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NEW BOOK SPOTLIGHTS JEWISH LAWS OF MARRIED SEX LIFE

NEW YORK -- Most marriages are failures, says a young New York rabbi in a recently published book, A Hedge of Roses by Norman Lamm (Feldheim Publishers, N.Y. \$1.75). Whether or not they end in divorce, he adds, too many marriages become "exercises in sustained tension, only occasionally relieved by periods of happiness and joy."

With this grim note, the author, a visiting assistant professor of Jewish philosophy at Yeshiva University and associate rabbi at The Jewish Center of New York, guides the reader on a short tour of one of Judaism's most fascinating cluster of laws -- Taharat Ha-Mishpahah (Family Purity.) According to Rabbi Lamm, the chances of success in a Jewish marriage are directly proportional to the couple's observance of the biblical and Talmudic laws concerning conjugal relations.

"It is easy enough to get married. It is quite another thing to stay married." He recommends the ancient Jewish code for modern couples as a way of preserving marriage. The author eschews various "scientific" interpretations that have been offered to explain this religious institution.

He proposes, instead, psychological, philosophical, and symbolic insights into the sexual code of Judaism.

"Family Purity," he concludes, "is that life-long education in the love of life which commences even before life begins."