

Online Mikvah Calendar Eases Jewish Family Purity Observance

By Hana Levi Julian

A new Online Mikvah Calendar created especially for the internet-savvy Jewish woman-of-today is making it easier to observe the complex Jewish laws of family purity.

The website is the brainchild of Rebbetzin Rivkah Bloom, who grew up in Charlotte, NC. She was the only Jewish child in her grade, choosing at age 14 to leave home for a Jewish school in PA, and from there to seminary in Israel. What followed led to software that has the potential to change the lives of millions of women: her years at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where she earned Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Computer Science and Electrical Engineering.

Bloom came up with the idea for the new website in response to requests for help from women learning about mikvah observance – the laws of purity, which include immersion in a ritual pool.

“They asked me to develop a program to calculate their important dates,” said Bloom. It took her four years to develop the Mikvah Calendar program, together with a colleague from MIT who “would like to remain anonymous.”

She told Israel National News in an exclusive email interview that she personally would “continually add new features to the site.”

“[The website has] been swamped with log-ins,” she added, noting that the service provided is free until July 15. After that, it will cost users \$18 per year to log in and use the high-tech service, a fee which Bloom said will “just cover the cost of maintenance.”

Users will be able to tap into an “Ask the Rabbi” feature and

receive SMS/Text message and/or email reminder the day before any important dates and times. Bloom cited works by Rabbi Fishel Jacobs, author of Chochmot HaTaharah and Family Purity, as being special inspiration in her formation of the service.

Although the observance of mikvah is primarily relevant to married women, Bloom said that she believes single women, men and even people of other faiths would also enjoy the new website.

“I think they would find it interesting because they can understand in a tangible way how every aspect of a Jewish life can be holy,” Bloom said even down to the barest details.

Rivkah Bloom is the daughter of Cheryl and Dr. Selwyn Spangenthal of Charlotte, NC. ☆

beta version
MikvahCalendar.com *now it's easier*

How the Israeli West Was Won

Sponsored by Chavurah Without Walls

The Chavurah Without Walls is hosting a “Night with Nachum” Saturday night, June 6. Nachum is one of the original Israeli pioneers, or Chalutzim. His parents were friends of Ben Gurion, the founder of the Jewish state. He commanded Haganah forces in the Galilee when Syria invaded from the North during the War of Independence in 1948. He has a great story tell. No, an amazing story. An important story, filled with personal details that you will not be able to find in a book anywhere. He is a great story teller, something like Mark Twain. Simple, down to earth and believable. You almost feel you were there. Come join us and here how the Israeli west was won. Learn what a miracle really is, and how it turned this civil engineer turned artist from a secular non-believer

into a believer. Not to reveal too many details, but Nachum also owned a famous night club in Israel that attracted many of the most famous people in politics and the movie industry. He also has some interesting stories to tell about the rich and famous. But most importantly, you will definitely learn something you did not know about Israel and about human nature. You will not come away from the encounter untouched.

The Chavurah Without Walls is an open Chavurah dedicated to bringing all Jews in the community together to learn from another and to share views and build friendships. Our diversity is a strength, not a weakness, as long as we appreciate one another as people, and learn from each other. We are dedicated to promoting and enjoying all things Jewish, in a relaxed, warm, welcoming environment. We meet in private homes monthly and host events such as lectures, game nights, Jewish movies and holiday celebrations. May 2 we had a very successful and fun night at Izzy's Cafe, “The Israeli Coffee House”, a night of Israeli song, dance, music and of course, authentic home made Israeli food. This summer we will be hosting picnics, game nights and a movie series on Jewish Humor and a special “Movie and Massage” event. (If you want to find out more about this one, you will just have to attend one of our meetings!) There is plenty of homemade food and it's a great way to meet new people and share opinions and ideas.

There are no dues at Chavurah Without Walls. As one member put it, we are “Jews without dues.” Join us on our adventure. Come eat with us and make new friends. Chavurah Without Walls generally meets the first Saturday night of each month. We also have an ongoing group, called Torah Without Walls, that discusses Tanach. We are currently studying the Book of Prophets. That group generally meets the third Saturday night of each month. If there are any questions, please contact us at Chavurahwithoutwall@gmail.com or call Elana at 704-296-2752, 704-236-6080. ☆



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