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 *rabbi* 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 *mikva* 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).

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