

הקשר היהודי שלך

Your Jewish Connection

Brought to you by the Lifelong Learning Committee – *Written by Linda S Trapasso*

Mikvah, The Ritual Bath

For more than 3,500 years, observant Jews have been making trips to a ritual bath called the *mikvah*. Their immersion is a purification and many experience tremendous positivity from it in terms of their marriage, their sense of self, and their connection to G-d ([Jew in the City](#)). According to [NHPR](#), the *mikvah* is having a resurgence and being used for more than the *mitzvah* of *taharat hamishpacha* (family purity).

The newest *mikvah* in the greater Boston area is Mayyim Hayyim, which looks more like a spa than a traditional *mikvah*. In ancient times, the *mikvah* was most commonly used by women – and men – for ritual cleansing after coming in contact with death and for *taharaot hamishpacha*. Today, traditional immersion usually is explained as a spiritual purification, to mark the pass-

ing of potential life that comes with each menstrual cycle. It's also commonly used for conversions to Judaism. However, the *mikvah* also is being used today as a kind of spiritual therapy – for everything from getting over a miscarriage, to completing a round of chemotherapy, to finishing a doctoral degree, or after breaking up with a boyfriend.

You can view these videos to learn more:

[What is a Mikvah?](#) An introduction to the Jewish Ritual Bath on YouTube

[Mikvah: Splish Splash Is It a Jewish Bath?](#) on Jew in the City



Join the SNHJMC and TBA Sisterhood when they tour Mayyim Hayyim in January. Look elsewhere in the Bulletin for details and sign up!

For details on all kinds of mikvah topics, go to [Mikvah Facts](#) or [Chabad](#). To learn about how one uses a *mikvah*, see [My Jewish Learning](#). For some history, visit the [Jewish Women's Archive Encyclopedia](#) and the [Jewish Virtual Library](#).

One interesting item is that if you are in Israel, you can have a personal *mikvah in your home* (Hidabroot)! Just imagine that!

Women of the Wall Presentation

By Linda S Trapasso, TBA Sisterhood

If you did not go to the Women of the Wall event on December 4, you missed something wonderful. The event was co-sponsored by several organizations and held at Congregation Shalom in Chelmsford, MA. The speaker, Lesley Sachs, Executive Director of Women of the Wall, was engaging and passionate. The video she played highlights the struggles women have to pray with tallitot, tefillin, and Torah scrolls at the Western Wall.

The fight to pray as they wish at the Western Wall, which is Orthodox,

has lasted 30 years, and it is not finished. This organization is striving to change the status quo and to expand civil rights, human rights, and religious freedom in Israel.

Women of the Wall is involved in establishing a pluralistic, egalitarian, and equal prayer space at the Western Wall, and looks forward to religious pluralism in Israel. It has taken three years to obtain an agreement for this type of space, but who knows when it will come into existence?

The effort of these women should inspire and empower all women around the world of any Jewish denomination to find their spiritual voices and create meaningful Jewish identities.

For more information, visit www.womenofthewall.org.il to sign up for their newsletter, to read the history of women praying at the Western Wall, to join them live over the Internet for [Rosh Chodesh](#), and to support their efforts.

