-921-4070 (Private)

Chabad of Marin
1150 Idylberry Rd.
Sab Rafael, CA 94903
415-492-1666

Chabad of Palm Springs
425 Avenida Ortega
Palm Springs, CA 92264
619-325-3212

Abraham Dayan Mikvah — Chabad
18181 Burbank Blvd.
Tarzana, CA 91356
818-758-3836 (Mikvah) or
758-1818

The La Jolla Mikvah
Congregation Adat Yeshurun
8625 La Jolla Scenic Drive North
La Jolla, CA 92037
(858) 535-1072
www.adatyeshurun.org/mikvah

Colorado

Mikvas Chana — Chabad
2835 E. Platte Ave.
Colorado Springs, CO 80909
719-475-8910 (Office — Rob
Eskanos)
590-7969 — Melody Eskanos or
599-7822 (Sandy Schwa)

Mikvah of Denver

1404 Quitman
Denver, CO 80204
303-893-5315 or 623-1659 (Pri-
vate)

**Mikvah of East Denver (Tomer
Devorah)**
295 S. Locust Street
Denver, CO 80224
303-320-6633
www.MikvahofEastDenver.org

Connecticut

Mikvah Israel
1326 Stratfield Rd.
Fairfield, CT 06432
203-374-2191

New Haven Mikvah Society
86 Hubinger St.
New Haven, CT 06511
203-387-2184
Call for appointment

Beth Israel of Norwalk/Westport
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Norwalk, CT 06851
203-866-0534 or 852-9041 (Pri-
vate)
In planning Stages

Congregation Brothers of Joseph
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Norwich, CT 06360
203-887-3777 or 889-5776 (Private)

Congregation Agudath Sholom
301 Strawberry Hill Ave.
Stamford, CT 06902
203-358-2270 or 358-0466 (Pri-
vate)

**Congregation B'nai Shalom Syna-
gogue**
135 Roseland Ave.
Waterbury, CT 06710
203-754-4159 or 753-1206 (Pri-
vate)

Laws of Nidah

Mikvah Beth Israel

61 N. Main St.
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203-521-9446

Delaware

Mikvah Chaya Mushka — Chabad

1306 Grinnell Rd.
Wilmington, DE 19803
302-478-4400

Florida

Boca Raton Synagogue

7900 Montoya Circle
Boca Raton, FL 33433
407-394-5854
Young Israel of Hollywood
3291 Stirling Rd.
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33312
305-963-3952 (Mikvah) or
966-7877 (Synagogue)

Mikvah Etz Chaim

10167 San Jose Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32257
904-262-3565

Mikvah Yisroel of Orlando

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407-740-8770 (Private)
Mrs. Dubov

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Mikvah Dej

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305-538-0070 or 674-8204

Mikvah Blima of North Dade

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North Miami Beach, FL 33179

305-949-9650 or 653-8553 (Private)

Mikvah Israel of Tampa Bay

14908 Pennington Rd.
Tampa, FL 33624
813-962-2375 (Private) or 963-0706
(Private)

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Closest Mikvah — Boca Raton, FL

Georgia

Congregation Beth Jacob

1855 La Vista Rd. NE
Atlanta, GA 30329
404-728-0441 (Mikvah) or
728-0551 (Synagogue)

B'nai Torah

700 Mt. Vernon Hwy.
Atlanta, GA 30328
404-257-0537

Chabad Center and Bet Tefilah Synagogue

5065 High Point Rd.
Atlanta, GA 30342
404-843-2464
Mikvah appointment — 255-9001

Congregation Adas Yeshurun

935 Johns Rd.
Augusta, GA 30904
404-733-9491

Congregation Bnai Brith Jacob

5444 Abercorn
Savannah, GA 31405
912-354-9619 (Private) or 354-7721

Hawaii

Aloha Jewish Chapel at Makalapa Gate

Naval Station Box 47
Pearl Harbor, HI 96860
808-471-0050 for information

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Chicago Mikvah Association

3541 W. Peterson Ave.
Chicago, IL 60659
312-509-0900
Entrance in rear. Open for Women
Fri. night and Yom Tov Only

Touhy Mikvah of Chicago Assoc.

3110 W. Touhy Ave.
Chicago, IL 60645
312-274-7425

Congregation Yehuda Moshe

4721 W. Touhy Ave.
Lincolnwood, IL 60646
708-675-8510 (Private) or 674-6272
(Private)

Congregation Agudas Achim

3616 N. Sheridan Rd.
Peoria, IL 61604
309-688-4800

Tri-City Jewish Center

2715 30th St.
Rock Island, IL 61201
309-788-3426

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Congregation Bnai Torah

6510 Hoover Rd.
Indianapolis, IN 46260
317-253-5253
Mikvah Hotline — 317-475-1429
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who is on call each night)

Hebrew Orthodox Congregation

3207 High St.
South Bend, IN 46614
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(Private)
236-5127 (Priv.), 287-2600 (Priv.)

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Beth El Jacob Synagogue

954 Cummins Pkwy.
Des Moines, IA 50312
515-274-1551

Jewish Federation of Sioux City — Cong. Beth Shalom

815 — 38th St.
Sioux City, IA 51104
712-258-0618

Kansas

Mikvah Chana — Chabad

6201 Indian Creek Dr.
Overland Park, KS 66207
913-649-7770 (Private — Esther
Friedman) 649-4852

Kehilath Israel Synagogue

10501 Conser
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913-642-1880

Ahavath Achim Hebrew Cong.

1850 N. Woodlawn
Wichita, KS 67208
316-685-1339

Kentucky

Louisville Vaad Hakashruth

3700 Dutchmans La.
Louisville, KY 40205
502-451-3122

Louisiana

Beth Israel Synagogue

7 Canal Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70124
504-283-4366 (Shul)

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Mikvah Chaya Mushka — Chabad

7037 Freret St.
New Orleans, LA 70118
504-866-5342 (Private)
B. Rivkin for appointments

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Mikvah

336 Pine St.
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207-945-5940 (Private — Rabbi
Isaacs)
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76 Noyes St.
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11621 Seven Locks Rd.
Potomac, MD 20854
301-299-0144 for appointments
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Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-565-3737

Silver Spring Jewish Center

1401 Arcola Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20902
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Daughters of Israel

101 Washington St.
Brighton, MA 02135
617-782-9433

Lubavitch Mikvah

239 Chestnut Hill Ave.
Brighton, MA 02135
617-782-8340, 562-0141, 254-8240
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Mikvah Chaya Mushka

9 Burlington St.
Lexington, MA 02173
607-787-2667 or 862-6626

Mikvah Israel

1104 Converse St.
Longmeadow, MA 01106
413-567-1607 or 736-1009 (Pri-
vate)

Montefiore Mikvah

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Lowell, MA 01851
508-459-9400 or 458-8797

Mikvah Bnot Yisroel — Congregation Ahabat Sholom

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593-9255 (Shul)
or 599-7495 (Private)

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617-784-7444

Worcester Mikvah

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Worcester, MA 01602
508-756-6483 (Private) or
752-7749 (Private)

Mikveh List

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Chabad House

715 Hill St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
313-995-3276

Chabad

5385 Calkins
Flint, MI 48532
810-733-3779 OR 230-0770

Chabad House

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616-957-0770 or 949-6788 (Private)

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15150 W. Ten Mile Rd.
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248-967-5402

Beis Chabad Torah Center

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West Bloomfield, MI 48033
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Ritualarium Society Knesseth Israel Synagogue

4330 W. 28 St.
Minneapolis, MN 55416
612-926-3829 or 926-3185 (Private)

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730 Second St. SW
Rochester, MN 55902
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Mikvah Association

1516-1/2 Randolph Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55105
612-698-6163 (Private) or 698-1298
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Taharath Israel of St. Louis — Sylvia

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4 Millstone Campus
St. Louis, MO 63146
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402-293-9340 (Private — Galit
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Las Vegas, NV 89102
702-224-0184 or 259-0770

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The Mikvah of Central Jersey/Twin Rivers

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609-443-1599 for appointments

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Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
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Laws of Nidah

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Congregation Zichron Yoel

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Passaic, NJ 07055
973-778-3596

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15 Market St.
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201-826-2977

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Bronx, NY 10467
718-798-6173

Mikvah

3708 Henry Hudson Pkwy.
Riverdale, NY 10463
718-549-8336

Mikvah of Canarsie

1221 Remsen Ave.
Brooklyn, NY 11236
718-763-5902 or 763-6812

Crown Heights Mikvah

1506 Union St.
Brooklyn, NY 11213
718-604-8787

Mikvah Divrei Chaim

1249 52nd St.
Brooklyn, NY 11219
718-972-9678

Mikvah Israel of Bensonhurst

48 Bay 28 St.
Brooklyn, NY 11214
718-372-9563, 373-8887 (Private) or
266-4649 (Private) By appointment

Mikvah Israel of Boro Park

1351 46th St.
Brooklyn, NY 11219
718-871-6866

Mikvah Israel of Boro Park

1574 58th St.
Brooklyn, NY 11219
718-871-0669

Mikvah Israel of Boro Park

4623 18th St.
Brooklyn, NY 11219
718-436-5140

Mikvah Israel of Brighton

245 Neptune Ave.
Brooklyn, NY 11235
718-769-8599

Kehilas Yaakov

115 Rutledge
Brooklyn, NY 11211
718-624-9262

Mikvah Nachlas Tzvi

3210 Kings Hwy. (Entrance on Ave. N)
Brooklyn, NY 11234
718-338-3545

Congregation and Yeshiva Hamaor

5010-12 18th Ave.
Brooklyn, NY 11204
718-633-7724

Mikvah Yisroel of Flatbush

1980 Avenue L (Corner Ocean Ave.)
Brooklyn, NY 11230
718-258-7704 Handicapped Facilities Available

Ritualarium of East Flatbush

340 E. 52nd St.
Brooklyn, NY 11203
718-771-5842 (Private — S. Hammer) By appoint. only

Laws of Nidah

Sephardic Mikvah Israel

810 Avenue S
Brooklyn, NY 11223
718-339-4600

Yetev Lev D'Satmar

212 Williamsburg St.
Brooklyn, NY 11211
718-387-9388

Young Israel of Bedford Bay

2113 Haring St.
Brooklyn, NY 11229
718-332-4120, 646-3253 (Private)
or 743-3633

Taharath Israel of Flatbush, Inc.

1013 E. 15 St.
Brooklyn, NY 11230
718-377-9813

Jewish Women's Club

234 West 78th St.
New York, NY 10024
212-799-1520

Mikvah Beth Avraham

163 E. 69th St.
New York, NY 10021
212-472-3968

Mikvah of East Side

313 E. Broadway
New York, NY 12
212-475-8514

Mikvah of Washington Heights

4351 Broadway
New York, NY 10033
212-923-1100

Mikvah

1121A Sage St.
Far Rockaway, NY 11691
718-327-9727

Congregation of Georgian Jews from Russia

63-04 Yellowstone Blvd.

Forest Hills, NY 11375
718-897-9370 or 718-997-9077
(Mrs. Gadaev)

Congregation Mikvah Israel

71-11 Vleigh Place
Kew Garden Hills, NY 11367
718-268-6500

Community Mikvah — Young Israel of Staten Island

835 Forest Hill Rd.
Staten Island, NY 10314
718-494-6704

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518-437-1303 or 453-9406 (Private)
Please call for appointment

Belle Harbor Community Mikvah

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Belle Harbor, NY 11694
718-945-4420 or 318-5712 (Private)

Congregation Ohab Zedek

134-01 Rockaway Beach Blvd.
Belle Harbor, NY 11694
718-945-4420

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Beth David Synagogue

39 Riverside Dr.
Binghamton, NY 13905
607-722-1793

Buffalo Ritualarium

1248 Kenmore
Buffalo, NY 14216
716-875-8451 (Evenings only) or
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Suffolk Mikvah Inc.

74 Hauppauge Rd.
Commack, NY 11725
516-462-6075
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Jewish Home of Central New York

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Dewitt, NY 13214
315-446-6194 or 424-0363

Congregation Ezrath Israel
Rabbi Eisner Square
Ellenville, NY 12428
845-647-4472 (Evening) or
647-6846 (Private – Day)

North Shore Mikveh Association

26 Old Mill Rd.
Great Neck, NY 11023
516-487-2726

Congregation South Shore

1156 Peninsula Blvd.
Hewlett, NY 11557
516-295-2995

Mikvah

209 N. Meadow St.
Ithaca, NY 14850
607-257-7379 or 273-5394 (Pri-
vate)

Mikvah Taharas Israel

37 Lincoln Place
Liberty, NY 12754
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Long Beach, New York 11561
(516) 897-4665

Congregation Yetev Lev

60 Acres Rd. (Bet. Forest and
Bakertown)
Monroe, NY 10950
914-782-2643

Mikvah of Concord

19 Bartlett Rd.
Monsey, NY 10952
914-425-8598

Mikvah Israel

4 Maple Leaf Rd.
Monsey, NY 10952
914-356-1

Mikvah of Rockland County

238 Viola Road
Monsey, NY 10952
845 371-0211

Mikvah

16 North St.
Monticello, NY 12701
845-794-6757 or 794-8470

Yeshiva Farm Settlement Mikvah

Pines Bridge Rd.
Mount Kisco, NY 10549
914-666-0211, 666-3652 (Private)
or 241-0175 (Private). Mailing ad-
dress: RD#4, Box Y30 (Y.F.S. Mik-
vah)

Mikvas Chaya

315 N. Main St.
New City, NY 10956
914-638-9398

Mikvah Association of Oceanside

3397 Park Ave.
Oceanside, NY 11572
516-766-3242

Laws of Nidah

Mikvah Association of Long Island

97 Southern Parkway
Plainview, NY 11803
516-933-3215

Shomrei Israel Synagogue

18 Park Ave.
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603
914-454-2890 or 452-7583 (Private)

Beth Hatvilah

27 St. Regis Dr. North
Rochester, NY 14618
585-442-0245

Congregation Mikvah Israel

30 Lafayette St.
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
518-584-6338
Open only end of June — End of August

Young Israel of Scarsdale

1313 Weaver St.
Scarsdale, NY 10583
914-472-0946 (Private) or
636-8686

New Square

33 Truman Ave.
Spring Valley, NY 10977
845-354-6578

Congregation Anshei Hashoran

Thompkins St.
Tannersville, NY 12485
518-589-5830
Open in Summer only

Chaya Mushka Mikvah — Chabad

2306 15 St.
Troy, NY 12180
518-274-5572 (Private)

Zvi-Jacob Synagogue

110 Memorial Pkwy.
Utica, NY 13501
315-724-8357 or 724-1078 (Private)

Mikvah Association of Nassau

County

775 Hempstead Ave.
West Hempstead, NY 11552
516-489-9358

Mikveh Shearith Hapletah

Route 52
Woodbourne, NY 12788
845-434-5111

Mikvah

Maurice Rose St.
Woodridge, NY 12789
845-434-4987 or 434-8981 (Private) or 434-8570

North Carolina

Lubavitch of North Carolina

6500 Newhall Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28270
704-366-3984

Congregation Shaarei Israel

7400 Falls of the Neuse Rd.
Raleigh, NC 27615
919-847-8986
Need at least a day's notice in order to heat mikvah

Ohio

Mikvah

2479 S. Green Rd.
Beachwood, OH 44122
216-381-3170

Beth Tefillah

1546 Kenova Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45237
513-821-6679 (Private) 761-0135 (Private)
or 761-7116

Mikvah

Taylor Rd.
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118
216-397-1040 or 371-4686 (Private)

Mikveh List

Congregation Beth Jacob

1223 College Ave.
Columbus, OH 43209
614-237-1068 (Private) or
237-8641

Mikvah

556 Kenwood Ave.
Dayton, OH 45406
513-274-1662 (Private) or 277-7337
(Private)

Etz Chaim Synagogue

3853 Woodley Rd.
Toledo, OH 43606
419-473-2401

Telshe Yeshiva

28400 Euclid Ave.
Wickliffe, OH 44092
216-585-0797

Greater Youngstown Area Mikveh Association

3970 Logan Way
Youngstown, OH 44505
216-759-2167 or 759-1429

Oklahoma

Emmanuel Synagogue

900 NW 47 St.
Oklahoma City, OK 73118
405-528-2113

Mikvah Shoshana — Chabad

6622 S. Utica Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74136
918-493-7006 (Mikvah) Coordinator
Ethel Weg
OR 492-4499 (Synagogue)

Oregon

Synagogue, The Halachic Minyan

2548 Willamette
Eugene, OR 97405
503-344-5096 (Private)

Jewish Ritualarium

1425 S.W. Harrison St.
Portland, OR 97201
503-224-3409

Pennsylvania

Mikvah

1834-1836 Whitehall St.
Allentown, PA 18104
215-433-6089

Philadelphia Mikvah Association

Wynnwood and Argyle Rds.
Ardmore, PA 19003
610-642-8679

Mikvah

3601 N. 4th St.
Harrisburg, PA 17110
717-234-0097 (Private) or
232-2023

Ohev Zedek

3rd Ave. and Davis St.
Kingston, PA 18704
717-287-5793 (Private), 287-6336
(Private)
287-2032 (Private), 283-1961 (Private)
or 825-6619 (Shul)

Congregation Gemilas Chesed

1545 Ohio Ave.
McKeesport, PA 15131
412-678-8859 (Shul), 678-2725
(Private)
or 678-2264 (Private)

Philadelphia Mikvah Association

7525 Loretto Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19111
215-745-3334

Jewish Women's League

2336 Shady Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15217
412-422-7110

Laws of Nidah

Scranton Ritualarium Association Mikvah Yisroel

917-919 E. Gibson St.
Scranton, PA 18510
717-344-5138 or 347-9238 (Private)

Ohev Sholom

Cherry and Belmonts Sts.
Williamsport, PA 17701
717-322-7050 (Private) or
322-4209 (Shul)

Rhode Island

Jewish Community Center

401 Elmgrove Ave.
Providence, RI 02906
(401) 621-9119
By appt only, 48 hrs notice, please

South Carolina

Brith Sholom Beth Israel

182 Rutledge Ave.
Charleston, SC 29403
843-577-6599

Beth Shalom Synagogue

5827 N. Trenholm Rd.
Columbia, SC 29206
803-782-1831
Under Construction

Beth El Mikvah
404 Calhoun Rd.
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577
803-449-3956 or 448-0035

Tennessee

Beth Sholom Congregation

20 Pisgah Ave.
Chattanooga, TN 37411
615-894-0801

Anshei Sphard-Beth El Emeth

120 East Yates Rd. North
Memphis, TN 38120
901-682-1611

Baron Hirsch Congregation

400 S. Yates Rd.
Memphis, TN 38120
901-683-7485

Congregation Sherith Israel

3600 West End Ave.
Nashville, TN 37205
615-292-6614

Texas

Mikve Tahara

2101 Nueces
Austin, TX 78705
512-478-8222 or 472-3900

Congregation Tifereth Israel

10909 Hillcrest Rd.
Dallas, TX 75230
214-373-7536

Mikvah Chaya Mushka

6505 Westwind Dr.
El Paso, TX 79912
915-833-5711 (Private) or 584-8218

Congregation Bnai Zion

805 Cherry Hill La.
El Paso, TX 79912
915-833-2222

Mikvah Taharas Yisroel

10900 Fondren
Houston, TX 77096
713-777-2

United Orthodox Synagogue

9001 Greenwillow
Houston, TX 77096
713-723-3850

Congregation Rodfei Sholom

3003 Sholom
San Antonio, TX 78230
210-493-3557

Mikveh List

Utah

Chabad-Lubavitch of Utah

1435 S 1100 E
Salt Lake City 84105
(24 hour notice required)
Contact Rebbetzin Sharonne
Zippel
801-582-0220

Vermont

Mikvah Chaya Mushka

221 Summit St.
Burlington, VT 05401
802-658-7612 (Private)

Virginia

Congregation Adath Jeshurun

12646 Nettles Dr.
Newport News, VA 23606
757-930-0820

Congregation Bnai Israel

420 Spotswood Ave.
Norfolk, VA 23517
757-627-7358, 757-627-4582 (Private — Melissa Friedman)
or 757-622-9930 (Private — Leah Schwartz)

Lubavitch Center

212 Gaskins Rd.
Richmond, VA 23233
804-740-2

Young Israel of Richmond — Cong.

Kol Emes

4811 Patterson Ave.
Richmond, VA 23226
804-353-5831 or 288-8816 (Private)

Washington

The Seattle Mikvah

5145 S. Morgan St.
Seattle, WA 98118
206-723-3644, 517-7139 or

721-0970 (Voice mailbox #3 - Synagogue)

West Virginia

Bnai Jacob Synagogue

1599 Virginia St.
Charleston, WV 25311
304-346-4722

Wisconsin

Mikvah Chaya Mushka

225 Campbell St.
Madison, WI 53711
608-251-8764 (Private) or
231-3450 (Private)

Congregation Beth Jehuda

3100 N. 52nd Street
Milwaukee, WI 53216
414-445-7300 or 442-5730

Lubavitch House

3109 N. Lake Dr.
Milwaukee, WI 53211
414-961-2266 or 961-6100

Mikvah Mei Menachem for Women

2233 West Mequon Road
Cross Streets: Between 1-43 &
Range Line Road
Mequon, WI 53092
Supervision: Rabbi Baruch Hertez,
Rabbi Rapoport
Shul Affiliation: Congregation
Agudas Achim Chabad
Schedule: By appointment only
Mikvah Tel. #: 414 745 9558
Alternate Tel. #: 262-242-9775
E-mail: infoabadmequon.org
Mikvah Type: BOR AL GABAI BOR
Notes: Brand new and beautiful

Wyoming

Mt. Sinai Congregation

2610 Pioneer Ave.
Cheyenne, WY 82001
307-634-3052