

בית הוראה דיעטראיט
BAIS HORAAH OF DETROIT
HALACHA HOTLINE

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF **HaRav Shmuel Irons** שליט"א VAAD HALACHA **Rav Aharon Yoel Sorscher** • **Rav Yissachar Wolf** • **Rav Boruch Miller**

KITCHEN • SHABBOS • YOM TOV • BRACHOS • AVEILUS • TAHARAS HAMISHPACHA • EVERYDAY SHAILOS

ISSUE #29 – Yichud FAQs

Below are answers to frequently asked questions in Hilchos Yichud. These responses apply only to **Ashkenazim**. Not all situations that are technically permitted are recommended, one should use **common sense** and **consult their Rav** to determine the proper course of action in a particular situation. These are only general guidelines, Hilchos Yichud depends on **many factors** including time of day, familiarity, location and demographics. One should consult a Halachic Authority for **any variations**. Lastly, the Halacha Hotline is available by call or text at **248-923-1613** to provide timely, clear guidance for your specific question.

• **May a single girl babysit a young boy?**

- Boys over **the age of 9** are included in the *Issur Yichud*, this situation is forbidden unless a valid leniency applies. Some examples of permitted situations are:
 - If both the babysitter and the boy are under bar/bas mitzvah.
 - If there's another **boy** over 5 and it's **before their usual bedtime**. After bedtime, 2 such boys are required.
 - If there's a **girl (in addition to the boy) between the ages of 5 and 11** at home and it's **before their usual bedtime**. After bedtime, 2 such girls are required.

• **Can an uncle babysit his 3-year-old niece and 1-year-old nephew?**

- No. If the uncle is over bar mitzvah and the girl is over the age of 3, the situation is prohibited even though they are related. The nephew would have to be at least 5 years old to permit it. Otherwise, a valid leniency is required, such as keeping the front door unlocked and open, or leaving an unlocked door with a male asked to enter unannounced.

• **Does the Issur Yichud apply in an office setting?**

- Yes. Every office arrangement must be discussed with a Halachic Authority as there are many situations which are forbidden or should be avoided even if the Issur Yichud does not apply.

• **Can a man be home with the cleaning lady?**

- A man may **not** be alone in the house with a woman (or even two women) working there. This applies even to non-Jewish women. Situations that can make it permitted include:
 - If his **wife is nearby and may return at any moment**. However, if he **knows where she is** (for example, he just spoke to her on the telephone), that **invalidates the heter**.
 - Leaving the **door open** to an area that is regularly used by others, such as a front yard or apartment hallway. An **unlocked screen door** is acceptable.
 - Having an **open window facing the street**, with the man remaining **fully visible** the entire time. However, this is usually only practical for short periods.
 - Arranging for a **male neighbor** to enter the house **unannounced multiple times**.
 - Having a **child aged 5 or older** (boy or girl) present in the home.
- As an aside, in all cases, one must ensure that the kashrus of the kitchen is protected. She must be told that she cannot be in the kitchen by herself. And either a video camera should be installed or regular unannounced checks on her throughout the day.

• **May one ride in an Uber with a driver of the opposite gender?**

- Ideally, this should be avoided. If there's no practical alternative, a **short trip** is permitted as long as the ride is on **populated roads** and at least one of them **remains visible** during the trip.

• **May a woman have a repairman in the house?**

- The following situations can be permitted:
 - The **worker is frum**, there is **no personal familiarity**, and her **husband works in the same city** and can come home if needed.
 - The **worker is frum** with no personal familiarity, and the **door is left at least slightly open** (a screen or storm door may be closed but **not locked**). This works only during hours when there are people passing by.
 - There are **two frum workers** present.

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- The **worker is not Jewish**, and the home is in an **apartment building** or in **close proximity to neighbors**, where people may pass by and the door is left unlocked and open.
- **Can a woman have her nephew in the house while her husband is in the same city?**
 - This can be problematic if the nephew is **9 or older** since relatives generally have a **level of familiarity**. As a result, the usual leniencies such as the husband being in the same city or leaving the door unlocked **may not apply**.
 - However, if the nephew is a **blood relative** (not related only through marriage), one may be lenient by leaving the door open.
- **May a woman use a male doctor?**
 - Ideally, a woman should see a female doctor. If that's not an option, or she is more comfortable with a male doctor and the doctor is known to maintain proper **boundaries of modesty** and **professionalism** in his speech and behavior, this can be permitted if one of the following applies:
 - Her husband is present.
 - It is a busy office during regular hours, where nurses may come in and patients are waiting.
- **May one go to a therapist of the opposite gender?**
 - This should not be done for several reasons. If one's spouse is present it is permitted. One's Rov should be consulted for extenuating circumstances.
- **What should be done if a male guest is staying in the home while the husband is at work?**
 - At least **one** of the following conditions should be met:
 - The husband is in the **same city** and can come home if needed. (Does **not** apply if the guest is a relative or has familiarity with the woman.)
 - The door faces a **public area** and is left unlocked and **open**. (Does **not** apply if the guest is a relative or has familiarity with the woman.)
 - A child **over age 5** is home during the daytime, or two children after their normal bedtime.
 - Two or more women are asked to drop in unannounced several times during the period.
- **Does having a separate entrance help in this case?**
 - The separate entrance is only effective if both of the following conditions are met:
 1. Each space is fully independent, meaning neither party ever needs to enter the other's area. For example, if the host needs the laundry room or the guest needs the kitchen, the separation does not help.
 2. A locked door separates the two areas. Ideally there should be locks on both sides, though in this case a lock on one side is acceptable.
- **Can a girl tutor a child when only the father is home?**
 - If the child is at least 5 years old it is permitted. If the child is a girl over the age of 11, the front door should also be unlocked. However, this arrangement should not be done on a regular basis.
- **May a brother and sister stay at home while their parents are in Eretz Yisroel?**
 - The standard Issur of Yichud does not apply to siblings. However, they should not live alone together for an extended period of time. A halachic authority should be consulted for guidance in specific situations.
- **Is there Yichud in an elevator?**
 - Since an elevator ride cannot result in seclusion for more than a short period of time, it is generally permitted.
 - However, this allowance applies only to elevators. In other settings, there is no minimum amount of time for the prohibition of Yichud to apply. Even quickly running into a house to grab something can be prohibited unless one of the applicable leniencies mentioned above applies.
- **May a female go to a male hair stylist or tailor?**
 - Even if more than three women will be present, which would normally allow Yichud during the daytime, this situation is prohibited because his job involves regular interaction with women. Furthermore, even in cases where the issur Yichud may not apply (such as in a busy store), it should still be avoided for tznius reasons.

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