

Inside-the-Daf

In another tractate, (ר"ה טו.) the Talmud teaches that one must make sure he is pure for ימים טובים (Festivals). We become pure by immersing ourselves in a מקוה (a ritual pool of water). Food utensils must also be immersed in a מקוה before they are used.

הלל do not allow the immersion of utensils in a מקוה on the Sabbath or יום טוב, but do allow people to immerse in a מקוה on those holy days. Why may not utensils be immersed but people may be immersed?

The גמרא quotes a few explanations, one of which is רבא's. רבא explains that when we immerse utensils it looks like we are "fixing" something that is broken. After all, before the utensils were put into the מקוה they could not be used, just like a "broken" utensil cannot be used. After the utensil is immersed it becomes "fixed" and may be used. Fixing broken objects is not allowed on the Sabbath and Festivals.

Why then may a person purify himself? Doesn't it look like he is "fixing" himself? רבא explains that when a person immerses in a מקוה, it doesn't look like he is "fixing" himself; it looks like he just wants to cool off. Someone who immerses a utensil, on the other hand, looks like he is "fixing" it.

A Moment גדול

Joel was feeling pretty good about himself. He just got a new black hat and pair of wool ציצית from Israel. That would take care of his religious shortcomings. If he didn't pray with proper concentration or become a better, nicer person, he could at least *look* like he was religious!

This didn't fool his father.

"Joel, do you know what I learned today?" asked his dad. "We can remove dirt from a utensil on the Sabbath but may not immerse it in a מקוה. This is because removing dirt doesn't really 'fix' the utensil since you only take away the outer ugliness. The real 'fixing' comes from fixing what's wrong with the utensil on the inside. That's why you can't immerse it in a מקוה on the Sabbath. When we 'fix' ourselves, it is important to fix what's really wrong with us on the inside, not just an outer 'fixing.'"

(מוסר המשנה)

SCIENCE and the 97



Today's גמרא mentions that vinegar was used to treat toothaches. In fact, throughout history vinegar has been used as a home remedy for tooth pain. When fluid builds up in the gums it can cause tooth pain. Vinegar acts to lower the osmotic pressure on the gums and to relieve pain. Even though the vinegar can help for a little while, you should see a dentist as soon as possible if you have tooth pain.

Men & Utensils

On the previous page we learned that בית הלל say one is not allowed to immerse utensils in a מקוה on the Sabbath or יום טוב.

The גמרא gives some reasons why this is not allowed. One opinion (רבא) was explained on the last page.

רבה explains that we may not immerse utensils on the Sabbath in case one carries them out of one's house through a public area. One is not allowed to carry from a private area to public one on the Sabbath. אבוי asks if one would be allowed to immerse utensils if one had a private מקוה on his property. The גמרא says we would still not be allowed to immerse the utensils because this could lead to someone using a מקוה in a public area.

רב יוסף understands that we may not immerse *clothing* in a מקוה on the Sabbath in case one squeezes out the water which is a forbidden activity on holy days. Even utensils that cannot be wrung out (such as a jug) may not be immersed because this could lead to someone immersing clothing.

WORD OF THE DAY:
אִיתִיבִּיה
 "HE RAISED A CONTRADICTION"



Did You Know...

We assume that on a very hot day, one will go into a pool of dirty water to cool off. For this reason, the Sages allow one to immerse in a dirty מקוה on the Sabbath as people watching will assume he just wants to cool off, not "fix" himself from being impure.

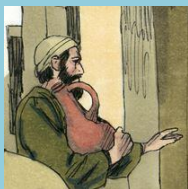
Games

Match Each Rabbi To His Reason For Not Immersing On Holy Days

רבא

רב יוסף

רבה



Review Questions – ביצה דף י"ח

1. According to רבא what is the problem with immersing utensils on the Sabbath?

2. According to רב יוסף, why may we not immerse clothing on the Sabbath?

3. If we see someone immersing in a dirty מקוה on the Sabbath, what will we think he is doing?
