

## Nidah and Zivah

**Ref: Sefer Kedushah, Hilchot Issurei Biah, Chapters 4–11**

One is not allowed to have relations with a woman who became impure due to menstruation (*nidah*). This would apply even to a girl above the age of 3. A girl from the day she is born can become a *nidah* i.e. there is no difference between an adult, and minor etc. regarding this impurity. The punishment is *karet*.

⌄ | Not to have relations with a woman in the *nidah* or *zivah* state<sup>23</sup>

This applies to –

**7 days** bleeding of *nidah*

*Zavah* period of bleeding plus her **7** clean days

Impurity after birth of a male – **7 days** (followed by **33** pure days after *mikveh*, even if bleeding.)

Impurity after birth of female – **14 days** (followed by **66** pure days after *mikveh*, even if bleeding).

The above periods of impurity only end when woman goes to *mikveh* (ritual bath). This removes the impurity.

Women usually have fixed periods when menstruation occurs. This is called *veset*. At other times, the husband can assume that his wife is pure unless told otherwise.

A woman who does not have a fixed *veset* is forbidden to engage in relations until she inspects herself for bleeding (i.e. with a cloth).

### 🔔 Reminder

Summary of Definitions of *zav*, *zivah*, *nidah* and *yoledet* (people who transmit impurity by sitting and lying down)

Ref: *Zav* Sefer Korbanot, *Hilchot Mechusrei Kaparah*, Chapters 1, 2, 3

*Zavah*. *Nidah* Sefer Kedushah, *Hilchot Issurei Biah*, Chapters 4–11

*Yoledet* Sefer Kedushah, *Hilchot Issurei Biah*, Chapters 7, 10



### ZAV

Disease in a male which causes an involuntary discharge of semen



If a person experiences **1** *zav* discharge his status is of one who had seminal emission.

If he experiences **2** discharges this is called *zav*. He must count 7 clean days and then immerse. He is not obligated to bring a sacrifice.

If he experiences **3** discharges he is a complete *zav* and is obligated to bring a sacrifice – *Mosheh Misinai*.

### ZAVAH (MAJOR)

A woman who experiences uterine bleeding for **3** consecutive days at a time other than the days when she usually menstruates.

### ZAVAH (MINOR)

A woman who experiences uterine bleeding (outside of menstruation time) for **1** or **2**

consecutive days

#### NIDAH

- a fixed day of expected menstruation
- 7 *yemei nidah* (days of nidah)
- 11 days of *zivah* – *Mosheh Misinai* – There are no more than 11 days between one menstrual bleeding and next.
- Thus the cycle continues every 18 days, 7 days, of nidah and 11 days of zivah

#### YOLEDET (CHILDBIRTH)

A woman who gives birth to a male is impure for 7 days

A woman who gives birth to a female is impure for 14 days

Miscarriage also included in this category.

#### 🕒 Reminder:

Definition of *Zav*, *Zavah*, *Nidah*, *Yoledet* (People who Transmit Impurity by Sitting or Lying Down).

Ref: *Sefer Taharah, Hilchot Metamei Mishkav Umoshav*, Chapter 1  
Pack on Impurity of *Zav*, *Zavah* etc



*Mikveh* (immersion) for *nidah* must be at night (unless there are special circumstances, in which case it should be done during one of the following days).

Bleeding continued.

External factors can also cause bleeding of *nidah* and *zivah* and these give rise to impurity, e.g. jumping, some factor which causes an arousal.

Anatomy of sexual organs.

Blood could have one of 5 colours

- *Adom* (red)
- *Shachor* (black)
- *Keren karkom* (bright saffron)
- *Memei adamah* (muddy water)
- *Yayin hamazug* (diluted wine)

Differences between bleeding of *Nidah*, *Zivah*, and Purity. (All originate from uterus)

It is *halachah* of *Mosheh Misinai* that there are not less than 11 days between one menstruation and the next.

According to Rambam, a woman has a constant regular cycle of 7 days *nidah* followed by 11 days *zivah*. If she bleeds in days of *nidah*, this is the blood of *nidah*. If she bleeds in days of *zivah*, this is the blood of *zivah*. This could be interrupted by birth. When this happens, a new *nidah* period starts after completion of days connected to child birth.

(These days women follow a different opinion, whereby their days of *nidah* and *zivah* vary each month according to circumstance. Days of *nidah/zivah* start at menstruation, then 7 clean days after bleeding stops. New bleeding after this is regarded as *nidah* again).

*Zivah* is further divided into:

- *Zavah ketanah* (Minor *zavah*) – Only 1 or 2 consecutive days of bleeding in *zivah* period.
- *Zavah gedolah* (Major *zavah*) – 3 consecutive days of bleeding in *zivah* period.

A minor *zavah* needs count only 1 clean day before immersing. (No sacrifice is brought.)

A major *zavah* counts 7 clean days before immersing in morning of the seventh day.

She is permitted to husband that night, and the next day she brings her sacrifices (2 doves).

#### **Reminder:**

Mechusrei Kaparah (period after mikveh and sunset, before achieving atonement with Sacrifices).

Ref: *Sefer Korbanot, Hilchot Mechusrei Kaparah*, Chapter 1.



Presently Jewish women are stricter and always count 7 clean days after any uterine bleeding, before going to *mikveh* to immerse.



*Veset* is an established pattern of menstruation – *Derabanan*.

A *veset* pattern is established when the menstruation repeats itself 3 times on the same day. E.g. 20<sup>th</sup> of month on 3 consecutive months.

Similarly, it can only be uprooted if it misses that day 3 times in a row.

If a *veset* becomes established in the ‘days of *zivah*’ it can be uprooted much easier – even after one miss.

If a woman does not have a fixed *veset* it is forbidden to engage in relations until she makes an internal examination on herself first.

If she does have a fixed *veset*, then relations are forbidden on the period when *veset* occurs. (I.e. either whole day or whole night, depending on when the *veset* occurs.)

If the pattern is not clear, then relations may be forbidden on more than one day.

A *veset* established by external factors is not a true *veset* even if it occurs 3 times.

Different patterns can occur e.g. an advancing *veset* is one which occurs say on first month 15<sup>th</sup>, next month 16<sup>th</sup>, then 17<sup>th</sup>. If next month occurs on 18<sup>th</sup> then *veset* is established.

Bleeding and blood stains. (*ketamim*)

According to Scriptural Law, a woman does not become impure until she experiences and sees blood which comes out. She becomes impure from the time of menstruation and onwards only. (I.e. retroactive does not apply)



According to Rabbinic Law:

If a woman discovers a *ketem* (blood stain) on her flesh or on her clothes, she is impure. The impurity extends 24 hours retro actively.

This applies even if she did not experience the sensation of menstruation.

This impurity is because of the possibility that the bleeding came from the uterus.

There is no minimum measure for a stain found on the flesh, but on the clothes, the stain must be greater than the measure of 1 *gris* = ½ a Sicilian bean = size of 3 x 3 lentils i.e. 9 lentils

## Reminder:

Pack on Weights and Measures



A stain would not render impure if found on a coloured garment (only a white one would render impurity). Nor if the bleeding was found on an item which is insusceptible to impurity. (I.e. stone, earth, fish skin, outside of earthenware vessel, or a cloth less than **3 x 3 etzba.**)

There are many other factors which also need to be considered when analysing whether the stain has caused impurity i.e.

- Position found on body (thighs more likely to be uterine origin)
- Position on clothing (i.e. above or below belt, inside or outside of garment)
- Is there another cause which could be attributed to the bleeding?

 The *Rabanim* ruled more leniently in these matters.

I.e. if a woman says this bleeding has come from a particular wound, or from the butcher area of the market where she has visited, or from slaughtering a chicken etc.

May be attributed to a louse, if size is no larger than **1 gris**.

- Is liquid blood?

To test if stain is blood, there are **7** cleansing agents which should be used in a specific order. If stain is blood, then colour will wash out.

The following women have altered patterns of bleeding which need to be considered:

*Meuberet* – Pregnant women – **3 months or more**

*Menikah* – Nursing – **within 24 months of birth**

*Betulah* – Virgin – **girl who has never menstruated**

*Zekenah* – Elderly women – **has not menstruated for 90 days**

Stringencies taken on by Jewish women.

As time moved on it became more difficult to keep track of patterns of menstruation and the Sages made stricter rulings. Also, Jewish women accepted further stringencies upon themselves e.g. whenever she discovered uterine bleeding, even the size of a mustard seed, she counts **7** clean days and goes to *mikveh* on the night of **8<sup>th</sup>** day.