



Volume 6. Issue 54

Stepping out of a Mikveh

A *Mishnah* learnt this week deals with a fascinating case (7:6). A *mikveh* containing exactly forty *seah* (the minimum volume) is used by one that requires it. As he steps out he will take some of the water with him thereby invalidating the *mikveh* for anyone that would follow him. A debate ensues in the *Mishnah* regarding the second person that enters the *mikveh* as the first person is stepping out. The first opinion is that since he has taken some of the water out with him it is too late for the second person; the *mikveh* is invalid. *R' Yehuda* explains that provided that the first person still has his feet in the *mikveh*, the *mikveh* is valid. The water on the body of the first person is still considered connected to and part of the *mikveh's* water. How are we to understand the debate?¹

The *Mishnah Achrona* initially suggests that perhaps the debate could be understood as whether water that flows (*ketafres*), i.e. down the first person's body, can be considered attached. He uses this suggestion to explain another potential question. The next *Mishnah* teaches that if one immerses a bed, and its legs sink into the thick muddy floor, that the immersion is nonetheless valid. One cannot immerse in thick mud and that area should be considered as if it were outside the *mikveh*. Nonetheless the *Mishnah* explains that everyone agrees that it is valid as the *mikveh* water precede the bed legs and surround them as they sink into the mud and that water is considered attached to the *mikveh*. That case appears similar to our own, yet the *Mishnah* does not record a debate. He explains that the difference in this case is that water that is surrounding the person is flowing unlike the water that surrounds the bed leg.

The *Tosfot* (*Gittin* 16) however question this explanation as a *Mishnah* in *Taharot* (8:9) teaches that *ketafres* is not considered an attachment and this point is not debated. The *R' Tam* there explains that this case is different in that since the water is destined to fall in the *mikveh* it is

considered attached.² In other words sometimes *ketafres* is considered attached and this case is one such instance. According to the *Maharik* this is indeed the debate in our *Mishnah*: can water that is flowing but when inevitably land in the *mikveh* be considered attached now?

Nevertheless the *Mishnah Achrona* cites the explanation of the *Rivash* who explains that indeed everyone agrees that *ketafres* is considered attached. What then is the debate? The *Mishnah* continues that if a *sagos* (thick blanket) is immersed in a forty *seah* *mikveh* and a person immerses in it as it is being removed, that absorbed water is considered attached to the *mikveh*. He understands that this is the universal opinion; *ketafres* in this context is considered attached. But why is this case agreed upon and our earlier case debated? The *Rivash* explains that the *sagos* has completely absorbed a great volume of water. In our case, there is only a thin layer of water that covered the first person as he exits the *mikveh*. Consequently *R' Yehuda* and the *Chachamim* debate whether such a thin layer qualifies as being attached. The *Tosfot Yom Tov* (3:2) explains in a similar manner that the *Chachamim* argue that since as the person exists he may be partially dry, the water on his body cannot be considered attached.

The *Tifferet Yisrael* attempts to answer the earlier question of the *Tosfot* that it is true that *R' Yehuda* agrees with the *Mishnah* in *Taharot* that *ketafres* is not considered attached. Nonetheless, the water in our case is not flowing down a slope – the body is vertical. Consequently we use a different principle of *gud achit*; we conceptually “pull down” the water and consider it already in the *mikveh* below.³ Accordingly, as explained by the *Bartenura*, the case of the *sagos* cited above must be only according to the opinion of *R' Yehuda*. That is because the *Chachamim* would maintain that neither *ketafres* nor *gud achit* could apply in that case.

Yisrael Yitzchak Bankier

¹ Note that the *Gemara* (*Chagigah* 19a) provides two opinion regarding the whether the debate is only regarding one that require immersion as a stringency or whether it relates to one that definitely require immersion. This aspect has been neglected in our discussion.

² See also the answer of the *Ri* cited in that *Tosfot*.

³ The term borrowed from, and more familiar in the law of partitions.

Revision Questions

מקראות ז' ג' – ט' ד'

- What is the law if one washed grape basket inside a *mikveh* and it changes its colour? (ז':ג')
- What is the law if wine falls into a *mivkeh* and changes its colour? (ז':ג')
- What is the law if wine falls into a *mikveh* and only partially changes the colour? (ז':ד')
- What is the law regarding three *lugin* of water amongst which is a *kurtov* of wine which gives it the appearance of wine and then falls into a *mikveh* of less than forty *seah*? (ז':ה')
- What is the law regarding the previous question if instead there were three *lugin* of water that contained an additional *kurtov* of milk? (ז':ה')
- What is R' *Yochanan ben Nuri*'s opinions regarding the previous two questions? (ז':ה')
- Explain the debate regarding a *mikveh* that has exactly forty *seah* and two people immersed in it one after the other. (ז':ו')
- What are the problems one can face when immersing a leather pillow and what is the solution? (ז':ו')
- Can one immerse a bed in a *mikveh* if the legs sink into the mud below? (ז':ז')
- What solution is given to the problem of a shallow *mikveh*? (ז':ז')
- What is the law regarding a needle that is placed on the step of a *mikveh* and water only covers it when someone unsettles the water? (ז':ז')
- What is the difference between a *stam mikveh* found in Israel and other countries? (ח':א')
- What are the two opinions regarding which *mikvaot* are *tahor* if found in *Eretz Yisrael*? (ח':א')
- Which people are considered *Ba'al Kerayin* based on assumption? (Include all opinions.) (ח':ב')
- Explain the debate regarding within how many *onot* a *poletet* is *tahor*. (ח':ג')
- In what case would a woman that immerses be considered as if she did not immerse? (ח':ד')
- In what case would a *ba'al kerai* share the same law? (ח':ד')
- What is the law regarding a *nidah* that immerses with a coin in her mouth? (ח':ה')
- What is the law regarding a *nidah* that immerses with her hair in her mouth? With clenched fists? (ח':ה')
- What is the law regarding one that immerses utensils while holding onto them? (ח':ה')
- Which threads are a *chatzitza* for a person? (Include both opinions.) (ט':א')
- Is dough under one's finger nails considered a *chatzitza*? (ט':ב')
- What is the concern with immersing with dust on one's feet? (ט':ב')
- What is R' *Eliezer*'s rule regarding what qualifies as a *chatzitza*? (ט':ג')
- Is a hang nail considered a *chatzitza*? (ט':ד')
- What law is common to all the items listed in the previous few *Mishnayot*? (ט':ד')
- What is the exception? (ט':ד')

Local Shiurim

Sunday -Thursday

15 minutes before *mincha*
Mizrachi Shul

Friday & Shabbat

10 minutes before *mincha*
Beit Ha'Roeh

Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
28 th February י"ז אדר	1 st March ט"ו אדר	2 nd March ט"ז אדר	3 rd March י"ז אדר	4 th March י"ח אדר	5 th March י"ט אדר	6 th March כ' אדר
Mikvaot 9:5-6	Mikvaot 9:7-10:1	Mikvaot 10:2-3	Mikvaot 10:4-5	Mikvaot 10:6-7	Mikvaot 10:8-9	Nidah 1:1-2

