



MAKING SURE MENSTRUATION HAS FINISHED

Thus said the Almighty to the Jewish People, “During the exile, your purity and impurity alternate. In the future—I will cause your purity to be perpetual.”

—Tanbuma, Metzura Ch. 9



Before discussing the laws connected to the hefsek tabara (examination ascertaining cessation of menstruation), it is important to emphasize the following considerations.

The necessity of the hefsek tabara should not be minimized whatsoever. Even if the wife is absolutely certain that menstruation has ceased and there remains no sign of impurity, in order to continue the purification process (seven white days, hafifah etc.) she must successfully perform the hefsek tabara. Even more than that—missing the hefsek tabara invalidates her immersion. Even if she was sure that there remained no signs of her impurity, the seven white day period passed, she washed as required and immersed in the mikveh, nonetheless if she

hasn't performed the hefsek tabara, her immersion is invalid and it is as if she didn't immerse¹.

The time she performs the hefsek tabara should not be played with. She should not make calculations which day is most convenient or inconvenient for her to go to the mikveh and adjust her performing the hefsek tabara accordingly. Likewise, she shouldn't delay its performance due to difficulties or inconveniences. The Torah does not like to see delay of the mikveh night. Rather, when this night becomes halachically feasible, efforts should be made that it is performed on its proper night. Halachic exceptions to this should be according to the directions of an orthodox Rabbi expert in these laws.

Furthermore, they should not independently invalidate a questionable hefsek tabara without consulting a Rabbi². Neither the wife nor husband should say "why should I be bothered or embarrassed by asking the Rabbi if a specific hefsek tabara is pure or not? I'll just assume it is impure, and just delay it one more day."

This is stated clearly, "If the husband is there, it is a mitzvah to go to the mikveh as soon as she is allowed in order not to delay fulfilling the commandment, 'Be fruitful and multiply' for even one night³."

Sometimes a question arises whether a hefsek tabara, or one of the examinations during the seven white days, is pure or not. In such a case another hefsek tabara or examination is often performed the following day. It is best to approach a Rabbi for his decision as soon as possible. However, if clarifying this question takes longer, it is important to note which day the questionable hefsek tabara or examination applied.

Additionally, there is another dimension which lies in the message sent to the husband. Delaying the hefsek tabara can be interpreted by the husband, correctly or not, as the wife not caring or not giving enough forethought. Either of these is undesirable.

1 *Bodei Hasbulchan* 196:8. In such a case an orthodox Rabbi expert in these laws must be consulted.

2 This would also confuse projection of the Interval Cycle, which is measured from *hefsek tabara* until the onset of the following menstruation.

3 *Mehaber* 197:2.



And this is the law when she ceases to notice blood, after seeing it for a few days.
 She should check herself on the day that it ceased, in order to establish her
 purity. This is to be done near sunset.

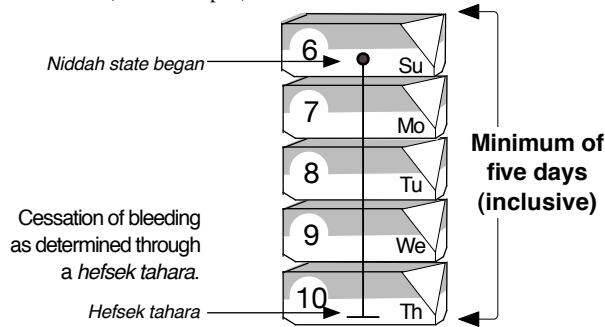
—*Shulchan Aruch* 196:1

PURPOSE

To ascertain the complete cessation of any bleeding, the wife who is a *niddah* performs an internal examination called a *hefsek tahara*⁴. This is an indispensable prerequisite to counting the seven white days (as explained in Chapter Six).

FIVE MINIMUM DAYS

The *hefsek tahara* can only be performed from at least the *fifth* day after she enters the *niddah* state⁵. Since for the seven white day period to be valid, not only must the bleeding have stopped, but also any traces of remaining semen must be inviable⁶. (This is explained at length in the appendix Five Minimum Days.) The sages therefore required this five day time barrier to ensure that any vestige of semen from the husband⁷ has had time to “spoil,” thereby losing its capability of invalidating the seven white day period. This requirement holds even if there was no possibility of marital relations, for example, the husband was elsewhere⁸.



4 *Mebaber* 196:1.
 5 *Ramo* 196:11.
 6 *Mebaber, Ramo* 196:11.
 7 Even if there were no marital relations before her entering the *niddah* state, *Ramo* 196:11.
 8 *Tzemach Tzedek* 196:28.