

Daf Digest for this month is dedicated in memory of ישראל צבי בן זאב גוטליב ז"ל

By the Weiss/Gotlib Families—London, England

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Interpositions

R' Shmuel bar R' Yitzchok rules that a woman may not immerse in a harbor.

Shmuel's reaction to his concern for interpositions is recorded.

Additional rulings related to possible interpositions are presented.

Reish Lakish describes the correct body position for immersing.

2) Hair

Rabba bar R' Huna discusses whether knots in one's hair constitute an interposition.

R' Yochanan rules that only a single hair that is knotted constitutes an interposition.

3) Interpositions (cont.)

R' Yitzchok discusses what constitutes a Biblical interposition and what constitutes a Rabbinic interposition.

4) Time to immerse

Rav rules that when immersing on time a woman must immerse at night but when she is not immersing on time she may immerse even during the day.

R' Yochanan rules that in all circumstances a woman should always immerse at night and it is reported that Rav retracted his position.

Exceptions to this rule are noted.

The reason why even nowadays women do not immerse on the seventh day before nightfall is explained.

5) Scrubbing and immersing

The Gemara presents four opinions concerning the amount of time that may elapse between scrubbing and immersing.

Mar Zutra and R' Chinena disagree whether a woman may scrub and immerse the same night.

R' Ada begins a challenge to R' Chinena's position that one may not scrub and immerse the same night. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

Knotted hair

שלש אינן חוצצות, שתיים איני יודע

Regarding knotted hair, Rabba b. R' Huna rules that one hair tied into a knot onto itself is considered too tight to allow water of a mikveh to penetrate, and this is an interposition. Three hairs tied together in a knot do not prevent water from circulating and coming in contact with the hair. Hair is a hard substance, and when three are twisted together they do not tighten enough to interfere with water flow. Rabba says, however, that he does not know the halacha whether two hairs which are twisted into a knot tie too tightly to allow water to penetrate. R' Yochanan clarified that the only situation which is unacceptable is when one hair is tied onto itself, but two hairs do not cause an interposition.

Beis Yosef (Y.D. 198:5) discusses the wording of Rambam (Hilchos Mikva'os 2:15) on this issue. Rambam rules, "Two hairs or more which are tied together in one bunch in one knot do not constitute an interposition." Beis Yosef understands that Rambam holds that the questionable situation whether two hairs allow water to penetrate is when they are twisted together and looped into a knot. The case where three certainly allow water to flow among them is true when three strands are together and then twisted around as one column into a knot. However, if two strands are tied and knotted with two others, or if the two are knotted with a third, this would be clearly permitted, as this is equivalent to a case of "three hairs."

Beis Yosef understands, however, that Rashba and Ra"n hold that two strands tied into a knot with another two strands are considered as "two." Beis Yosef notes that it seems that Rashba rules according to Rabba b. bar Channa (in our text, we have Rabba bar R' Huna, but this opinion is cited in Sukkah 6a in the name of Rabba b. bar Channa, as Beis Yosef mentions).

Bac"n disagrees with Beis Yosef, and he explains that there is no disagreement between Rabba b. R' Huna and R' Yochanan, or among the Rishonim in this issue. He understands that all opinions agree that two strands of hair are in the category of "two" whether they are tied together around themselves, or if they are tied together with a third strand. This is also the understanding of Rema in his ruling.

Beis Yosef agrees that even those who say that two hairs is an uncertain situation, when two strands are tied together with three other strands that this is called "three hairs," which certainly allow water to flow along all the surfaces. ■

Today's Daf Digest is dedicated

לעילוי נשמת

שמואל יהושע בן ישראל

HALACHA Highlight

Immersing with contacts

או עצמה עיניה ביותר

Or if she shut her eyes too tightly

The authors of Minchas Yitzchok and Shevet HaLevi were asked about the permissibility of a woman to immerse with contacts lenses in her eyes. The nature of contact lenses is that even a small amount of water could dislodge them from their place and cause the contact lens to become lost. For this reason many people do not put their lenses in their eyes until after they have washed their face in the morning, and they remove their lenses before they wash up as they get ready for bed. The woman in question would prepare for immersion at home without her contact lenses in her eyes but when she would go to the mikvah to immerse she would reinsert her lenses into her eyes. For a variety of reasons, in the mikvah it would be difficult for her to remove the lenses and then replace them after immersion so she wanted to know whether she may immerse with the lenses in her eyes. When asked why she was not afraid that she will lose her lenses when she immerses she responded that when she immerses she closes her eyes so there is no chance that her lenses would fall out.

The one presenting the question was concerned that the lenses would constitute an interposition since it prevents water from reaching her eyes. Even though a woman immerses with her eyes closed, it has to be possible for the water to reach that part of the body as well. On the other hand, since the lenses could be dislodged with even a drop of water perhaps we should assume that a

REVIEW and Remember

1. Why did Shmuel not allow his daughters to immerse in the Euphrates during the springtime ?

2. What is the proper body position for a woman as she immerses?

3. What is the point of dispute between Rav and R' Yochanan ?

4. How long of a delay is permitted between one's scrubbing and immersion ?

lens does not adhere to the eye and water could get under the lens had she kept her eyes open. As such, the lenses would not constitute an interposition. The one concern that remains is that if she is afraid that her contacts could get washed away by the water she may hold her eyes closed very tightly and R' Yochanan warns against immersing with one's eyes closed tightly. Minchas Yitzchok¹ agreed that a woman may not immerse with contacts in her eyes out of concern that perhaps she will tightly close her eyes which would constitute an interposition. Shevet HaLevi² agrees that a woman should not immerse with her lenses in but if the question is raised the morning after a woman immersed he is not certain that she would have to immerse again. He bases his uncertainty on the fact that many Rishonim maintain that **בדיעבד** immersing with one's eyes tightly closed does not invalidate the immersion. ■

¹ שו"ת מנחת יצחק ח"ו סי' פ"ט.
² שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ב סי' צ"ז. ■

STORIES off the Daf

Tevilah at the Right Time

"בי יוחנן אמר בין בזמנה בין שלא בזמנה אינה טובלת אלא בלילה..."

On today's daf we find a discussion regarding the proper time to immerse. In general, the proper time carries great weight and should not be missed unless the challenges are insurmountable. And, throughout our long history, the challenges have sometimes truly seemed impossible to overcome...except to the brave women who overcame them.

In Warsaw, during WWII, the Nazis suddenly ordered all public mikvaos to be closed. Stamped with swastikas, the

following notices graced their doors: "Use of the mikveh or bathing in it will render the perpetrator liable to punishment as if a terrorist act had been committed: from ten years of imprisonment to even the death penalty!" After two weeks, all of the public baths had also been shut down. When the mikveh on Smocznie Street was closed, the German officer in charge of the operation pulled his machine gun on the proprietor, Mr. Goldman, and said, "Whoever defies this ban will be shot immediately...and that also means you!"

Jewish Warsaw was left without a single mikveh to serve a huge population. Women with the means had no choice but to pay for the expensive tram ride to take them to outlying suburbs, where mikvaos were still operating. As the day

drew on, hundreds of women carrying very obvious bundles under their arms filled the trams. When the tram stopped in one of the small towns outside of Warsaw, the women would all make a mad dash for the exits at the same time, each hoping to be the first to reach the mikveh and make the journey home. All feared any loss of time; the penalty was severe if they did not make it back before the nighttime curfew in Warsaw.

One time, two German soldiers spotted a large group of women rushing quickly through the back alleys of Proshkowitz in the early evening. They ran after them in hot pursuit, thinking a mass escape was in progress, and found them...at the doors of the local mikveh.¹ ■

¹ ס' בקדושה ובגבורה, עמ' 335-333 ■

