



Agudath Israel Of Madison

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Morah D'asrah

GUIDELINES FOR HILCHOS CHATZITZA

1. The rules of *chatzitza* are based on two concepts:
 - a. רוב - A distinction is drawn between a *chatzitza* which covers most of the body and those which cover only part of the body.

Most *poskim* view the hair independently. That is, a *chatzitza* on most of the hair also constitutes רוב. We are מחמיר and consider most hairs, even in one place as רוב (*Ch. Adam 3, Oruch Hashulchan 25*).

- b. מקפיד - A distinction is also drawn between a *chatzitza* which one would normally wish to remove and one which a person considers inconsequential. The *Rambam* holds that this depends on the individual woman. The *Rashba* holds that this depends on the behavior of most women. We follow both opinions, thus if this individual is מקפיד or if most people are מקפיד even if she is not, this is considered מקפיד.

Furthermore, even if one is מקפיד only under specific conditions (eg. a ring is removed to knead dough) this is sufficient to be considered מקפיד.

The rule is; when both concepts exist (רוב ומקפיד) this constitutes a *chatzitza* by Biblical law.

When one of these concepts exists (רוב ואין מקפיד או מיעוט ומקפיד), this is a *chatzitza* by Rabbinic law. Where neither exists (מיעוט ואין מקפיד) this is not a *chatzitza*, but should nevertheless be removed *l'chatchila* (*Rama 198:1, Shach 14*).

Unless otherwise noted, the following rules are for a *bidieved* situation, where a *chatzitza* was noticed after *tevilah* or where it cannot be removed (See *Ch. Adam* and *O.H.* who are lenient *l'chatchila* where a מקפיד אינו מקפיד cannot be removed).

2. Hair - must be washed with hot (or warm - *Ch. Adam*) water and combed [while it is wet (*Ch. Adam 120:20*)]. If one neglected to do so, the *tevilah* must be repeated even if no *chatzitza* was subsequently found (*Yorah Deah 199:8*).
 - a. Long Hair is not a *chatzitza*, even if one plans to cut it (*Igros Moshe 2:80*, see also *Pischei Teshuva #12*).
 - b. Knotted Hair is a *chatzitza* only when each hair is knotted individually and the individual is normally *makpid* to remove such knots. (When two or more hairs form the knot, it is loose enough for water to penetrate.) If most hairs (in any part of the body) are knotted individually, this too constitutes a *chatzitza* (198:5).
 - c. Dyed Hair is not a *chatzitza* because i) the dye has no substance (*אין בו חומר*) and ii) it is considered part of the hair (*Shach 198:21*).
 - d. Lice are a *chatzitza*. One must remove the lice in the normal manner; that which might remain after this process does not constitute a *chatzitza* (*Y.D. 198:47*). Similarly, one who has dandruff must shampoo in the normal manner - residual dandruff is not a *chatzitza* (*Badei Hashulchan 356*).
3. Eyes, Ears, Nose & Mouth - the inside chambers of these parts of the body are called *Beis HaStarim*, hidden parts of the body. Although water need not actually enter these parts of the body (ie. a woman may close her mouth or eyes during immersion), they must be free of any *chatzitza*.
 - a. Leniencies regarding *Beis HaStarim*
 - i. A woman who forgot to examine herself prior to immersion, must repeat the immersion even if she subsequently found herself to be free of any *chatzitza*. Regarding *Beis HaStarim*, however, if one erroneously neglected to examine these areas prior to immersion, it is sufficient to do so subsequently (*Y.D. 198:25*).
 - ii. R' Moshe זצ"ל held that only something actually attached to *Beis HaStarim* is a *chatzitza* and not something placed there. Therefore a coin lying in the mouth (*I.M. 1:98:3*), a false eye or contact lens (*I.M. 1:104*), or certain types of ear plugs (*I.M. 1:98-102*) are not *chatzatz bidieved* [One should ask a *sheilah* in these cases.]
4. Eyes
 - a. Mucus which is outside the eyeball is always a *chatzitza* (*שהדרך להקפיד עליו*). Mucus on the eye is a *chatzitza* only if it is dry and has begun to turn green. In this case, one should clean the eye and immerse again. If one is unable to immerse again, one may rely on the original immersion because most *Rishonim*

rule leniently (*Shach 13, Ch. Adam 6*).

- b. Eyelashes & Eyebrows should be washed with warm water (*Ch. Adam 121:1* (ו עיי שיכת ציון מבי שאין חפיפה מעכב כם). False eyelashes which cannot be removed should not be used. In case of necessity, a *sheilah* should be asked (*I.M. 3:62*).
 - c. A false eye is not a *chatzitza* (*I.M. 1:104*) but should be removed *l'chatchila* except in case of great necessity (*Har Tzvi 161*).
 - d. Eye make-up see # 13.
5. Nose - צו אה החור טם is a *chatzitza* only on the outside of the nose or if seen from the outside; but not in the nostrils themselves (*R' Akiva Eiger to 198:7, Binas Adam 11*).
6. Ears - the ear canal has the same rule as the nostrils (*Binas Adam 11*). When there is a danger in allowing water into the ear see *Igras Moshe 1:98-102* who permits certain forms of ear plugs. (See also *Taharas Mayim 69*, who suggests an alternative method of dealing with this problem.)
7. Mouth
- a. Coins or other items which were in the mouth (but not stuck between the teeth) during *tevilah*, are not a *chatzitza* (*Oruch Hashulchan 64, I.M. 1:98:3*).
 - b. The mouth must be washed and one must clean between the teeth. Anything found between the teeth is a *chatzitza* (*Y.D. 198:24*). On the day of *tevilah*, meat or poultry should not be eaten (*Y.D. 198:24*) except on *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov (Taz)*. Chicken soup is always permitted, as it does not become stuck between the teeth (*Badei Hashulchan 185*). *Tevilah* is permitted even if one did eat meat that day (*Taz*).
 - c. Permanent fillings, crowns, posts, bridges or false teeth are not a *chatzitza*. Temporary fillings which are as comfortable as normal fillings (ie. they do not jut above the normal tooth surface) are not a *chatzitza* (*I.M. 1:97*, see also *Nishmas Avrohom 198:24*). R' Moshe זצ"ל held that temporary fillings which are not comfortable in the mouth are a *chatzitza*. This is a subject of dispute among contemporary *poskim*. One should try to schedule dental work so as to avoid the *sheilah*; in case of need a *Rov* should be consulted.
 - d. Braces too are the subject of a dispute.

בפרי השלחן מיקל במו נחים שם ללי יום, אכן רי אלי שב מוכא כנ שמת
אברהם מחמיר כנ עשים לנו יו עיי אג"מ אי צרי ומני"צ רי פרי

Biteplates and any other removable parts must be removed before *tevilah*.

- e. Stitches see # 17.
- f. Dentures which can be easily removed are a *chatzitza* (*Maharsham 1:78, Minchas Yitzchok 5:21*).
- g. Shaky tooth - if one has no plan to have it extracted but will allow it to fall out naturally, it is certainly not a *chatzitza*¹. Even when it causes pain and one does plan to have it extracted, many *poskim* do not consider it a *chatzitza*².

8. Fingernails

- a. Dirt under the nails is a *chatzitza* only where the nail extends past the skin. Dough is a *chatzitza* anywhere. However, when the amount of dirt or dough is so small that people are not *makpid* to remove it, it is not a *chatzitza* (*Taz 18*). Our *minhag* is to cut the nails, and therefore any amount of dirt or dough is a *chatzitza* (*Oruch Hashulchan 48*, regarding parts of the nail which must be cut see "b").
- b. Cutting Nails - all fingers and toenails must be cut prior to *tevilah*. The custom is to cut the nails until the point where they are attached to the skin. Cutting more than this is absolutely unnecessary (*Ch. Adam 12*).
- c. Bidieved - if one was *tovel* without cutting the nails, the *tevilah* should be repeated unless a night has already passed and one is reasonably sure that the nails were clean (*Ch. Adam 14*). Otherwise, a *sheilah* should be asked. [when the nails were cut short, but not quite to the point where the nail is attached to the skin, some *poskim* do not require a second *tevilah* - see שי עורי שכט הלוי].
- d. On Shabbos & Yom Tov - if one forgot to cut their nails; In the opinion of *Taz 21* - clean out well and be *tovel*; In the opinion of *Shach* - ask a gentile to cut the nail, preferably in an unusual manner (כיר או כפה).

L'Halacha - one should try to have a gentile cut them; where this is not possible one may rely on the *Taz* (*Mishnah Berurah 340:3*).

- e. Ingrown Toenails - should be cleaned as best as possible and are not a *chatzitza*.
- f. A small crack in the fingernail, which a person would normally leave as is, does not constitute a *chatzitza* (*Y.D. 198:21*).

¹ דרמה לחכ"א ס"ק טז' וכן מוכח מאג"מ ח"ב סי' פ'

² אבנ"נ רסי ורוב כב מי שרים פרי, אכן עיי בכרי השלחן קסכ' שמחמיר בזה

- g. A hanging nail (at a point where it is not necessary that the nail be cut) is a *chatzitza* only if a small part is hanging, but if most of the width of the nail is hanging, water can go in and it is not a *chatzitza* (Y.D. 198:21).
- Bidieved* - if a night passed, even if a small part was hanging, one should not repeat the *tevilah* (Simlah 22, Har Tzvi 162).
- h. If the nail itself is partially detached from the finger, a *Rov* should be consulted (שרעת החכ"א להקל ברוכו נפרד, ורעש הס"ט וכעצי לבונה להחמיר).
- i. Nail Polish - see #13.
9. Peeling or hanging pieces of skin are not a *chatzitza* because people usually allow them to fall off by themselves and are not *makpid* to remove them (Ch. Adam 119:16, Har Tzvi 162). Skin which hangs alongside a fingernail, where people are usually *makpid* to trim it, is a *chatzitza*. (The small piece which remains after trimming is not a *chatzitza*). (Badei Hashulchan 161 - (ולשוך החכ"א מוכח שמורה לזה)).
10. Mud is a *chatzitza* unless it is moist and so soft that it would come apart in water (Y.D. 198:14). Certain types of mud are always a *chatzitza* and since we are not expert on which types, we are *makpid* on all types of mud (Bach in Lechem 41, Ch. Adam 198:9, O.H. 40).
- If one is *makpid*, all types of mud are *chotzatz* even *ma'ikur hadin* (Rama 198:14).
11. Bath oil mixed into the bath water should be washed off the body before *tevilah* (Taharas Mayim, end of #60, see there also regarding *bidieved*).
12. Ink, paint, dyes, etc. on the skin should be removed. The stain which remains after washing is not a *chatzitza* because it lacks substance (Ch. Adam 119:11, O.H. 41). The same is true for stains caused by medicines (eg. iodine) (Har Tzvi 163) or food coloring (eg. red pistachio nuts) (Badei Hashulchan 120).
13. Make-up of all types should be removed (Shach 14). Regarding *bidieved*, there are a number of variables which affect the *halacha*; a *sheilah* should be asked³.
14. A splinter is a *chatzitza* only if it is above the skin surface and not if it is totally embedded in the skin (Y.D. 198:11). If skin has grown over the splinter, even if the splinter is higher than the normal skin level, it is not a *chatzitza* (Taz 15, Ch. Adam 119:8).

³ שחצץ בישבור ממשותב ונתקלקל קצת באופן שמקפרת לפעמים, אינן באשה שרגילה להסירה לפעמים אפילו לא נתקלקל ראז מקרי מקפרת

15. Blood is not a *chatzitza* when it is wet (*Y.D. 198:15*). It is considered dry if it would form a thread when a finger is put into it and slowly lifted up (*Shach 20*). Dried blood, even on a wound is a *chatzitza* (*Simlah 14; cf. Ch. Adam 119:6*).
16. Scabs - the custom is to soak and remove all scabs. *Bidieved*, if removing the scab is painful, so that one would not want to remove it, the immersion is valid (*Sidrei Tahara 23, see also Ch. Adam 119:6*). Hard skin around a wound is not a *chatzitza* (*Darkei Teshuva 33*). Moist puss is not a *chatzitza*, even outside the wound; dry puss is a *chatzitza* outside the wound, but not on it (*Y.D. 198:9*).
- Acne pimples which have not yet burst (ie. they have not begun to puss) are not a *chatzitza*. It is not necessary to soak such pimples. Once it has begun to puss, if a hard skin has formed on it, this must be soaked for ten minutes (in water or by applying a wet cotton) so that it softens (*R' Moshe zt"l in Torah V'horah #7*).
17. Stitches on the surface of the skin or gums are a *chatzitza*; when under the surface they are not a *chatzitza* (*I.M. 2:87; cf. Badei Hashulchan, Beurim to 198:23*). [Regarding stitches which are absorbed in the skin and are not removed; or when stitches are left in for thirty days or more, a *sheilah* should be asked].
18. Regarding casts, splints, bandages, uterine devices, catheters and other potential *chatzitzos* which are attached for medical reasons; there are many variables which might affect the *halachic* determination. A *sheilah* must be asked in each case. [It should be noted that casts and splints are virtually always a *chatzitza* (*Y.D. 198:23*)].
19. Warts and corns are not considered a *chatzitza* even if one plans to have them removed (*Lechem 23*).
20. Jewelry should be removed but is not a *chatzitza* if worn loosely (eg. a loose necklace) [A precise definition of "loose" is difficult to determine.]

Jewelry which is tight on the skin is a *chatzitza* because women are sometimes *makpid* to remove it (when working with dough, etc.). A woman who is never *makpid* to remove it should nevertheless immerse again wherever possible.⁴

Earrings - the *Bach* considered earrings a *chatzitza* in all cases (*R' Akiva Eiger to 198:23, see also Pischei Teshuva 13*).

⁴ חוץ מלנחה עם בעלה וכתבעת שאין בו אכזר - חכ"א.

When should preparations be done?

1. Tevilah on a weekday night

- A. *Rashi* advised that they be done by day (towards evening) so that one should not feel rushed. Others argued that they should be done as close to *tevilah* as possible. To satisfy both opinions, it is preferred that the preparations begin during the day and be completed at the time of the *tevilah* (*Y.D. 199:3*).
- B. Where this presents a difficulty (for example, if one is at work past the time of sunset), at least a minimal type of preparation should be done by day (preferably combing of hair, but at least a minimal preparation such as clipping of toenails. See *Badei Hashulchan 199:40*).
- C. Where even this is difficult (or if one forgot) all preparations may be done at night (*Y.D. 199:3*) but at least an hour should be set aside for the preparations so that one should not feel rushed (*Shach 199:6*, See also *Torah V'Horah Vol. 7*).
- D. Where necessary, all preparations may be done by day, however another examination (for *chatzitzos*) should be done prior to *tevilah* (*Taz 199:6*). In any event, where preparations are done at home, a repeat combing of hair should be done at the *mikvah* (*Y.D. 199:3*).

2. Tevilah on Shabbos (or Yom Tov) night.

- A. All preparations must be completed on Friday (*Y.D. 199:5*) as close to *Shabbos* as possible, without causing one to feel rushed. It is preferred that these preparations be done at home, so that one can light candles prior to leaving to the *Mikvah*.
- B. Where it is only possible to do the preparations in the morning, this may be done, but care must be taken to avoid *chatzitzos* afterwards. Before *Shabbos* one should shower and recheck for *chatzitzos*. (See *Ch. Adam 120:7*).
- C. One should not eat between the washing (of the month) and the *tevilah* (*Ch. Adam 120:8*). Even when beginning *Shabbos* early, one should not eat between preparations and *tevilah*. In case of great need (e.g., one would be embarrassed because of guests at the table) one may eat but must subsequently clean their teeth and wash their hands well (*Badei Hashulchan Beurim 6*).
- D. One should not handle sticky substances after completing the preparations. One who did handle food or other substances may not *tovel* unless they first re-

examined themselves to check for *chatzitzos*. [This is always true, but extra diligence is required on *Shabbos* when preparations are completed earlier.]

- E. On *Shabbos*, one may clean sweaty parts of the body with hot water. It is preferred that one re-rinse sweaty areas immediately before *tevilah*. [One must use water that was heated before *Shabbos* - hot water from the tap should not be used.]
- F. One should remember to pay the *mikvah* fee before *Shabbos*.

3. *Tevilah on Motzei Shabbos (or Motzei Yom Tov)*.

It is preferred that all preparations be done on Friday, (in this case it is not necessary that they be done late in the day) and repeated on *Motzei Shabbos*. [One should bathe and check for *chatzitzos* both times.] Where the custom is to bathe for at least thirty minutes, this minimum time should be observed for one of the two preparations; for the remaining preparation, no minimum time is required.

One may put on make-up for *Shabbos* but must be careful to remove it before *tevilah* on *Motzei Shabbos* (*Ohel Sarah* 20:15).

- 4. When *Yom Tov* falls immediately after *Shabbos* and *tevilah* falls on *Motzei Yom Tov*, all preparations should be done before *Shabbos* and repeated on *Motzei Yom Tov* (as in #3, except that extra care should be taken in the *Motzei Yom Tov* preparations). [The same is true when *Yom Tov* precedes *Shabbos* and *tevilah* falls on *Motzei Shabbos*.]
- 5. *Tevilah on Motzei Shabbos which is Yom Tov (or Motzei Yom Tov which is Shabbos)* - All preparations must be done before *Shabbos*. On *Motzei Shabbos*, one should run fingers through hairs to separate them; brush teeth with a dry brush (*Torah V'horah Vol. 7*) or floss (however, this should not be cut from the roll on *Shabbos*); wash hands and clean under fingernails and toenails; and check the entire body for a *chatzitza*. Make-up may not be used following the *Erev Shabbos* preparations. [This applies also to *tevilah* between the two days of *Yom Tov*.]
- 6. *During the Nine Days* - All preparations are done normally, using hot water (*O.C. 551:16*). Nails may be cut normally (*M.B. 551:20*).
- 7. *Motzei Tisha B'Av* - Preparations should be done on *Erev Tisha B'Av* in the normal matter and repeated on *Motzei Tisha B'Av* as in #2. Where bathing on *Erev Tisha B'Av* would cause embarrassment, or if this presents a difficulty, this may be left for *Motzei Tisha B'Av* (*O.C. 551:16 and Beur Halacha*).