Rules For the Mikvah

Contributed by Michael
Thursday, 30 November 2006
Last Updated Tuesday, 13 February 2007

BE HOLY!

Guidelines For Modest Behavior In The Mikvah
Excerpted from the book, "Taharat HaKodesh" by the Gaon, Rabbi Aharon Rota

-
A person who does not behave in the proper, modest fashion in a mikvah, not only fails to purify himself, but also adds to his impurity and causes himself further spiritual damage.

-
Someone who enters the mikvah waters, not with the intention of immersing for spiritual purity, but rather for bodily pleasures, brings damage to himself and leads others astray.

-
A person should not think about matters of Torah in the changing room or showers, since it is forbidden to meditate on holy things in places where people are naked. This is only permissible when immersed in the waters of the mikvah. Furthermore, one should especially guard against sexual thoughts.

-
A person should strive to limit his speech as much as possible in the mikvah, for no good will come from his words. For instance, if someone should ask him a question, he should respond curtly, just enough so as not to be rude.

-
One must not be like the fools who stand naked and engage in conversation, with no sense of shame or the fear of Heaven upon them.

-
One must also not listen to the conversations of others, but rather concentrate on one's immersion and their intentions, and not linger in the mikvah any longer than necessary.

-
Since it is forbidden to go about naked (Orach Chaim, 2:1), one must endeavor to cover oneself, with a robe or towel, as much as possible, to and from the immersion pool.

-
One should not go naked to and from the bathroom.

-
It is forbidden to look at naked people, both women and men. This is one of the ways of blemishing the Yesod. It is especially forbidden to look at a man's sexual organ, including one's own. Someone who looks at the nakedness of others in the mikvah will suffer far more than he will gain by going to the mikvah.

-
Guarding one's eyes in the mikvah can be a greater tikun than the immersion itself.

-
On the way to the mikvah, a person should pray that he doesn't transgress any of the prohibitions regarding speech or sight.

-
One should not use a urinal where his nakedness can be seen by others.

-
It is best to shower at home before going to the mikvah, and not in an open area in the mikvah with others.

-

One must dress in a modest manner (for instance by putting on underwear while a towel is wrapped around his waist) and not be afraid of what scoffers might say.

Remember, one who sanctifies himself even a little below, it given great sanctity from Above.