

## "And if she bears a female, she shall be in an impure condition for two weeks." (12:6)

In the case of the birth of a female the days of *tumah*, impurity, and *tohar*, cleanliness, are doubled. While the entire period of *y'mei tumah v'taharah* after a male birth consists of forty days, a female birth requires eighty days. **Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl**, suggests that the "double" period of time required for a female birth indicates a dual cycle - one for the mother and one for her female child.

This extra cycle of *tumah v'taharah* accomplishes for the female child what the *Bris Milah* does for a male. The striking characteristic of a Jewish woman, the emblem of Jewish womanhood which distinguishes her as a "daughter of *Sarah Imeinu*," is her ability to sublimate herself to the measure of morality and modesty to which man has a constant remainder in the form of the *Bris Milah* on his body. Thus, these laws of ritual purity serve as a reminder to the female of the preparation and training required for developing such moral virtue.

The *Bris Milah* is the father's obligation. This imbues him with the responsibility to raise his son with a strong dedication to *Torah* observance. The double period of *y'mei tumah* infuses the mother with her two-fold mission. First, she is to raise her daughter to represent the character of the Jewish woman. Second, she must do so, by herself being a role model of this noble virtue. The maternal influence upon the moral values of a daughter is greater than the parallel influence upon a son. The obligation to educate a son lies in a greater sense upon the father in whom the son sees an example, perhaps a portrait of his own future state. For a daughter, however, the mother is the standard who sets the tone for her moral character development. Thus, with each female birth the mother must doubly prepare herself to lead her child along the lofty path of virtue and purity.