

The Jewish women's bath (mikveh)



Immersion pool of the former mikveh in Felsberg.

Image and information sources:

- Hans-Curt Köster, in *Synagogues* by Thea Altaras, Langewiesche Publishing House.
 - *History of the Rimbach Jews* by Wolfgang Gebhard
- www.juden-in-rimbach.de | www.rimbach-odw.de

The mikveh is a ritual immersion bath for purifying the spirit and soul.

Women visit the mikveh on the eve of their wedding, after menstruation, and following childbirth. On certain occasions, it is also used by men. Men are recommended to visit before the Sabbath and the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur.

The ritual purification is carried out relatively quickly and privately. Only one other person is present. According to the rules, the bath may be entered only after the body has been physically (pre-)cleaned. Depending on tradition, the visitor immerses themselves completely in the water once or several times and then recites a blessing.

In 1826, the Jewish community of Rimbach purchased a plot of land from Adam Öhlenschläger to build a new women's bath near the "Seebächlein." A well was drilled (at today's Staatsstraße 22) and a bathhouse was built a short distance away (approximately at today's Staatsstraße 21/23). The Rimbach mikveh was supplied with water through wooden pipes ("Deicheln"), which were later relocated beneath the newly constructed Staatsstraße. The new bath house had heating for both the rooms and the bathwater. The bath was lined with stones or clad in wood, and the steps leading into the bath were made of oak.

The Jewish women's bathhouse was used until the turn of the century and then served as a washhouse. In 1937, it was sold to the carpenter Nikolaus Schaab and was later demolished.