



RABBI GIDEON

Machon Puah for Fertility and Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha

WEITZMAN

Corona Challenges

Over the past few months, the world has faced together a horrific epidemic; millions were ill and over one and half million people died worldwide. Even those who were not ill were still affected since our entire lives have been upended and changed almost beyond recognition. Simple routines, such as going to work, travelling and celebrating joyous occasions, have been altered to fit the new reality. The norm and the known have been all but forgotten amidst the disruption and disorientation brought on by Covid 19.

The world of the halacha has been affected no less than any other area of

our lives. There have been new realities that required creative halachic decisions, ranging from questions of life and death to the new order of synagogue and communal service. We have been blessed with some extremely active Poskim around the world who have stepped forward to answer the myriad queries and provide guidance through this pandemic.

PUAH has also been working tirelessly throughout this period. Not only have we answered many questions from concerned couples and individuals, but we have been active in continuing to provide services and enable life to proceed as much as possible.

I would like to share with you some of the areas of practical halacha that we have faced throughout these months and how we were able to reach satisfactory solutions.



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From the beginning of the pandemic, it was clear that whatever happened the mikvah must remain open and be accessible for the women who needed to use it. While there were some lone voices who suggested that all women cease attending the mikvah, the overwhelming opinion among the Rabbis and concerned doctors was that it is possible to keep a mikvah functioning during this pandemic.

Some suggested that going to the mikvah may be dangerous and therefore women should prefer to go to the sea instead. However, there are several problems with using the sea as a mikvah. Not everyone has access to a sea or river. Not all rivers or bodies of natural water can be used as a mikvah, and the associated laws are quite complicated. We cannot rely on every

person understanding which river and lake is a kosher mikvah. There is a fear that a person will be discovered by other people immersing in the sea. As such, sometimes a person is inclined to seek out a hidden beach, without any lifeguard. There is a danger of drowning in the sea, and this danger is increased in such undesignated swimming areas. Therefore, the sea or lakes and rivers do not offer a viable alternative to the mikvah.

More on this next week. ■

The Puah Institute is based in Jerusalem and helps couples from all over the world who are experiencing fertility problems. Offices in Jerusalem, New York, Los Angeles & Paris. Contact (Isr) 02-651-5050 (US) 718-336-0603 www.puahonline.org

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