



NIDDAH

*A man that lies with a woman who had her [menstrual] flow...
as she had revealed the source of her blood.*

—Leviticus 20:18



UTERINE BLEEDING

A woman becomes a “menstruant,” *niddah* in Hebrew, when blood leaves the womb¹. This is based on the verse above, “she had revealed the *source* of her blood².” The *source* refers to the womb³, where the infant is formed and it is from here that menstrual (*niddah*) blood comes⁴.

A woman enters this *niddah* state whenever blood leaves the womb regardless of the cause⁵ and

1. Even if it hasn't exited the body, Mehaber 183:1.

2. Leviticus 20:18.

3. Throughout, womb and uterus are used interchangeably.

4. *Rambam, Hilchos Isoorei Biah* 5:3; *Shach*, *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazoken* 183:1; *Bodei Hashulchan* 183:3. “Only uterine or cervical bleeding renders a woman a *niddah* (with the exception of hymenal bleeding,” Gefen Poriah 1:14. “Scripturally, the external os, cervix and the womb itself are collectively called ‘the womb.’ Only blood issuing from these cause *niddah* (or *zavah*). Blood which definitely issues from any other reproductive organ is not, except hymenal bleeding, which was rabbinically prohibited,” Gefen Poriah Chapter 1, endnote 48.

Bleeding or staining which may be traced or dismissed to other sources should be decided by an orthodox rabbi who is knowledgeable in these matters. Some examples: injuries, chemical irritations e.g. douches, contraceptive material, urinary tract, kidneys, ovaries, fallopian tubes, vaginal.

5. *Taz* 183:1.

whether for natural reasons e.g. menstruation, spotting, giving birth⁶, emotional excitement, physical exertion⁷ or because of medication⁸, or an internal gynecological examination which involved penetration into the uterus⁹.

Even a minuscule amount of blood exiting the uterus causes the *niddah* state¹⁰, regardless of whether it is moist or dry¹¹—even if there was no sensation of menstrual bleeding or opening of the uterus accompanying the appearance of blood¹².

NIDDAH BEFORE MARRIAGE

This state of *niddah*, as well as the spiritual excision of both¹³ for having relations at this time is applicable even before marriage¹⁴, even if there wasn't full penetration¹⁵ and there was no emission of semen¹⁶.

The other prohibitions associated with *niddah*, including kissing, hugging, and affectionate contact¹⁷, also apply to an unmarried woman¹⁸, since an unmarried woman has never left her *niddah* 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 *niddah*—see Chapter Four).

There is no minimum age for a woman to become *niddah*¹⁹. Even a girl who has begun menstruating²⁰

6. See Chapter Fifteen.

7. *Mehaber, Taz* 183:1, *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazoken* 183:2.

8. *Nishmat Avrohom* 183:3, *Chosen Yeshuot* 1:1.

9. *Aruch Hashulchan* Section 43, cited in *Nishmat Avraham* 183:2. In these instances, a Rabbi who is knowledgeable in these matters should be consulted to determine the wife's status. See additional examples in section Gynecological Considerations and Appendix - Gynecology.

10. *Niddah* 66:a. *Mehaber* 183:3, *Shach* 183:3, *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazoken* 183:3.

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

12. *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazoken* 183:3, *Shach* 183:2.

13. Leviticus 18:19, 20:18, see *Bodei Hashulchan* 183:11, 183:13

14. *Ramo* 183:1.

15. *Darchei Teshuva* 183:14.

16. *Bodei Hashulchan* 183:11.

17. E.g. handshaking, add more: Research

18. *Bodei Hashulchan* 183:12, *Darchei Teshuva* 183:15.

19. Even “on the day she is born,” Rambam, *Isorei Bia* 4:1, *Darchei Teshuva* 183:1. *Rashi* on Leviticus 15:19.

20. Or otherwise become a *niddah*. Regarding *niddah* resulting from a stain, *kesem*, before age twelve see *Mehaber* 190:2.

is in a constant *niddah* state until she immerses herself in a *mikveh* for the first time before her wedding²¹.

MENSTRUATION

Menstrual bleeding appearing as it normally does, (even when the sensation of blood flowing was unnoticed), as well as when discovered through an internal examination without noticeable physical sensations, render a woman *niddah*. From a *halachic* standpoint, it is considered that the physical sensation was slight and therefore went unnoticed²².

QUESTIONABLY ORIGINATED ELSEWHERE . If there is reason to believe that staining originated somewhere other than the womb, for example: vagina, urinary canal, bladder or an injury, cut, bruise, infection, or medical irritations, hemorrhoids, etc., an orthodox Rabbi who is knowledgeable in these matters should be consulted to determine her status.

NIDDAH THROUGH EXAMINATION

PREVIOUSLY CHECKED CLOTH . If the wife²³ performs an internal²⁴ examination using a cloth which was previously checked to be clean²⁵ and discovers a stain²⁶ of any size, she enters the *niddah* state²⁷, even if she felt no menstrual sensation²⁸.

Even if she had placed this cloth in a clean secure place but only afterwards performed an internal

21. Immersion by single women, whether unmarried, divorced or widowed, except in preparation for marriage is forbidden, *Beis Yosef* end of Chapter 183, *Gefen Porioh* 14:10.

A Talmudic discussion revolves around whether it is a *mitzvah* for someone who is ritually impure to seek purification as soon as possible. The *Mehaber* (192:7) holds that it is not a *mitzvah* for a menstruant to immerse as soon as possible (except when fulfilling “be fruitful and multiply” or her marital obligation for intimacy). Therefore, there is no *mitzvah* for a widow or bachelorette to purify themselves from *niddah*, *Bodei Hashulchan* 197:10.

22. *Pischei Magidim* 1:14.

23. Similarly, if the husband wipes his penis, immediately following intercourse, with a cloth which was previously examined to be clean and discovers an impure colored stain of any size, his wife enters the *niddah* state, *Bodei Hashulchan* 190:293. Check if poskim in agreement.

24. When performed deeply [in the private place, where menstrual sensations, *hargasha*, occurs], this impurity is on a scriptural level, *Mehaber* 190:54, see *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazoken* 190:122, *Chavas Da'as* 190:1.

25. *Mehaber* 190:33, 190:54.

26. Of the impure colors listed above.

27. *Mehaber* 190:54, 190:33. Whether elongated, round or another shape.

28. It is assumed that menstrual bleeding was accompanied with *hargasha* and that she mistook the sensation of the examination cloth for this. *Chavas Da'as* 190:1, *Bodei Hashulchan* 183:6. See *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazoken* 183:3.

examination and found the stain, she enters the *niddah* state²⁹.

Blood found on an examination cloth which only partially entered the private area causes *niddah*, as well³⁰.

The day or night it is found is recorded for the purpose of reckoning the next anticipated menstruation³¹.

DOUBTFUL SOURCE OF BLEEDING . If she has any reason to suspect that the coloration on the examination cloth was caused through a bruise or cut in her vagina or in that area, an orthodox Rabbi who is knowledgeable in these matters should be consulted. He may base his decision partly on medical evidence. Nonetheless it is a difficult subject which can only be decided through a competent authority.

DISCOLORED URINE

If she notices blood after urinating, an orthodox Rabbi who is knowledgeable in these matters should be consulted.

Facts which might influence his decision³² include: whether the blood was found in the water or on the seat, if she sat over the middle of the toilet seat or on its edge, if this is a one time experience or it repeats itself, if she felt pain or burning during urination, and if she ate some red food, such as beets, prior to this.

GYNECOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

OPENING OF THE UTERUS . The sages³³ asserted, “There can be no opening of the uterus³⁴ without blood flowing³⁵.”

This applies not only when something is expelled, such as during menstruation, but also when

29. *Mehaber* 190:33.

30. According to many Rabbonim who decide according to Chabad custom. However, blood found through an external wiping, which did not penetrate whatsoever, some hold causes *niddah*, while others view it according to the guidelines deciding stains, *Chosen Yeshuot* 1:2, footnote 2, see sources there.

31. *Mehaber* 190:54, as explained at length in Chapter Fourteen.

32. These are found in the *Ramo* 191:1. Within these situations are interwoven numerous and differing *halachic* opinions too complex to narrow into one final decision in the text.

33. *Niddah* 21:a, b.

34. *Rashi Niddah* 21:a.

35. *Mehaber* 188:3, *Ramo* 194:2. This rule applies primarily to the internal os, but also applies to the external os as a stringency, *Shiurei Shevet Halevy* 188:3, 4.

something is inserted³⁶ into the uterus, e.g. a medical instrument.

Some internal gynecological examinations involve penetration into the uterus using various types of medical instruments³⁷. When the uterus is penetrated with a medical instrument, the *niddah* state almost invariably results³⁸, even when no sign of blood is present. Therefore, in the event that a medical instrument was inserted into the cervix³⁹ or into the womb⁴⁰, an orthodox Rabbi⁴¹ knowledgeable in these matters must be consulted⁴².

In light of the above, it is advisable to arrange such procedures at a time when the woman is already a *niddah*. If this is not possible, an orthodox Rabbi should be consulted.

ADDITIONAL PURITY

During menstruation⁴³, it is customary for women to refrain from attending synagogue, looking at a *sefer* Torah or praying while standing in close proximity to friends(??).

This custom is in the category of additional purity, not based on prohibition. Therefore, she is permitted to attend synagogue if abiding by this will cause her anguish e.g., during the holidays⁴⁴ when everyone attends synagogue, when she is with her son or daughter (??), when visiting synagogue is

36. *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazoken* 188:8. This applies for pregnant, nursing, and post-menopausal women, as well, *Pischei Teshuva* 194:4.

Some poskim hold this rule does not apply when something is inserted into the uterus, see Appendix - Gynecology for more deliberations.

37. For example: an endometrial biopsy with a biopsy curet or a hysteroscopy (visual examination of the uterine cavity through an instrument called a hysteroscope). A number of instruments are used to perform a cervical biopsy, for example: Tischler cervical forceps, Kevorkian-Young forceps, and the Duncan endometrial curet.

38. See Appendix - Gynecological.

39. See opinions brought in *Nishmat Avraham* Volume Two *Yoreh Deah* on *Mehaber* 183:2 and 194:2.

“Penetration into the cervix causes *niddah*, or at least requires consultation with an orthodox Rabbi who is knowledgeable in these matters,” *Shiurei Shevet HaLevy* on 188:3. Note *Gefen Porioh* Chapter One endnote 68.

40. An overview of opinions regarding the width which causes *niddah* is found in Appendix - Gynecology.

41. *Nishmat Avraham* 194:2.

42. In order to accurately consult the Rabbi, the wife should ask the doctor what diameter the instrument was and how far it reached.

43. During the Seven White Days this custom does not apply, *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazoken* 88:2. Nor does it apply during impurity due to birth, *Gefen Porioh* Chapter Two note 21.

44. “From the first day of *slichos*,” *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazoken* 88:2.

related to her giving birth⁴⁵ or she has another reason for attending⁴⁶.

At home, however, even during menstruation, women may pray, make *kiddush* and say all the blessings⁴⁷.

During menstruation it is customary for women to refrain from entering a cemetery⁴⁸.

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45. Note, *Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazoken* 88:2.

46. *Kitzur Dinei Tahara* 3:26.

47. *Shulchan Aruch Amur Hazoken* 88:2.

48. *Pnei Baruch* 37:6, 7.

