

Who the Heck Needs Family Purity?

Contributed by Tzvi Fishman
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Question:

With all of the problems I have in my marriage, do you really expect me to keep all the laws of family purity? There are so many of them. For instance, why can't I just refrain from having relations with my husband during my menstruation without immersing in a mikvah afterward?

Answer:

For certain, many of your marital problems stem from your attitude toward this supremely holy commandment. In addition, hundreds of thousands of Jewish women guard the laws of family purity and enjoy it!

Ask any Orthodox woman if it's a burden or a pleasure. Chances are she will tell you it's the best thing that ever happened to her marriage. Thank to the laws of family purity, Jewish wives are brides ever month! As the old saying goes: "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." Having to refrain from sexual relations during the period of menstruation brings a constant renewal of intimacy and love to what can otherwise become a stale and loveless act.

In addition, the period of separation adds a powerful spiritual aspect to the marriage, bringing about deeper, more meaningful communication between husband and wife, and preventing the wife from becoming a mere object of the husband's ever-waning lust, as too often happens in secular marriages.

But mere separation isn't enough. Menstruation brings about a state of spiritual impurity that can only be purified through immersion in a mikvah. The Kabbalist, Rabbi Eliahu Leon Levi, explains that many marital problems, including grave illnesses, lack of shalom bayit, problems with children, and economic woes, derive from not keeping the laws of family purity, which have been the holy foundation of the Jewish Nation ever since the time of our forefathers. He explains that when a couple doesn't respect the laws of family purity, the devastatingly negative spiritual forces of Niddah wage a war of havoc and revenge on the household. Very often, Hashem brings it about that the couple argues and fights until they divorce, for their benefit, even though the tragedy of divorce causes Hashem figurative tears, rather than to have to inflict the severe Divine punishment that befalls transgressors of the laws of family purity and Niddah.

While it would be best for you to keep the laws of family purity out of recognition of their positive value to your marriage and your family's health and wellbeing, it is important to understand the consequences of treating this sacred commandment lightly.

Regarding the difficulty in learning and keeping the many laws surrounding family purity, it really isn't so complicated. Millions of women have learned them, and you can too. If there aren't classes at your local synagogue, there are many excellent books on the topic, and the wife of any Orthodox rabbi can find a woman who will be happy to teach you. To get you started, here is a list of links which explore the different facets of "taharat hamishpachah." To put it off till tomorrow. Get started today and have fun!

Basic Family Purity

http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/680218/jewish/Family-Purity.htm

The Essence of Ritual Purity

http://www.chabad.org/theJewishWoman/article_cdo/aid/1542/jewish/On-the-Essence-of-Ritual-Impurity.htm

Laws of Family Purity

http://www.breslev.co.il/categories/judaism/practical_halacha/the_laws_of_family_purity.aspx?category=37&chapter=123&pageid=1&language=english

Renew Your Marriage Every Month

http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/1762/jewish/The-Monthly-Marriage.htm

What's a Mikvah?

http://www.chabad.org/theJewishWoman/article_cdo/aid/1541/jewish/The-Mikvah.htm

A Woman's Mikvah Experience

http://www.chabad.org/theJewishWoman/article_cdo/aid/404905/jewish/Transforming-Waters.htm

Mikvah Directory

www.Mikvah.org