



Volume 6. Issue 50

Mei Gevaim

The new *masechet*, *mikvaot*, begins with discussing different bodies of water in the earth and how they differ from one another with respect to *taharot*. The first category is *mei gevaim*. As we will learn a *mikveh* (commonly known as the “ritual bath”) must be at least 40 *seah* in volume. *Mei gevaim* is collection of water on the ground that is less than that measure. Water, while inside a *mikveh* is not susceptible to *tumah*. Furthermore, we have learnt recently, that if *tameh* water comes into contact with the *mikveh* water it become *tahor*. Something however appears to be different when discussing *mei gevaim*.

The *Mishnah* (1:1) teaches that if someone drinks from *mei gevaim* after someone *tameh* drank from that water, they would be *tameh*. More specifically, it would be considered as if the water they drank was *tameh* and thereby, by way of rabbinic decree, be a *sheni le'tumah*. What is the reason for the *Mishnah's* ruling and how is *mei gevaim* different to a regular *mikveh*.

One approach taken by many commentaries is that, like a *mikveh*, *mei gevaim* cannot become *tameh* while attached to the ground (eg *Rashi Vayikra* 11:36). The *Tifferet Yisrael* explains that on a biblical level, only a small amount of water (*revi'it*) is required for a *mikveh* for the immersion of small utensils (see *Pesachim* 17b, *Nazir* 38a). The *Meiri* explains the reason for increasing the measure to forty *seah* was out of concern that people would begin using water that collected in utensils and not in the ground for the purpose of immersing *keilim*; which would be invalid. Consequently our case must be referring to *mei gevaim* whose source was not drawn but naturally collected (*Bartenura*). Therefore when the *tameh* person drinks from the *mei gevaim* his contact with the water does not make it *tameh*. Why then does the second person become *tameh*?

The concern is that drops of liquid that were removed from the *mei gevaim* by the *tameh* person when drinking would return. Since it is not the volume of a *mikveh*, that liquid

remains *tameh*; albeit amongst the *tameh* liquid. Many commentaries continue to explain that we are concerned that the *tahor* person will drink water from the *mei gevaim* that includes that *tameh* drop. Once removed from the ground that *tameh* drop will cause the other water in the person's mouth to be *tameh* and he will be drinking *tameh* liquid.

The *Tifferet Yisrael* prefers however to explain that when the *tameh* drops falls into the *mei gevaim* it is considered through mixed evenly. Therefore when the second person takes a drink will certainly be taking some of the *tameh* liquid into his mouth. The reason he prefers this variation of the explanation is because otherwise this would appear to equate with a doubtful case involve *tameh* liquids that we learnt previously would be deemed *tahor* (*Taharot* 4:11).¹

The *Mishnah Achrona* does not like either approach. The question he poses is that in this case the *tumah* should be considered *batel*. (He dismisses the *Raavad* answer that the minority can be “reawakened” when some of the water is removed as other *Gemara* that assesses that concept does not cite this *Mishnah*.) He therefore prefers the *Rambam's* approach.²

The *Rambam* disagrees with the first premise. He maintains that the *mei gevaim* is susceptible to *tumah* – much like water that is contained in utensil. The difference is that the *mei gevaim* becomes *tameh* only if one bring the *tumah* in contact with the water willingly. According to this understanding, since the law of *mei gevaim* is not connected to *mikvah*, *mei gavaim* can also be made up of drawn water. Returning to the *Mishnah*, once the *tameh* person drank from the *mei gevaim*, that water is *tameh*. The reason why the second person becomes *tameh* is then readily understood.

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¹ In defence of the other opinions, one could say that there is a difference between a case where one is unsure whether he drank liquid that is definitely *tameh* (perhaps the case referred to in *taharot*) and this case where one is certain they drank the liquid, but is unsure whether it is *tameh*. We have drawn this distinction previously where the latter was ruled in stricter way – see volume 6 issue 46.

² See the *Tifferet Yisrael* at length for his treatment of this question.

Revision Questions

טהרות ט' ח' – י' ח'

- What is the law regarding a case where a *sheretz* is found:
 - On a grinding stone?
 - On the leaves on pressed olives? (ט' ח')
 - On clumps of olives above the main mass of olives in a vat?
 - On clumps above clumps above the mass?
 - Between the wall and the olives?
 - Burnt on top of the olives? (ט' ט')
- What is the law regarding the vat from which olives were being taken and placed on the roof if a *sheretz* is found amongst the olives on the roof? (ט' ט')
- What is the law if the *sheretz* was found in the vat? (ט' ט')
- Explain the debate regarding the case where the olive workers who were made *tahor* were locked in the press along with a *tameh kli*. (י' א')
- What is the law if *tameh* liquid was found spilt in an olive press in which the workers were treading? (י' ב')
- Were the workers allowed to leave the press to relieve themselves? (י' ב')
- Explain the debate regarding whether the workers would need to be supervised when immersing themselves and the *keilim* prior to work? (י' ג')
- What is the scope of the decree that applies to picked grapes making them susceptible to *tumah*? (Include both opinions.) (י' ד')
- Grapes picked and stored in which locations would immediately be susceptible to *tumah*? (י' ה')
- What would be the law if one such grape (that was *tameh*) fell into many others? After how many more would the law be different? (י' ה')
- What is the law if an *am ha'aretz* spat while he talked and there is a doubt whether the spittle reached the vat? (י' ו')
- What is the law if while one was drawing wine out of the vat, a *sheretz* was found in the first barrel? In the last barrel? (י' ז')
- Regarding the previous question in what case is the ruling more stringent? More lenient? (י' ז')
- Which parts of a vineyard would be considered *reshut ha'rabbim*? (י' ח')
- What must one do first if the utensils of a wine press became *tameh* through *tameh* liquids? (Provide both cases.) (י' ח')

מקואות א' א' – א' ד'

- What is *mei gevaim*? (א' א')
- What is the law regarding one that drank from *mei gevaim* after someone *tameh* drank from it? (א' א')
- Regarding the previous question, what would the law be if *trumah* fell in such water? (א' א')
- What is the law regarding the previous two questions if instead of a *tameh* person first drinking from the *mei gevavim*:
 - Water was first drawn with a *tameh kli*? (י' א')
 - *Tameh* liquid first fell into the *mei gevavim*? (י' ג')
 - A corpse fell into the *mei gevavim*? (י' ד')
- Provide some examples of bodies of water that qualify as *mei gevavim*? (י' א')
- What is the law regarding *mei gevavim* that is found during the rainy seasons? During the rest of the year? (י' 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
31 st January ט' שבט	1 st February י' שבט	2 nd February י"א שבט	3 rd February י"ב שבט	4 th February י"ג שבט	5 th February י"ד שבט	6 th February ט"ו שבט
Mikvaot 1:5-6	Mikvaot 1:7-8	Mikvaot 2:1-2	Mikvaot 2:3-4	Mikvaot 2:5-6	Mikvaot 2:7-8	Mikvaot 2:9-10

