



## A Mikveh with Snow

The seventh *perek* begins by discussing various liquids and assesses whether they would invalidate a *mikveh* or whether, if added to a *mikveh*, can be considered as increasing its volume to the minimum amount (*shiur*). One item that is debated in the first *Mishnah* is snow. The first opinion is that snow can be added to a *mikveh* so that it can reach the *shiur*. *R' Akiva* however continues that *R' Yishmael* would rule before him that the snow could not achieve that end.

The *Mishnah* however continues that *R' Yishmael* instructed the people of *meidva* to create the *mikveh* with snow.<sup>1</sup> *R' Yishmael* ruling appears to contradict the position he presented before *R' Akiva*. How are we to understand this *Mishnah*?

The *Tosfot Yom Tov* cites that *Rambam* who explains that the position *R' Yishmael* presented in front of *R' Akiva* was not a definite ruling but rather part of their deliberation when discussing this case. The *Mishnah* therefore follows with *R' Yishmael's* practical ruling in the matter, which is consistent with the first ruling in the *Mishnah*.

The *Mishnah Achrona* is not comfortable with this explanation. Why would the *Mishnah* present a statement that was not representative of his true opinion?

The *Tifferet Yisrael* suggests that the case with *Meidva* is different than that which was in discussion with *R' Akiva*.

More importantly, the second case was necessary to better understand *R' Yishmael's* position in the first case. Had the *Mishnah* only taught that *R' Yishmael* did not allow snow to be used to top up the *mikveh*, one might have thought that this is because he does not consider snow as water. The *Mishnah* therefore continues that *R' Yishmael* allowed a *mikveh* to be created with snow. That being the case, it is clearly considered water. The issue was using snow to top up a *mikveh* since it is a different "type" of water.

The *Mishnah Achrona* also suggests that there is a difference whether the *mikveh* is made entirely of snow or whether snow is being used to top up a *mikveh*. He however presents a different distinction. The *Mishnah Achrona* cites the *Beit Yosef* who explains that if snow is being used, it must be crushed. Since snow full of empty space, if the snow is not crushed, there is concern that not enough snow will be added.<sup>2</sup> The *Mishnah Achrona* continues the creation of a *mikveh* is usually done by experts that are particular about all the law of a *mikveh* including this one. Consequently, there would be no issue in creating a *mikveh* with snow. Topping up a *mikveh* however could be performed by anyone. That being the case, the use of snow might mistakenly result in not enough being added. Consequently, both statements of *R' Yishmael* are needed as they present two different cases.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that we learn from this case, that even if the snow is transported in buckets, it is not considered drawn water (see YD 201:30). The transport itself however needs care since any water that collects as the snow melts, would be considered drawn water.

<sup>2</sup> One can add that snow would also need to be melted before the *mikveh* can be used. Some techniques used to melt the snow may invalidate the *mikveh*, so expert involvement is certainly required. For

example, *Pitchei Teshvua* (201:21) cites the *Toldot Yitzchak* who explains that since one is not allowed to immerse in snow, it is not yet defined as water. Pouring hot water on the snow to melt it would be equivalent to adding drawn water to a *mikveh* prior to it reaching forty *se'ah*. He cites the *Chatam Sofer* that suggests heated metal plates must be used instead.

**Revision Questions**

מקואות ו' ב' – ז' ד'

- Can one immerse a bucket full of utensils at the same time? (ו' ב')
- What is the law regarding a case where three *mikvaot* each had twenty *seah* of water and three *temei'im* immersed in each of them causing the waters to mix where: (ו' ג')
  - The end *mikveh* consisted of drawn water?
  - The middle *mikveh* contained drawn water?
- What is the law regarding a case where a sponge containing three *lugin* of drawn water fell into a *mikveh* containing less than forty *seah*? (ו' ד')
- Explain the debate regarding the manner in which one would be allowed to immerse in chest that is immersed in the ocean. (ו' ה')
- Regarding the previous question, how does the law change if one wished to immerse inside a large basket? (ו' ה')
- What other two laws are mentioned regarding baskets in the same *Mishnah*? (ו' ה')
- What is the law regarding utensils that are immersed in a partially submerged *tameh gistra*? (ו' ו')
- What other case is brought that is similar to the one in the previous question? (ו' ו')
- What are the dimensions described as *k'shfoferet ha'nod* and for what are these dimensions important? (ו' ז')
- What is the law if there is a doubt whether these dimensions are satisfied? (ו' ז')
- Explain the debate regarding what items would reduce a hole that size. (ו' ז')
- Explain how one can “*metaher*” one *mikveh* with another. (ו' ח')
- What would be the solution to the previous question if the source *mikveh* was on forty *seah* and the other empty? (ו' ח')
- Explain the debate regarding the direction of a crack in a wall between two *mikvaot* such that they combine without a whole *k'shfoferet ha'nod*. (ו' ט')
- If the dividing wall broke at the top, how much water must pass between the two such that the *mikvaot* combine? (ו' ט')
- What is an *avik* and when would it invalidate a *mikveh*? (ו' י')
- Explain the debate regarding the *metaheret* in a *merchatz*. (ו' י"א)
- Can snow be used to a fill a *mikveh*? (ו' י"א)
- Can hail be used to a fill a *mikveh*? (ו' י"א)
- What is the law if cooking water was used to fill the *mikveh*? (ו' י"ב)
- When would the volume of fruit juice that was added to a *mikveh* be considered and when would it be ignored? (ו' י"ב)
- What is the law if one washed a grape basket inside a *mikveh* and it changes its colour? (ו' י"ג)
- What is the law if wine falls into a *mikveh* and changes its colour? (ו' י"ג)
- What is the law if wine falls into a *mikveh* and only partially changes the colour? (ו' י"ד)

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Mikvaot 7:5-6	Mikvaot 7:7-8:1	Mikvaot 8:2-3	Mikvaot 8:4-5	Mikvaot 9:1-2	Mikvaot 9:3-4	Mikvaot 9:5-6

