# MIKVA IN NATURE

# MIKVA IN NATURE: GENERAL CONCEPTS

#### Mikva in Nature: Rabbinic Guidance

Rabbinic guidance is recommended when using a river, lake, or spring as a mikva due to:

- Problems of mud, dirt, or sand, and
- Difficulty in checking if the person is fully underwater,
- It might not be a kosher mikva.

NOTE This section applies to the immersion of both utensils and people, since the same principles apply.

### **Mikva in Nature: Source of Water**

Spring water, whether moving or stationary, is a kosher mikva.

Rain water is only a *kosher mikva* once it is stationary (just sitting in a pool, not flowing anywhere). In neither case may the water enter a constructed *mikva* through a "*kli*," which includes being carried in a bucket or via pipes with bends and other places for water to collect. In the case of a pipe that may not be a *kli*, consult a *rabbi*.

#### Mikva in Nature: Measurements

A kosher mikva in nature:

- Must be 40 se'ah (about 192 gallons);
- Has no minimum depth;
- May be murky or muddy (but must be such that a cow would drink it); and
- May not drop in level more than 2 inches (3.1 cm) within 24 hours.

# LAKE AS MIKVA

#### Lakes or Ponds as Mikva

A lake or pond may be a kosher mikva if it is:

- Fed from ground water (percolates through the soil); or
- Primarily fed from a spring; or
- Primarily fed from rain.

NOTE The rain must run into the lake or pond directly. If the water enters, or drains out, via pipes, it is not a *kosher mikva*. However, if the lake or pond gets rain from run-off from streets through pipes, it might be a *kosher mikva*. Consult a *rabbi*.

NOTE A lake or pond that drains out through a river or stream may not be a kosher mikva. Consult a rabbi.

NOTE A lake or pond into which a river or stream empties, might be a kosher mikva. Consult a rabbi.

NOTE A lake or pond with a river running into it and then out of it is considered a river. For immersing in a river, see Rivers as *Kosher Mikva*.

### **OCEAN AS MIKVA**

#### Oceans as Mikva

All oceans and seas are *kosher mikvas*, but other salty water (defined as water that a cow would not drink) is not *kosher* for immersion.

NOTE A <u>rabbi</u> should be consulted before using an ocean for immersion since there are other issues involved.

# **RAINWATER AS MIKVA**

### Rainwater as Mikva

Rainwater only purifies when it is stationary.

### **RIVER AS MIKVA**

### Rivers as Kosher Mikva

Rivers are only *kosher mikva*s when spring-fed. A river is a *kosher mikva* if it exists year round (not like a *wadi*, which is frequently dry and only flows after rainfall).

### Hot Springs as Mikva

Here are requirements for a hot spring as a mikva:

- 1. The temperature may not be above 98° F.
- 2. If the spring and immersing area are separate, any pipes used to bring water into the immersing area from the spring must be at least 3" in diameter. Consult a *rabbi*.
- 3. The *mikva* area must contain at least 40 *seah* of the spring water.
- 4. The <u>mikva</u> area must be hewn of rock or poured concrete, etc., but may not be prefabricated in one piece, like a hot tub.
- 5. The water may not reach the *mikva* area via a pump.

# SPRING AS MIKVA

### Spring as Mikva

Springs are always *kosher mikvas* as long as the volume in the place of immersion is at least 40 *se'ah* (192 gallons).