

Mikvah Immersion

Tevilah-Immersion Perspective

Mikvah is one of the Three special Mitzvos for women.

(The other Two special Mitzvos are candle lighting and Hafrashas Challah).

- It is an auspicious time to **pray** to Hashem.
- The Rebbe promoted giving **Tzedakah** especially before doing these Mitzvos.



Three Special Mitzvos for Women

Hafrashas
Challah



Taharas
Hamishpacha



Hadlokas
Neiros



The performance of this mitzvah, as well as our thoughts and intentions on this special night, affect the Neshoma that is drawn down and create the “garments” that the Neshoma will bear.



(Tanya)

- It is important to immerse on the **correct** day.
- Be as discreet as possible- this is your private **Mitzvah**!
- Prepare ahead to avoid stress so this mitzvah can be performed with **joy**!



Chatzitza

Intervening substance



A woman's entire body and every hair must be immersed simultaneously in the waters of the Mikvah to ensure a kosher and valid immersion.

There must be no intervening substance between her and the water.

Therefore, before immersion, she is required to thoroughly **wash and examine her entire body and hair**, to ensure that no intervening substances (chatzitza) will separate any part of her body from the waters of the Mikvah.



What is a Chatzitza?

Anything that interferes with any part of your body/hair coming into contact with the water of the Mikvah.



What is considered a Chatzitza?

1. Something that is small and **MOST WOMEN** are particular about, *even if you are not particular about.*

2. Something **YOU** are particular about, *even if other women are not.*

Example: The way you wax the hair on your eyebrows.

Note: If you establish a personal habit, that you have done three or more times in preparation for Mikvah and you wish to stop doing this further, consult your Rav before stopping.

3. **ALL FOREIGN SUBSTANCES**, *even if no one is particular about it.*

This applies as a chatzitza even if it covers only a small part of your body! Example: Lotion on face, hands or feet.



Wounds

Blood

Blood that is dried and crusted or blood that is **outside** of wound is a **Chatzitza**.

However, blood that is wet inside the wound is *not* a Chatzitza.

Scabs

Scabs of unhealed wounds, that are dry and hard, should be softened with warm water.

If the wound is healed, the scab should be removed.

Pus

Pus that drained **outside** of a wound and dried after **72 hours** is a **Chatzitza**.



Wounds

Splinters

Splinters that stick out of the skin are a **Chatzitza**.

However, splinters completely embedded under the skin are *not* a Chatzitza.

Warts/corns

Warts or corns are *not* a Chatzitza, they just need to be softened.

If they are loose or almost falling off, a shaila needs to be asked.

Blisters

Blisters that are closed, are *not* a Chatziza.

If they pop and are not painful, remove the loose skin and clean.



Stains/Ink

- Scrub the stain to remove as much as will come off, if no substance remains, yet it is still stained it's ok.
- **Tip:** Alcohol, lemon juice, vinegar or baby oil can be used to remove.

Remove any residue from these solutions.



Consult a Rav for:

- Temporary dental work/dental work in progress (ex: temporary fillings).
- Tooth causing pain
- Ingrown toenail that can't be cleaned
- Cast
- Stitches

(In general, self dissolving stitches are better than non-dissolving. Consult a Rav).

- Nuva Ring and hormonal patch* are a **Chatitza** and need to be removed for immersion.
- IUD* is not a Chatziza (*strings should be wiped clean*).

** used with a heter from Rav*



Prepare in Advance



Hair Removal



If you are particular:

- If hair cutting and removal/shaving is something **you are particular about and regularly remove**, then it needs to be removed for Mikvah.
- Once you have done it **three times** and you no longer wish to do it, consult a Rav.

If you are *not* particular:

- Hair cutting is done when you feel the need to. It does not have to be done every month. If you need to cut hair this month, then it does need to be done prior to immersion.
- When you feel you need to, make sure to have in mind that it is just for this time. Example: Some women do hair removal only in the summer time.
- If you only shave certain parts, that is all you need to do.

Hair Removal

Haircuts/Waxing & Shaving



- Hair cutting/removal, is best done at least Three days prior to Mikvah.
- If done closer to immersion or on day of Mikvah, be extra careful that any residue or loose hair are completely removed.
- Note: Hair removal for Mikvah is permitted on Chol Hamoed, during Sefirah and the Three weeks.

Hair Dye

- If it is permanent hair dye and has no substance, it is not a Chatzitza. Consult a Rav.
- If dye is incomplete or growing out, consult a Rav.
- It is preferable to dye it fresh a few days to a week prior to immersion to ensure that no residue remains.



Dandruff/Lice/Nits

- Make sure to treat before Mikvah.
Preferably, a few days before, if discovered.
- Once full treatment has been done to clean and remove, anything that is not removable, is not a Chatzitza.



Mikvah Day

(Day 7)



Mikvah Day-Day 7:



AVOID ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ON MIKVAH DAY:

MEAT/ CHICKEN

- Eating **chicken** or **meat** (including whole or ground), which can get stuck in your teeth. (Note: if meat is eaten by mistake, be extra careful to clean teeth well.)
- Meat may be eaten for a Seudas Mitzvah and Shabbos and Yom Tov, but be extra careful to clean teeth well.

OTHER FOOD

- Other food that can get stuck in your teeth. Example: corn, popcorn, taffy, oranges or mango.

SUBSTANCES

- Sticky substances such as **dough**.
- Playdough, paint, glitter, permanent markers, **use gloves if needed**.
- Waterproof mascara and any waterproof or longwearing makeup (eyeliners, etc).

HAIR REMOVAL

- Haircuts, waxing and shaving on day of Mikvah. (Preferably, should be done in advance).
If done on day of Tevilah, extra care must be taken to ensure no bits of hair or residue remain.



Mikvah Day-Day 7:

REMEMBER TO DO BEDIKOS!

- Plan ahead with arrangements such as babysitting, scheduling and supper to reduce stress.
- “Erev Mikvah” can be stressful like Erev Shabbos.
- Increase your chance at Shalom Bayis with forethought!



Chafifah

Cleansing



Clean

Comb

Check

ARE CRUCIAL FOR A KOSHER IMMERSION!

Clean



Bathe: Wash entire body & hairs

Comb



Comb all body hairs while wet

Check



Check entire body visually & by touch

When should it be done?

- Ideally, Chafifah should begin after the final Bedikah **before sunset**, and continue into **nightfall**.
- Preferably the preparation should begin in the daytime to ensure that you don't rush.



How long should it take?

DAY

If the Chafifah is done **entirely by day**, you still need to Rewash, Recomb and Recheck prior to tevilah, at night at the mikvah.

If Chafifah is begun **during the day**, Chafifah should take a **minimum of 30 minutes**.



PART DAY

PART NIGHT

If unable to begin Chafifah before sunset and go into night, then you should try to do something (ex: cutting nails) to begin Chafifah **during the day**.

If Chafifah is begun **during the day**, Chafifah should take a **minimum of 30 minutes**.



NIGHT

If unable to do anything during the day, full Chafifah may be done **entirely at night**.

However, Chafifah should then take a **minimum of 1 full hour** to ensure one does not rush.



IMPORTANT: Chafifah should be done thoroughly in a calm and relaxed manner

Where is Chafifah done?

Chafifah may be done at home or at the Mikvah building, or it can be done partially at home and completed at the Mikvah premises.

If Chafifah is done at home, or whenever there is a gap between Chafifah and Tevilah: The **three** main steps may be done at home, but they then **MUST** be done again at the Mikvah premises **prior to immersion:**

Clean, Comb, Check

Note: If there is a gap between Chafifah (including bath) and Tevilah, then a thorough shower should be taken at the Mikvah prior to Tevilah.

If Chafifah took place at home right before coming to the Mikvah, then a rinse in the shower is sufficient.



Step 1: Clean



Remove External Items/Substances

- Jewelry
- Band aids
- Contact lenses
- Makeup
- Nail polish
- Lotions



Washing & Soap

- **Bathe in hot water using soap and a washcloth.**
- Bathe in a tub. If unable to bathe in a tub consult a Rav.
- After bathing, take a shower and rinse off loose hair.
- Soaps and body wash should not leave a creamy residue.
- Shampoo should be used without conditioner.
For knotty hair a small amount of conditioner may be used, but be sure to rinse it out completely.
- **Tip:** Wash yourself from top to bottom to ensure that you don't miss any part of your body.





Hair



Hair

- Wash all hair on head and body with shampoo and soap.
- **Comb hair with a comb.**
Make sure that there are **no knots**.
- Comb through all body hairs-
hair of head, eyelashes, eyebrows,
armpits and pubic area.
- Remove all stray and loose hairs.




Hair & Chatzitza



Knots:

Knots in the hair (not hair knotted together, but hair knotted on itself).

- If it is in the **majority of the hair**, it is a **Chatzitza** (as is any knotting).
- If the knots **bother YOU** it is a **Chatzitza**.
- If the knots do not bother you, but they are considered a **bother to MOST WOMEN**, it is a **Chatzitza** and they then need to be removed. Best is by simply cutting off those knotted bits.
- However, a loose knot formed from several hairs is not a Chatzitza.



Eyes/Nose/Ears



Eyes



- Remove contact lenses.
- Remove mucus around the eye and clean all discharges in corners of eyes.
- Remove eye makeup thoroughly.
- **Tip:** For easier removal use a Q-tip with eye makeup remover.
- **Tip:** A damp, white cloth, or gauze pad rubbed along the lid/lash line will show any makeup residue.

Eyes & Chatzitza

Pus:

- If pus leaked out of eye and dried **after 72 hours**: It is a **Chatzitza**.
- If there is a clear discharge in the eye or fresh pus present less than 72 hours: It is not a Chatzitza.



Nose

- Clean nose up until the septum (where the pinky finger can reach).

Ears

- Clean earring holes.
Tip: Dip post in alcohol to clean.
- Clean ears inside up until as far as where the pinky finger can reach.
- Cotton swabs can be used to clean the folds of the outer ears.





Teeth



Teeth

- Brush teeth thoroughly.
- Clean tongue and **rinse** mouth from all toothpaste residue.
- Floss (unwaxed floss is preferred, only if you are sure it will not get caught. Or use plastic flossers).
- **Tip:** If using waxed floss, floss first, then brush afterwards to remove any possible wax residue
- **Tip:** Water flosser is helpful if you have teeth that are close together or any permanent dental work.



Teeth & Chatzitza

- Remove anything in/on the teeth and all removable dental appliances.
- Any permanent dental work that is not removable may remain.
- If any emergency dental work is in progress, consult Rav.





Nails



Nails

- **Remove** all nail polish.
- Be sure to **clean** under all corners and around cuticles, of finger and toe nails.
- **Cut finger and toe nails on day of Mikvah.***
- **Smooth nails.** Make sure there are no rough or jagged edges.
- (Remove cuticles if it bothers you, or if you are accustomed to doing so).

*Nail cutting for Mikvah is permitted even on Chol Hamoed.



Nails & Chatzitza

- Remove hanging pieces of skin.
- **Note:** Be extra careful with removing clear or light colored nail polish, (hard to see bits at edges).





Skin



Skin

- Soften any callouses and hard skin on your body.
- Check for blisters, peeling skin etc.
- Any loose, hanging skin (or flaps) should be gently cut off and removed.
- **Tip:** Using a pumice stone and creams to keep hard areas softened ALL month long, will make Mikvah prep easier.



Pay special attention to:

- Hair (all body hair)
- Ears, earring holes
- Eyes, eyebrows, eyelashes, corners of eyes
- Nose, clean and blow
- Chin, under chin, neck
- Underarms, between elbows and fingers
- Breast nipples and under breast
- Navel and Genital area (also folds)
- Knees, between knees and between thighs
- Feet- toes, between toes and soles
- Back



Step 2: Comb



Comb out all **body hair** and all **hair of head** after bathing.

Comb hair with a comb while wet.

Undo all knots.



Step 3: Check (Iyun)



Checking yourself is Crucial for a Kosher Immersion. This is Halacha!

Note: If there is any delay between Chafifah and Immersion,
Checking (Iyun) is required to be done just prior to immersion
even if it was done earlier.



Checking before Immersion

After rinsing yourself, **CHECK*** your entire body, to ensure there are no intervening substances.

For a valid immersion, all of the following three inspections are needed:

- Visual check
- Touching check (non-visible areas)
- Mental review (checklist)

*Note: if checking was omitted, even if nothing was found after immersion, you must check and immerse again. If you only remembered at home/next day consult Rav.



If you used the bathroom:

- Re-rinse
- Re-comb
- Re-check

Don't dry off after washing yourself!

Wear slippers and you are ready for immersion!



Tevilah - Immersion

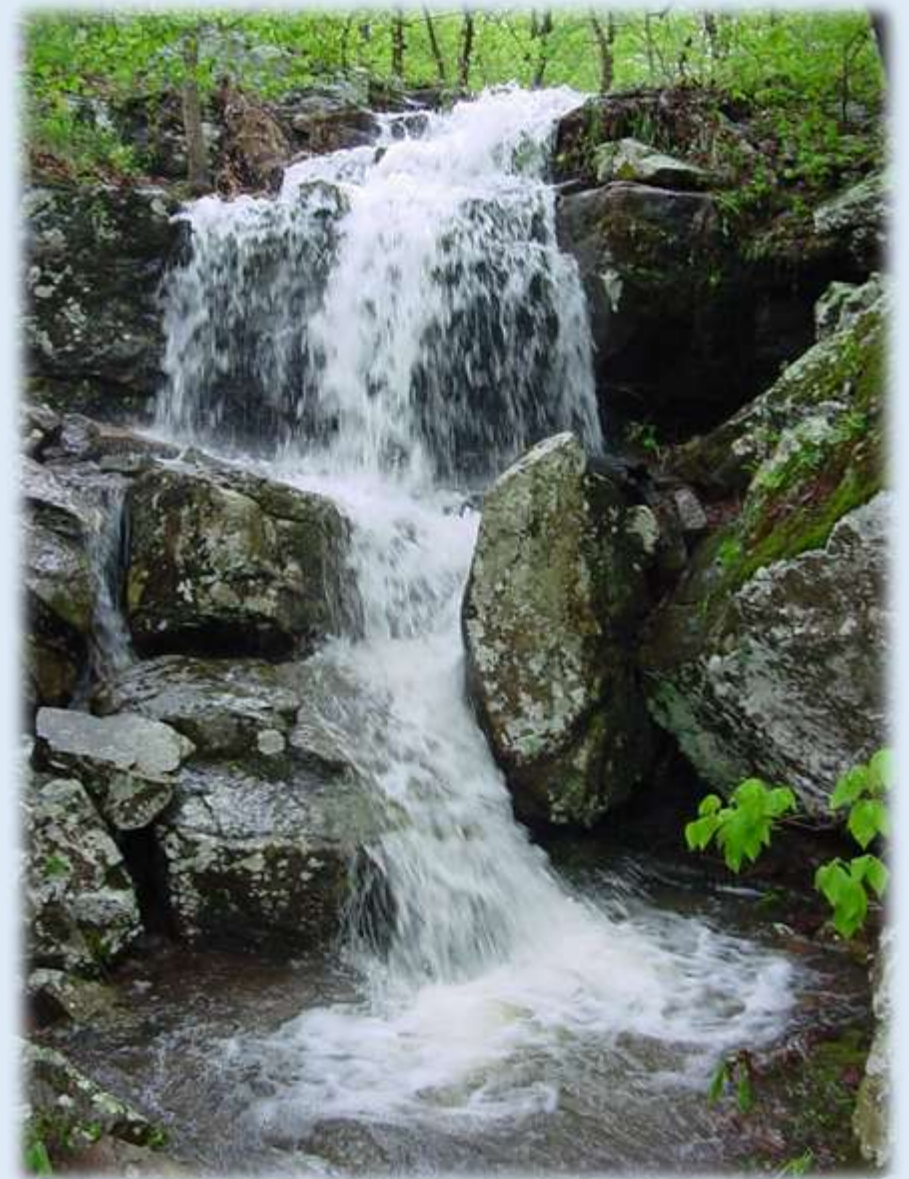


Mikvah

- A woman must be sure to immerse in a Kosher Mikvah that is under the supervision of a Rav with Yiras Shamayim, expert in these Halachos.
- **Immersion in a kosher mikvah is vital for a woman's purity and descendants for all generations!**
- Be extra careful to inquire about the kashrus of the Mikvah when traveling to small cities.



- The Mikvah pool must be connected to a natural water source. Modern Mikvaos are constructed like a pool filled with tap water and connected to a natural water source.
- If you do not have access to a Mikvah and wish to immerse in a lake, sea, or ocean, consult a Rav.
- The Mikvah should not have mud on the bottom nor mats or loose tiles, for you to stand on.



- An attendant who is a Jewish woman that has **Yiras Shamayim**, Shomeres Shabbos and at least 12 years old, should accompany you to ensure you are completely immersed. If such is not available, consult your Rav.
- The water should reach 10.5 inches above the navel (approx. mid chest) when standing in it.



Time of Immersion

A woman immerses in the Mikvah on the night following the seventh white day, **AFTER NIGHTFALL.**



Procedure of Immersion

1. Wet yourself in the Mikvah
2. Immersion
3. Make a Bracha
4. Immerse again
(Immerse a third time for “extra purity”)
5. Say your private Tefilos
(Can be said before or after third immersion)



The Process

1. Wet yourself and immerse one time.
2. You should have the intention to fulfill the Mitzvah and become Tehorah.
3. Position yourself to recite the Bracha.
 - Arms crossed around your waist to form a “gartel” between upper and lower body.
 - The attendant, will hand you a towel to cover your hair.(One should not talk from the bracha until after the immersion)

4. Recite Bracha: "ברוך אתה... על הטבילה"

While making the Bracha:

- Eyes look up, out of the water. Don't look at your reflection while you are making the Bracha.
- Crouch so that the water reaches your chin.



5. Then dip a second time without talking. (The first two immersions are halachically required). Dip a third time for “extra purity.”

6. After that, you can say Yehi Ratzon and other private prayers.
(Yehi Ratzon can be said before or after the third immersion)
(Some have a family custom to dip 7 or more times)



Position for Immersion

Enter Mikvah and *wet yourself with the Mikvah waters*

There are two halachically acceptable positions:

1. "Like Kneading dough" 2. *k'dag*: "Like a fish".

- Each position requires your arms to be held away from your body and your legs to be spread apart, so that the water reaches your entire body. Spread your fingers and toes. Teeth lightly together, not clenched and lips and eyes lightly shut.
- **POSITION 1:**
Position yourself as though "kneading dough", leaning forward with your arms and legs apart.



Position for Immersion

- POSITION 2:

Lay under water completely flat, “like a fish”.

This is only if you are comfortable with this position.

- Spread out straight like a fish, legs spread apart and stretched out straight, arms spread straight in front.
- **Tip:** To get to the bottom of the Mikvah pool for fish position: Use the railing or the wall to lever yourself to the bottom of the pool.
- **Tip:** You may feel less self conscious if you can stand in the Mikvah with your back to the attendant.



Hair & Immersion

- Hair in the mouth is a Chatziza!
- **Tip:** If you have long hair, hold your hair in your fist before immersion and then release under water.



After Immersion



After Immersion

- The attendant will declare “Kosher” after each immersion. At the same time this is echoed in Shamayim as well and results in children who serve Hashem leshaim shamayim. (Arizal)
- The first encounter you have after immersion should be with something pure, the attendant can serve this purpose. This is not halacha, but seeing something holy & pure has a spiritual affect on our children.
- Wash Negal Vaser and say Asher Yatzar.
- **You must verbally confirm to your husband that you have immersed and are Tehorah, before stopping Harchakos (texting is not enough).**
- One should not take a full shower/bath, after immersion, until the next morning. Separate parts may be washed as needed. If there is a great need, consult Rav.



If you forgot something:

- If you realize something was forgotten, or notice something that may be a problem, while you are still at the Mikvah, re-immense without a bracha (one immersion).
- If you only realized after you are already home, or the next day, consult a Rav on what to do. Ask if you need to re-immense and if a bracha is required.



Mikvah on special days



Mikvah on Friday Night (or First Night Yom Tov)



If you need to go to the Mikvah *before* Shabbos:

1. Your husband can light the Shabbos candles and make the Bracha for you.

You will be mekabel Shabbos when it begins.



2. You can Light candles earlier (earliest after Plag Hamincha) but don't be Mekabel Shabbos before going to the Mikvah.

Note: Your husband must be Mekabel Shabbos at the time of your candle lighting.

Note: If you want to light candles and then drive to the mikvah, you need to consult a Rav, if it is acceptable in your case/area. Some Rabbonim do not allow because of traffic concerns and possible chilul Shabbos.

Do Chafifah on Erev Shabbos

(Erev Yom Tov)

1

CHAFIFAH

Do entire **CHAFIFAH** on Erev Shabbos (Erev Yom Tov), preferably at home.

If difficult to do chafifah close to candle lighting, you may bathe earlier in the day and shower thoroughly **before candle lighting**, pay attention to folds and orifices and then **re-comb** and **inspect**.

2

BEDIKAH

REMEMBER to do final bedikah



3

HAIR

If you have long hair, tie it back so it won't get tangled. (Use clip that can easily be removed without tearing hair).

4

AVOID CHATZIZA

- Be careful not to get a Chatzitza in the gap between Chafifah and Tevilah.
- **Do not apply makeup**
- **No eating after Chafifah until Tevilah. You may drink water.**

Mikvah on Friday Night (first night Yom Tov)

At Mikvah before Immersion:

1

HAIR

Run fingers gently through all hair (head and body) to make smooth.

2

CHECK

CHECK YOUR BODY VISUALLY,
And by **TOUCH** (for non-visible areas).

3

WET

Wet yourself (folds and orifices) in the Mikvah waters before immersion.

- Be careful not to wring out hair.



Mikvah on Motzoei Shabbos

(Motzoei Yom Kippur/Tisha B'Av)



Chafifah is done Twice:
Once on Erev & the Second time on Motzoei

Do Chafifah #1 on Erev Shabbos

(Erev YK & TB)

1 CHAFIFAH

Do entire **CHAFIFAH** on Erev Shabbos (Erev YK & TB).
If difficult to do chafifah close to candle lighting, you may bathe earlier in the day and shower thoroughly **before candle lighting**, Pay attention to folds and orifices and then **re-comb** and **inspect**.

2 BEDIKAH

REMEMBER to continue with **Bedikos** as necessary (Day 6 & 7).



3 HAIR

If you have long hair, tie it back so it won't get tangled.
(Use clip that can easily be removed without tearing hair).

4 AVOID CHATZIZA

Be careful to avoid sticky substances etc. in the gap between Chafifah and Tevilah.

Mikvah On Motzoei Shabbos (YK & TB)

Do Chafifah #2 on Motzoei

1

RE-WASH

- **Do Chafifah. Take a thorough bath or shower**
If full bath was taken Erev, then thorough shower is required Motzoei.
However, if only shower was taken Erev, then full bath is required Motzoei.
- **Remember to clean and floss teeth carefully**
- It is better to lightly file nails Motzoei, if they were cut Erev (Minhag).

2

RE-COMB

Comb your hairs

3

RE-CHECK

**CHECK YOUR BODY VISUALLY,
And by TOUCH (for non-visible areas).**



When you are unable to do full Chafifah Erev Shabbos (Erev Yom Kippur/Tisha B'Av)

- If you are unable to do full Chafifah on Erev Shabbos (Erev Yom Kippur/Tisha B'Av), then **do something to start**, example, cut nails, shower etc. Then Motzoei take a full bath and complete Chafifa process (wash, comb, check).
- Since something was begun on Erev, then Chafifah on Motzoei should take a **minimum of 30 minutes**.



- If you are unable to do anything Erev Shabbos you may do full Chafifah Motzoei (bath, wash, nails, comb, check, etc).
- Then, full Chafifah should take a **minimum of 1 full hour**.

Mikvah on Second Night Yom Tov



Do Chafifah on Erev Yom Tov (weekday)

1 CHAFIFAH

Do entire **CHAFIFAH** on Erev Yom Tov (weekday).

Remember to **remove hair and cut nails.**

If difficult to do Chafifah close to candle lighting, you may bathe earlier in the day and shower thoroughly **before candle lighting**, Pay attention to folds and orifices) and then **re-comb** and **inspect**.

2 BEDIKAH

REMEMBER to continue with Bedikos as necessary.



3 HAIR

If you have long hair, tie it back so it won't get tangled. (Use clip that can easily be removed without tearing hair).

4 AVOID CHATZIZA

- Be careful to avoid sticky substances etc, in the gap between Chafifah and Tevilah.
- **Do not apply makeup.**

Mikvah on Second Night Yom Tov

At Mikvah before Immersion:

1

TEETH

- Be extra careful with **teeth**. Clean teeth with plastic toothpicks, dry toothbrush and mouthwash. If you normally do not bleed from flossing, then floss with pre-cut floss. Rinse mouth.
- **Note:** Clean teeth after eating meat & chicken, as well as prior to immersion.

2

RINSE

- Rinse genital area with hands (no washcloth or sponge).
- If necessary you may rinse parts of body individually, with warm water. (**Especially folds and orifices**) No washcloth or sponge. Liquid soap may be used. Hair of head should not be rinsed.



3

HAIR

Run fingers gently through all hair (head and body) to make smooth.

4

CHECK

CHECK YOUR BODY VISUALLY,
And by **TOUCH** (for non-visible areas).

5

WET

- Wet yourself (folds and orifices) in the Mikvah waters before immersion.
- Be careful not to wring out hair.

**Motzoei two-day or three-day
Yom Tov/Motzoei Yom Tov**



Motzoei two-day or three-day Yom Tov/Motzoei Yom Tov

When is Chafifah done?

- It is preferable to do some Chafifah on Erev Yom Tov.
- **Full Chafifah/Tub/Bath is done Motzoei Yom Tov.**



NO Immersion on these days!

- The night of Yom kippur and the night of Tisha B'Av (Unless Tisha B'Av falls out on Shabbos and fast is postponed to Sunday).
- If husband/wife sitting shiva (R"l).



A Rav should be consulted for the following. The Rav will determine if immersion should take place on schedule or be postponed.

- If night of immersion falls out on night of a calendar Onah of separation.
- If the husband or wife is out of town (away from each other).
- If there are any practical or physical/medical reasons that relations may not be had.

Mikvah Delay

It is important to make every effort to go to Mikvah on time.

- If Mikvah is EVER delayed, a Rav should be consulted. We do not delay immersion lightly, however, there may be times when it is extremely difficult, or impossible to immerse. The Rav will advise on how to proceed and advise of further Bedikos and whites.
- A Rav should be consulted if immersion should take place on a Friday night which resulted from it being **postponed** from a previous night.

A Mikvah Story



Story

R' Boruch's wife traveled to Uman on the first night of Chanuka in the winter of 1724 to immerse in a Mikva. After exiting, she encountered a non kosher animal three times. With Mesiras Nefesh, she dipped in the icy waters again.

Suddenly the water became like the waters of Gan Eden; warm and fragrant and healing. She passed her test and merited to have a special baby who became the Tzadik, 'the Shpoler Zaide'. The special perfumed scent accompanied her for her whole life.

Chabad Mikvah



The way the Chabad Mikvah is constructed, “בור על גבי בור”.

As Chabad Chassidim, a Mikvah that is built Bor al Gabai Bor is preferred.

As taught by the Rebbe RaShab, this method allows less exchange of tap water for rain water, eliminating issues that may arise.

The following are several benefits of this model:

- A. The way the Mikvah pool is constructed on top of the pool, with natural water ensures less mixing of the water.
- B. The hot tap water above will remain unmixed with cool rain water below.
- C. There is no need for a plug which eliminates the risk of forgetting to remove the plug.

The following samples illustrate the different models of Mikvaos.

Note: If a “Bor Al Gabai Bor” Mikvah is not available in your area, it is acceptable to use any Mikvah that is under proper Rabbinical supervision.

Diagrams of Mikvaos

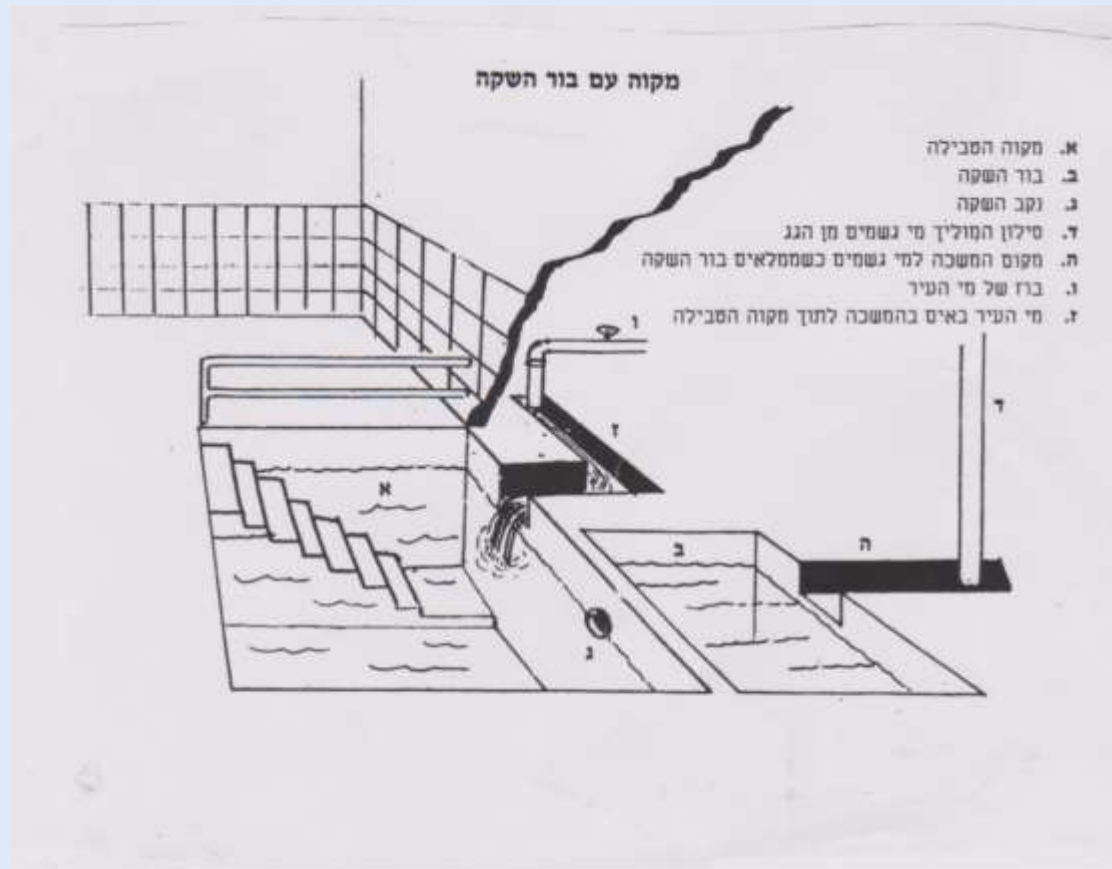


Diagram of the Chabad Mikvah

