

References for Ritual Purity 6.13 – Ritual Purity

Due to these conditions, we welcome all people at our festival gatherings and Seder meals, even if they are in a state of ritual impurity. This includes women during niddah, who may be present, participate fully, and engage in worship, prayer, and Scripture readings (Weisberg, n.d.; Shurpin, n.d.). Touching or carrying a Torah scroll is not prohibited on the basis of niddah, since the words of Torah do not receive ritual impurity, though some individuals may choose to refrain as a personal or community custom (Maimonides, n.d.; Novick, 2019). We respect personal stringencies, but we do not exclude, restrict participation, or assign lesser standing to anyone on the basis of ritual impurity or niddah (Shurpin, n.d.; Novick, 2019).

Because there is currently no Temple service or sacrificial eating of holy foods, ritual impurity, including impurity from contact with the dead, does not prevent participation in congregational worship or festival meals, including a Passover Seder (Posner, n.d.; Weiss, 2012). In traditional halakhic understanding, these impurity laws primarily affect Temple entry and the consumption of consecrated foods, and contact with the dead is prohibited specifically for a kohen, not for the ordinary Israelite (Posner, n.d.). If a Temple were standing and the Korban Pesach were being offered, then ritual purity would apply in connection with Temple participation and holy foods, and the Torah provides Pesach Sheni for those unable to participate due to impurity at the appointed time (Chabad.org, n.d.; Numbers 9:6–12).

References

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