



פרשת פקודי  
אדר ב תשפ"ב

**PRE-PURIM SHIURIM**  
**between Mincha & Maariv**  
**daily in the Shule**

Starting on Sunday, there will be half-hour Shiurim between Mincha and Maariv in the Yeshivah Shule, to help you get ready for Purim.

Mincha: 7:35pm

**Shiur: 7:50-8:18pm**

Maariv: 8:18pm

**Sunday**

Purim Halachos from the Shulchan Aruch with Rabbi Yossi Moshel

**Monday & Tuesday**

Sichos of the Rebbe on Purim with Rabbi Menachem Sufrin

**Wednesday**

Fascinating Midrashim on the Megillah with Rabbi Yonasan Jones

Different refreshments each night!

**SHAALOS UTESHUVOS**  
**SUNDAY MORNING**

After an extended break, the Sunday morning Shaalos Uteshuvos Shiur is returning to Kollel.

Join Rabbi Yonason Johnson on Sundays 9:30-10:15am to explore contemporary issues through the Halachic writings of the Poskim.

This week

**Planting and cutting down trees**  
**outside of Shule**

**SHABBOS SHIUR**

The Shabbos afternoon Shiur this week will be given by Rabbi Telsner on the topic of Shemittah.

After Mincha in Yeshivah Shule

**PRE-PURIM SHIURIM**

Half-hour daily learning options  
Between Mincha (7:35pm) & Maariv (8:18pm)  
in Yeshivah Shule, **with refreshments & לחיים**  
From Sunday 3 Adar 2 (Mar 6) until Purim

Sunday Night **Upcoming Purim Shiurim**

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**Celebrating Diversity**

The final two Parshios of Sefer Shemos discuss the actual building of the Mishkan with the donations given by Bnei Yisroel. The Mishkan was a collective project, involving all of the Jewish people.

The names of the Parshios Vayakhel and Pekudei highlight two different aspects of being a part of a community and the contribution that each of us makes to the community and its endeavours.

Vayakhel means to gather together, reflecting the community as a whole, seemingly homogenous group devoted to a common cause or set of values. To achieve this unity one must transcend, and sometimes forgo their individuality to become a part of the greater goal and greater good.

In contrast, the message of Pekudei is the celebration of diversity and uniqueness of the individual and the specific contribution that they can make.

Pekudei means to count. In the opening of the Parsha Moshe Rabbeinu gives a tally of the contributions made to the Mishkan and how they were used in the various aspects of the Mishkan's construction. Counting an object recognises and declares the unique value of each counted item.

We see this contrast in the Mishkan itself as described within these Parshios.

On one hand, the Mishkan was a total unit, a single Mitzvah - expressing the theme of Vayakhel. But it was made up of unique elements; materials and keilim, each serving a different function - the theme of Pekudei.

If any of the individual details were missing, the totality of the Mishkan would be lacking and Hashem's presence would not rest amongst Bnei Yisroel.

These contrasting themes are also reflected in the different donations that were given to build the Mishkan. The half Shekel coin was given by each Jew equally, whether rich or poor. The idea of giving an equal donation reflects how each member is an equal part of a homogenous whole.

But there was another type of donation where each person would (and was expected to) give according to their ability and their generosity. Some would give gold, others silver or copper. These items differ greatly in their nature and value.

As a community we look more-or-less homogenous. We wear similar clothing, ascribe to similar beliefs and share common facilities. But far from minimising uniqueness, a community thrives on uniqueness and diversity of opinions.

Like each brush-stroke in a masterpiece or each note in a song, we are each unique parts of the greater whole. We each possess talents that only we can offer and which make us unique. For some it is in teaching or speaking. Another might be a good organiser, implementer or source of ideas.

The underlying base to everything that must come first is Vayakhel; to work together as a Kehillah with Achdus and Ahavas Yisroel.

But within this framework, Pekudei encourages each of us to utilise our uniqueness and contribute it to the greater good of the community; to building our Mishkan.

Like the individual items in the Mishkan, it is our diversity that actually creates the fabric of the community and without each individual and their uniqueness, the community would not be complete or reach the successes that we are capable of.

1. Y.D. 198:36

2. Teshuvos Harashba 1:818

3. Niddah 67a

4. Y.D. 198:35

5. Rashba Teshuvah 819

6. See Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 189:35

7. Tosefta Keilim

8. Based on shiur of Rabbi A.C. Noeh

9. Shiurei Shevet Halevi 189:36:2

10. Tosfos Eiruvin 21a א"ח א"ח

11. Teshuvos 1:910

12. Kitzur SA Aruch Hashulchan

13. Y.D. 201:66

14. Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, Sidrei Taharah

15. Ram"o Y.D. 201:66

16. Y.D. 1:107

17. Igros Moshe Y.D. 1:106

18. Sidrei Taharah 189:73 based on Ta"z 189:55

19. Maharsham 3:15

20. Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 198:37,

Ram"o Y.D. 201:66

21. Teshuvos Haran 66

22. Built in a Halachically valid manner that does not constitute a Keili

23. Developing a method to allow warm Mikvaos was one of the

Alter Rebbe's great innovations

24. In addition to the concern that some may not go to Mikvah at all

25. The wife of the Rebbe Maharash

26. Igros 6p142

27. Sidrei Taharah 189:75, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 161:14

28. Igros Moshe ibid

29. 21 Kislev 5710

# The weekly Halacha analysis

## How to immerse in a shallow Mikvah

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

### Minimum height of the water

The Shulchan Aruch<sup>1</sup> rules that the water of the Mikvah should be at least a Zeres above the navel of the one immersing. This measure should come to the middle of the chest<sup>2</sup>.

Whereas the discussion last week concerned the Bor containing the rainwater, this Halacha applies to the Bor in which the immersion takes place. This Halacha has nothing to do with the minimum volumes of the Mikvah and will apply even if the Mikvah contains a large volume.

The reason for this requirement is to enable the one immersing to position their body in the correct manner<sup>3</sup>. The Shulchan Aruch<sup>4</sup> rules that a woman immersing should not bend over too much or stand upright.

This is to ensure that the water of the Mikvah reaches every place of the body<sup>5</sup>. For the same reason, there are Halachic guidelines for how to position and distance one's arms and legs<sup>6</sup>.

If the water-level in the Mikvah is too low, it would necessitate bending forward too much, which would create creases or folds that would obstruct the water and constitute a Chatzitza.

### What is a Zeres?

Usually a Zeres means half of an Amah<sup>7</sup> which is 3 Tefachim – approximately 24cm<sup>8</sup> (some require up to 30cm<sup>9</sup>). According to some authorities<sup>10</sup>, a Zeres is a third of an Amah i.e. 2 Tefachim – approximately 16cm. The Rashba<sup>11</sup> writes that a Zeres is half of a 5-Tefach Amah – approximately 20cm. Most Acharonim<sup>12</sup> require (Lechatchila) the measure of 3 Tefachim.

Some Poskim are more lenient to base the measure of the Zeres of the person immersing, measured as the span between the thumb and little finger when spread apart.

Many Mikvaos are built with a decorative tile strip that marks the required height for the water, so that the Mikvah attendant will know to what depth to fill the Mikvah. The water in the Mikvah is customarily filled based on the average height, with the water level being 120-125cm above the floor.

### Bedieved

The Ram"o<sup>3</sup> and other Acharonim<sup>14</sup> write that

if the water is not filled to this minimum height, she should not use it Lechatchilah. Where no other option is available, a woman should not put off her immersion<sup>15</sup>. Igros Moshe<sup>16</sup> rules that if another Mikvah is available within an 18-minute drive she must travel to use that Mikvah.

Nowadays this should not be an issue because water is readily available to top up the water of the Mikvah. The extra cost involved should not be reason to a reason to not do this<sup>17</sup>.

In former times where water was not readily accessible, the Poskim discuss alternative solutions when no other Mikvah is available.

When immersing in a Mikvah which does not have the required depth, she should slowly lower herself into the Mikvah up to her neck and ensure that each part of her body gets wet<sup>18</sup>. By first ensuring that all parts of the body including inside any creases are wet, even if creases form when she bends forward to immerse, since they are already wet they are considered Mechubar to the Mikvah and will not be a Chatzitza.

As an extra precaution, she should also immerse a number of times, changing the position each time to ensure that each part of the body is in contact with the water<sup>19</sup>.

### Immersion "like a fish"

Alternatively (or in addition to the above), she can immerse lying down horizontally<sup>20</sup> with her arms and legs outstretched. This method of immersing is first attributed to the Geonim and is referred to as כדג, טבילה, immersing "like a fish". Whereas bending forward significantly will create creases, lying horizontally does not create any creases<sup>21</sup>.

The Alter Rebbe designed a type of "box"<sup>22</sup> that could be fixed into a river so that hot water could be added to allow immersion in warm water<sup>23</sup>. His instructions are recorded in his Tikunei Mikvah. He begins with the statement "it is well known in the outstanding gates of Halacha that the height of a Mikvah must be half an Amah above the navel... "

Nonetheless, the Alter Rebbe explains that since it is not possible to heat up enough water to fill such a deep "box" and it is necessary to make a shallower Mikvah, the woman immersing should lie horizontally "like a fish". To enable this, the Mikvah "box" should be 18 Tefachim long, 6 Tefachim wide and should be filled to a depth of 7 Tefachim.

In the Alter Rebbe's view, having a warm Mikvah is a more serious concern. Cold water (especially in the Russian climate) could lead to greater problems on the validity of the immersion such as rushing or clenching up due to the cold<sup>24</sup>.

Whilst it seems from the above that immersing "like a fish" should only be done Bedieved where the Mikvah is not deep enough, the Tzemach Tzedek instructed his daughter-in-law<sup>25</sup>, that the primary method of immersion (טיבילה) is to lie flat "like a fish", even when the Mikvah is deep.

The Rebbe Rashab<sup>26</sup> writes that this is based on a directive of the Alter Rebbe. The reason to immerse in this manner is because it is difficult to ensure that the Mikvah is at the height of a Zeres above the navel for each woman. Additionally this position ensures all of the hair is under water.

In the instructions of Rabbi Yaakov Landau from building the Mikvah of the Rebbe Rashab in Rostov, he writes that the Mikvah should be at least 32 Vershok (an old Russian measure) which is approximately 142.24cm. This is in order to enable immersing horizontally, placing one's body flat with the head resting on the bottom step. This was done even though the Mikvah itself was deep.

Many Poskim<sup>27</sup> are hesitant to rely on immersing "like a fish", especially if the Mikvah is deep<sup>28</sup> since it is difficult to maintain the exact horizontal position and a slight deviation could invalidate the Tevilah. A woman may also be afraid and rush the Tevilah. They conclude that immersing "like a fish" should only be used where absolutely necessary.

In a letter<sup>29</sup>, the Rebbe writes that it is difficult to immerse in this position and it would be necessary to hold on to something (e.g. a rail). Holding something tightly would also create a problem of a Chatzitza and therefore trying to keep the Chumra of the Tzemach Tzedek could lead to a leniency.

For Chabad Chassidim, if a woman is not afraid and can immerse in this position without holding onto anything, she should do so for at least 1 of her customary number of Tevilos to fulfil the Tzemach Tzedek's directive.