



## Reshaping a shallow *mikveh*

The *Mishnah* (7:7) discusses a case of *Mikveh* that, despite having the minimum volume, is so shallow to immerse one's entire body. The *Mishnah* explains that one can "even" stack bundles of wood or reed at the side, to reduce the width and thereby increase the depth of the *mikveh*. We shall try to understand this *Mishnah*.

The *Bartenura* explains that even though it might appear that the *mikveh* is being divided in two, since the water can enter the bundles, it is still considered one *mikveh*.

The *Tosfot Yom Tov* however finds the *Bartenura*'s explanation difficult. According to his explanation, the fact that the bundles were used is the reason that the technique worked. That being the case, the word "even" in the *Mishnah* is difficult to understand.

The *Tosfot Yom Tov* continues by citing the *Rash* who explains that while if stones were used the water between them would certainly be considered part of the *mikveh*, the same could even be said by bundles. If however the bundles were placed in the centre of the *mikveh* then they would indeed divide the *mikveh* into two *mikvaot*. Placing them there would be that same as the case where baskets were placed in the centre and divided a *mikveh* into two *mikvaot*. Each were then less than the minimum amount and therefore invalid. Note that this is even though the division is not watertight.

The *Mishnah Achrona* explains that when the bundles are on the side, the water that collects between the branches has the same status as water that collects in the holes in the walls of the *mikveh* and can therefore combine to make forty *seah*. If however the bundles are in the middle, dividing the *mikveh*, it does not matter that water can pass through the bundles. The two (new) *mikvaot* can only be combined if there

is a hole *k'shfoferet ha'nod* (the size of the tubing in a leather water bag). Note that this explanation assumes that the *mikveh* does not have much water and requires all the water to make the minimum requirement.

The *Mishnah Achrona* continues that this explains the distinction made by the *Rashbatz*, cited by *Beit Yosef*, that the technique described in the *Mishnah* may be performed with stones but not with utensils. Some explain that this is because that a *mikveh* must be formed "*be'tahara*" (in purity) where precludes the use of vessels that are susceptible to *tumah*. The *Mishnah Achrona* however explains that this answer is insufficient considering that the *mikveh* is already valid; it is just too shallow for human use. Based on the above explanation the difference is readily understood. The reason why the bundles can be used on the side is because the water that collects there is considered like water that collects in the cracks of a wall. Considering that one does not form walls with vessels, the same logic would not apply.<sup>1</sup>

Returning to the *Bartenura*, how do we understand his explanation? The *Dvar Avraham* (I, 18:2) cites the *Eshkol* that appears to disagree with the *Rash* and explains the *Mishnah* like the *Bartenura* cited above. The *Dvar Avraham* explains that the term "even" makes sense. Even bundles, that are substantial, do not serve to divide the *mikveh* in two. That is even if it was placed in the centre of the *mikveh*, and even if there is no hole that is *k'shfoferet ha'nod*. The reason that is the case is because they understand that the bundles are much like sackcloth. Since they cannot contain water – water simply passes through – they cannot serve to divide a *mikveh* whether they are on the side or placed in the center.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The *Mishnah Achrona* continues that one could provide a different explanation for the ruling of the *Rashbatz*. One could explain that the use of vessels was precluded, out of concern that one might immerse in vessels, which cannot be used for a *mikveh*.

<sup>2</sup> The *Dvar Avraham* continues that the *Rashbatz* makes sense according to the *Bartenura*'s explanation. The distinction between a vessel and the bundles is clear since the bundles are treated like sackcloth such that they do not constitute a division at all.

**Revision Questions**

מקואות ז' ה: ט' – ט: ז'

- 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 opinion 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': ה')
- What are the problems one can face when immersing a leather pillow and what is the solution? (ז': ה')
- Can one immerse a bed in a *mikveh* if the legs sink into the mud below? (ז': ה')
- What solution is given to the problem of a shallow *mikveh*? (ז': ה')
- 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': ה')
- 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.) (ב': ח')
- Explain the debate regarding within how many *onot* a *poletet* is *tahor*. (ג': ח')
- 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? (ה': ח')
- What is the law regarding a *nidah* that immerses with her hair in her mouth? With clenched fists? (ה': ח')
- What is the law regarding one that immerses utensils while holding onto them? (ה': ח')
- 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')
- For what items listed in the *Mishnah* are *zefet* and *mor* a *chatzitza*? (List some.) (ט': ה')
- For which of those items is there a difference between a wealthy and poor person and why? (ט': ה')
- Concerning a saddle, for which people does *zefet* not constitute a *chatzitza*? (ט': ה')
- What are three opinions regarding when *zefet* is a *chatzitza* on clothing? (ט': ו')

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**Next Week's Mishnayot...**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
[	23 August ט"ו אלול	24 August ט"ז אלול	25 August י"ז אלול	26 August י"ח אלול	27 August י"ט אלול	28 August כ' אלול
	Mikvaot 10:2-3	Mikvaot 10:4-5	Mikvaot 10:6-7	Mikvaot 10:8 - Nidah 1:1	Nidah 1:2-3	Nidah 1:4-5

