

Jewish ritual bath – mikveh in the hotel Joseph1699

A bath-form inscribed in the rock has been retained in the oldest hotel building with baroque vaults. According to all documents It is the mikveh which is no more used for its purpose but shows the past of this place.

Mikveh (Hebrew means “collection” or “collection of water”) is a cistern with groundwater used for the ritual purity. Mikveh must contain at least 762 litres and should be deep enough to cover the entire body of an average-sized person. The mikveh was used by priesthood in ancient Israel as ritual purity before their ministration in the Temple in Jerusalem. Nowadays Mikveh is mainly used by Jewish women to achieve the ritual purity after menstruation or childbirth. Jewish men use it ordinarily during the significant religion holidays. The purpose of their visit is both religion preparation and the ritual purity before Jewish holidays. Using Mikveh is also a part of traditional procedure for conversion to Judaism (for both women and men) and a part of ritual purity of utensils used for food.

In Orthodox Judaism (about 20 % of Jewish population) are these regulations steadfastly adhered. Jews professing reform Judaism, who live in the modern way of life, do not put much importance on the existence of a mikveh.

In the past Mikvehs were situated in the cellars of the houses or in single houses with public entry.

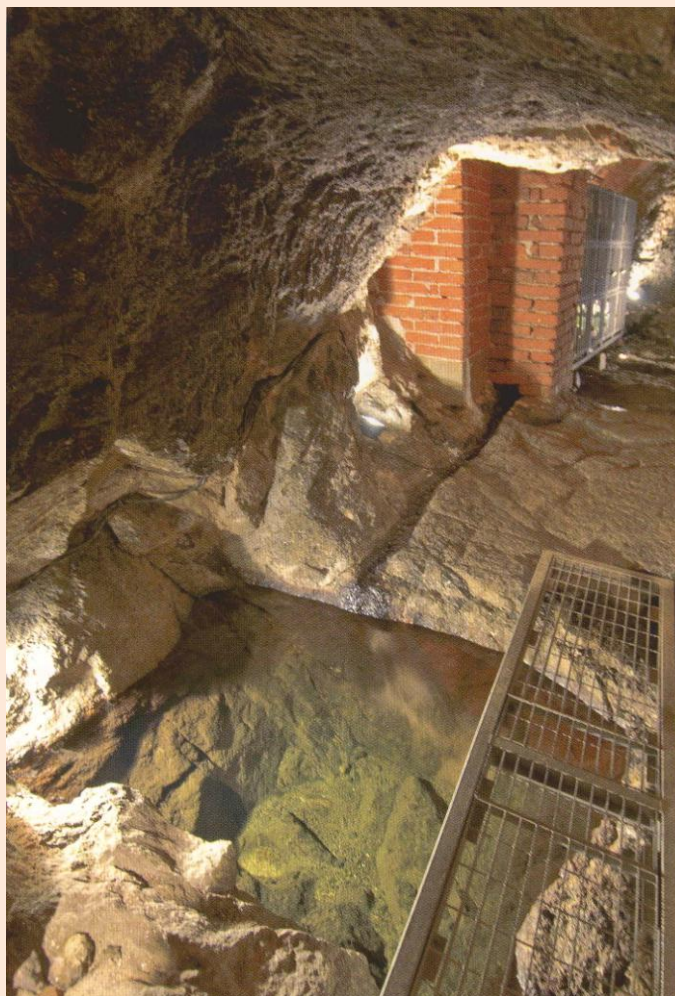
There are two Mikvehs used for ritual purity in the Czech Republic – in Prague (not far away from Pinkas Synagogue) and in Brno which was set in a cellar of a house belonging to Jewish community in the street of Kapitána Jaroše. The mikveh in Brno had to be newly built because no ritual bath had been saved in Brno. You can see the modern mikveh on the picture below.



There have been some historic ritual mikvehs left in the Czech Republic and some of them are visitable. For example accidentally discovered mikveh in Boskovice or in Mikulov

There are two mikvehs in the Jewish quarter of Třebíč. The first one is in the cellar of the house no. 10 (building of company Kapucín - right at the entrance to the Jewish quarter). The second one is situated in the hotel building between

Blahoslavova and Skalní Street with house no. 85. Both places are accessible to public after prior consultation.



Mikveh in the house no. 10 is situated in the cellar which goes under the Blahoslavova Street towards the next house across the street.

Mikveh in the hotel building is situated in the ground floor, in the room with baroque vaults which belongs to the oldest buildings of the hotel complex. According to the historic documents this part was built in 1699 and it has retained almost original form despite the reconstruction in 2008-2010. The existence of the mikveh in the house was unknown until the preparation for reconstruction in 2006 when old floors were removed. During an uncovering in 2006 was found, that one of the former bearing walls had been situated at the bottom of the Mikveh, so it was possible, before the reconstruction, to uncover it only from two thirds in order not to crash the wall. This problem was fortunately solved and now you can see the whole Mikveh, which has been covered by glass window after the agreement with the heritage institute.

There are two dates which border using of mikveh in the past. There is no sign of existence mikveh before 1629. Urban Stehlík sold the farmsteading to Jewish people in 1629 (it cannot be assumed that the mikveh was a part of Christian farmsteading). The mikveh haven't been no more used for ritual purpose since 1699 when Jew Hierschel Hesky built the bearing wall into it.

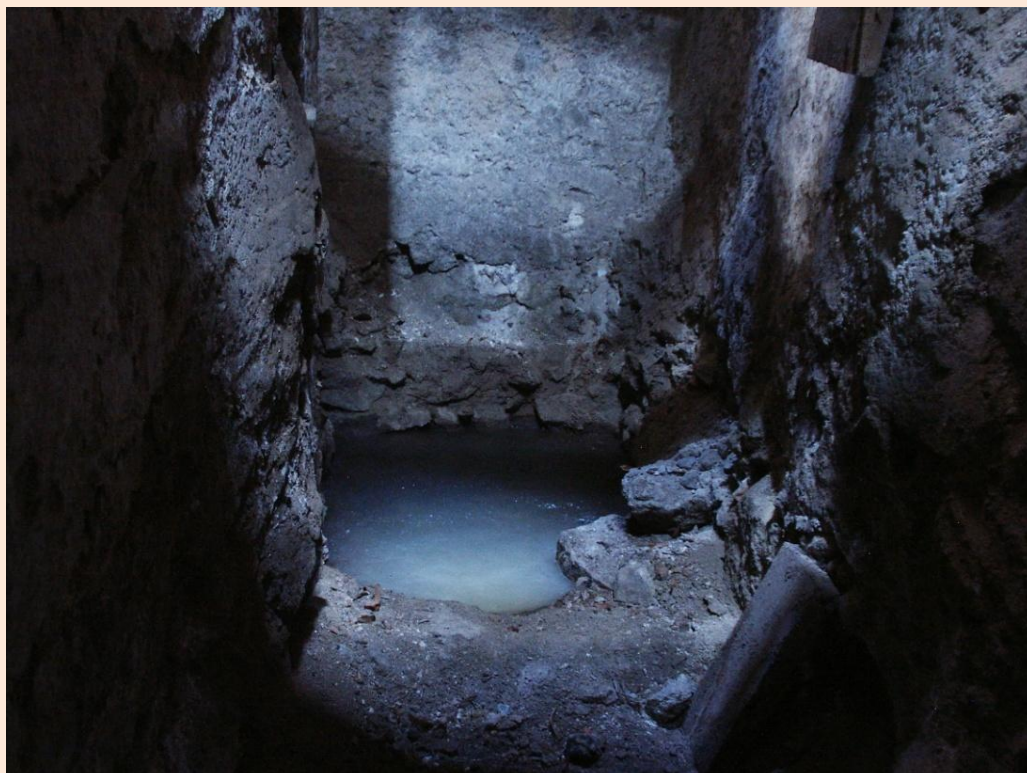
The photo just after the uncovering and dewatering in 2006 (mikveh will be fill by groundwater after about two days)



Photos were made at the same time just with different lightening



The mikveh in winter



The recent photo after the reconstruction



We believe you will enjoy your staying here and the hotel will make you feel like you're in 1699.

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