



NIDDAH

*Jerusalem is likened to a menstruant. Just as she returns to her permitted state,
so too will the holy city become redeemed.*

—Talmud Taanis 20:a



Although not directly related to the specific laws of family purity per se, there are a number of issues which the husband should be aware of in the larger context of married life.

The time of the wife's menstruation is, in many cases, and to varying degrees, an uncomfortable one for her. Even prior to the onset of menstruation some women experience the physical or emotional discomfort called Premenstrual Syndrome.

As a result of the uterus expelling blood, many women experience menstrual cramping (Dysmenorrhea). This is a biological phenomenon over which she has little control. Both of these subjects are discussed in more detail in the Appendix.

Even when not menstruating she must remember to carry sanitary pads in case menstruation occurs unexpectedly. She must constantly change them when soiled and constantly keep herself clean to avoid embarrassing odors caused by menstrual blood.

The husband should be aware that prior to or during menstruation, his wife may exhibit quite pronounced emotional fluctuations. They may be based in hormonal changes or result from increased tension at this time.

If during these times her functionality is impaired, or even if she is incapacitated, he should lighten her burden by accepting additional household responsibilities. If she is undergoing difficulties she should communicate them to her husband and, if possible, before they occur (see Appendix - Premenstrual Syndrome). This will allow him to understand her situation and respond appropriately.

It is wisest for both to realize that these are biological phenomena, embedded in nature by the Al-mighty. There is no one “at fault.” What remains is to alleviate, comfort, and ease difficult situations as they arise and this demands heightened sensitivity on the husband’s part.

—w—

When a woman experiences a menstrual discharge, it being blood which emerges from her body¹, she enters a niddah state....

—Leviticus 15:19

GENERAL

A woman becomes a “menstruant,” *niddab* in Hebrew, when blood leaves the womb. This is based on the verse, “and she revealed the *source* of her blood².” The *source* refers to the womb, where the infant is formed and it is from here that menstrual (*niddab*) blood comes³.

A woman becomes a *niddab* whenever blood leaves the womb *regardless* of the cause⁴; i.e., whether related to the monthly menstruation, an internal gynecological examination which

1 Specifically, from the womb, *Rasbi*. For a description of *niddab* from a scriptural standpoint see Appendix - Seven White Days and *Chochmat Hatabara*, Chapter Three.

2 Leviticus 20:18.

3 *Rambam, Hilchos Isoorei Biab* 5:3, *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazoken* 183:1.

4 *Taz* 183:1.

involved penetration of the uterus⁵, giving birth⁶ or spotting.

Even a minuscule amount of blood coming from the uterus causes the *niddab* state⁷, regardless of whether it is moist or dry⁸—even if there was no sensation of menstrual bleeding or opening of the uterus accompanying the appearance of blood⁹.

NIDDAH BEFORE MARRIAGE

This state of *niddab*, as well as the spiritual excision of both¹⁰ for having relations at this time is applicable even before marriage¹¹, even if there wasn't full penetration¹² and there was no emission of semen¹³.

The other prohibitions associated with *niddab*, including kissing, hugging, and affectionate contact, also apply to an unmarried woman¹⁴, since an unmarried woman has never left her *niddab* state by immersing in a *mikveh*.

Additionally it is forbidden to be alone with them in closed quarters (unlike one's wife when she is a *niddab*—see Chapter Four).

There is no minimum age for a woman to become *niddab*¹⁵. Even a girl who has begun menstruating¹⁶ is in a constant *niddab* state until she immerses herself in a *mikveh* for the first time before her wedding¹⁷.

5 In such a case an orthodox Rabbi expert in these laws should be consulted to determine the wife's status.

6 See Chapter Fifteen.

7 *Niddab* 66:a. *Sbach* 183:3, *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazoken* 183:3.

8 *Mehaber* 188:4, *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazoken* 188:16.

9 *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazoken* 183:3, *Sbach* 183:2.

10 Leviticus 18:19, 20:18, see *Bodei Hasbulchan* 183:1 and 183:11.

11 *Ramo* 183:1.

12 *Darbei Teshuva* 183:14.

13 *Bodei Hasbulchan* 183:11.

14 *Bodei Hasbulchan* 183:12, *Darbei Teshuva* 183:15.

15 Even "on the day she is born," *Darbei Teshuva* 183:1. *Rasbi* on Leviticus 15:19.

16 Or otherwise become a *niddab*.

17 Note, immersion by a single woman, whether unmarried, divorced or widowed, except in preparation for marriage is forbidden. *Beis Yosef* end of Chapter 183, *Gefen Porioh* 14:10.

SENSATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH MENSTRUATION: *HARGASHA*

When a woman experiences a menstrual discharge, it being blood which emerges from her body¹⁸, she enters a niddab state...

—Leviticus 15:19

The subject of this verse is menstrual discharge. The words *which emerges from her body* are seemingly superfluous. The traditional rules of interpreting scriptural passages state that nothing is purposelessly repeated. Our sages, therefore, understood these words *which emerges from her body* to imply that the *niddab* state is scripturally defined as intrinsically connected to a *physical sensation* called *bargasha*¹⁹. In other words, menstruation as described here is one in which the woman *feels* something when blood leaves the womb.

Feeling the womb open to expel blood²⁰ or feeling blood flow from the womb into the vagina²¹ are considered *bargasha*. On the other hand, it is *halachically* questionable if feeling blood flow in the vaginal corridor qualifies as a *bargasha*²².

Note that many *poskim* hold it is doubtful if women, nowadays, can accurately discern a *bargasha* as *halachically* defined²³.

NON-PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROMES

When we refer to menstrual sensations we mean those listed above, specifically and not premenstrual syndromes (PMS). These may be a variety of disorders occurring prior to menstruation, including bloating, tiredness, migraines and emotional imbalances such as anger, depression, or anxiety spells (see Appendix - Premenstrual Syndrome). Note that we are not referring to disorders during the time of actual menstruation such as headache, stomach cramps, backache, etc., commonly associated with menstruation (see Appendix - Menstrual Cramps).

18 Specifically, from the womb, *Rasbi*.

19 *Sbach* 183:2, *Niddab* 57:b, see *Bodei Hasbulchan* 190:2 in *Tziyonim*.

20 *Mehaber* 190:1, *Tzemach Tzedek* 190:1, *Darhei Teshuva* 190:14.

21 *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazoken* 183:3, see *Darhei Teshuva* 190:14.

22 *Chavas Da'as, Beorim* 190:1.

23 *Shiurei Shevet HaLevy* on 190:1. Therefore, if a question arises, an orthodox Rabbi expert in these laws should be consulted.