



## SERMON NOTES

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By Rabbi Dani'el Rendelman  
[ravemet@comcast.net](mailto:ravemet@comcast.net)

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### **“The Meaning of Mikvah”**

A drunk staggered upon a baptismal service on Sunday afternoon down by the river. He proceeded to walk down into the water and stood next to the Preacher. The minister turned and noticed the old drunk and said, "Mister, Are you ready to find the Savior?" The drunk looks back and says, "Yes, Preacher. I sure am." The minister then dunked the fellow under the water and pulled him right back up. "Have you found the Messiah, the Redeemer?" the preacher asks. "No, I didn't!" says the drunk. The preacher then dunks him again, holding him under for quite a bit longer, brings him up and says, "Now, brother, have you found Him?" "No, I did not Preacher." The preacher in disgust holds the man under for at least 30 seconds this time brings him out of the water and says in a harsh tone, "Friend, are you sure you haven't found the Savior yet?" The old drunk wipes his eyes and says to the preacher, "Are you sure this is where he fell in?"

It is easy to see that this fellow didn't know what he had gotten himself into. This drunk is not alone.

There are many people who don't understand what baptism is all about. The purpose of this teaching is to expose the truth of the Scriptures about Baptism and clear the waters, so to speak, concerning this often-misunderstood subject. Though we might think we know all about this topic, this well is much deeper (no pun intended) than it looks.

In our western culture, when we need to understand a word, we turn to a dictionary. Well, the American Heritage Dictionary, found online at [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com), says that baptism is "a religious sacrament marked by the symbolic use of water and resulting in admission of the recipient into the community of Christians. It is a ceremony, trial, or experience by which one is initiated, purified, or given a name." It's settled. The dictionary says that baptism is a Christian event; a sacrament with water. Scholars, educators, and our western culture identify only Christianity with this subject. The same dictionary defines a sacrament as a "religious rite ordained by the Roman Catholic Church that confers sanctifying grace." Baptism is a cornerstone of all Christian sects. Some sprinkle, others immerse, and many groups christen children or infants. Yet, what does the Bible teach about this subject? **Is baptism solely a New Testament idea?**

### Our Real Hebrew Roots

The word baptism comes to the English language from the Greek word "baptizos," which means to "wash or immerse." This Greek concept is derived from the Hebrew term "t'vilah." Does this mean that baptism is really a Hebrew concept?

Yes, before John the Baptist came preaching "repent and be baptized," immersion was already an accepted practice in the life of the Hebrew people. As John the Baptist stood in the Jordan River, he wasn't doing anything radical or new. T'vilah (immersion) was part of the Biblical faith before Messiah came. Judaism today continues to use immersion. This proves that baptism is not just as a sacrament ordained by the Roman church, but an action commanded by the Scriptures. We'll learn that t'vilah is in essence a gateway into being kedusha or set apart.

T'vilah is the physical act of immersing into a body of moving water, called a "mikvah" in Hebrew. The Encyclopedia Judaica says that a mikvah is a, "a collection of water, a pool or bath of clear water, immersion in which renders ritually clean a person who has become ritually unclean through contact with the dead (Num. 19) or any other defiling object, or through an unclean flux from the body (Lev. 15) and especially a menstruant. It is similarly used for vessels (Num. 31:22–23)." These terms, mikvah and t'vilah, will be used interchangeably throughout this teaching to have the connotation of immersion.

### Our Dictionary: the Torah

To learn more about this topic let's consult the only true authority, the Holy Scriptures. As Hebrews, let's look to our dictionary, the Torah, to learn exactly what t'vilah / immersion is. We're not going to look directly to John the Baptist in the New Testament, but to the many places immersion is found throughout the Tanakh, starting in the book of Genesis.

### In this study, we will learn

\*mikvah is not a once in a lifetime event, but an action to be experienced over and over again.

\*the power of immersion cleanses the spiritually unclean and thus bring about healing and restoration.

There are some powerful insights about immersion to be learned, so let's fasten our life preservers and dive in!

Let's begin with understanding that the main purpose of immersion into water is not physical cleanliness, though that does play a part in Scriptural t'vilah. The most important reason we have been called to t'vilah is to reinforce the Bible's message of separation. As Hebrews we have been called out of darkness into the Light of YHWH. He was called us as His own precious people. "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to Elohim, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light," – Kefa Aleph / I Peter, chapter 2

We are set apart, to YHWH, as His children. He has called us to set ourselves apart in this world, through our actions. As we choose to obey His Torah and thus replicate His will, we set ourselves apart unto Him. The Messianic Writings say, "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Master. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says YHWH Almighty," 2 Corinthians 6:17-18. Immersion is a "procedure" that sets us apart as holy to YHWH. We will undergo the physical act of being baptized as we make Scriptural decisions that validate our desire to live as a holy nation.

## מקוּדָה

### The First Baptism

The earth was immersed in the beginning. As part of creation, the Almighty immersed the world in water. "Elohim said, Let the mayim (waters) under the Shamayim (heavens) be gathered together to one place, and let the dry land appear, and it was so. And the mayim under the shamayim gathered to their gatherings and the dry land appeared. And Elohim called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the mayim He called Seas: and Elohim saw that it was tov(good). And Elohim said, Let the earth bring out grass, the herb yielding zera, and the fruit eytz (tree) yielding fruit after its kind, whose zera (seed) is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought out grass, and herb yielding

zera after its kind, and the eytz yielding fruit, whose zera was in itself, after its kind: and Elohim saw that it was tov,"

-- Beresheet / Genesis 1: 8-12.

Believe it or not, there is a baptism in these verses! We don't see this because we don't read or write Hebrew. **Zeph 3:9 shows us that as the Hebrew language is restored then so is the truth of worship and mikvah!**

The Hebrew word often translated "gathering the waters" or "gathered to their gatherings" in Beresheet / Genesis 1: 9 is actually "mikvah." The place where the waters gathered was a mikvah, or a "gathering of moving waters that renders a ritually unclean person clean." New life sprung forth after the waters were gathered into a mikvah.

Also in Beresheet the Torah says, "the Ruach (Spirit) of Elohim moved upon the face of the mayim (waters)". The Sages of Judaism, of blessed memory, teach us that when YHWH hovered over the waters in Genesis, He impregnated the waters and the creation was birthed from this action of hovering. "Out of whose womb came the ice? And the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen," -- Iyov / Job, chapter 38 shows the basis for this imagery.

From these examples we can see that the waters of mikvah act as a womb. Then and now, as we obey the Scriptures and are immersed, YHWH hovers over us and brings forth Spiritual life! When we rise from the waters, we are born anew. This is repeated in the birth of Messiah Yahshua. The Spirit hovered over Miriam (Mary); she became impregnated, and brought forth a child. The Angel spoke to Miriam, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of Elohim," -- Luke 1:35.

This pattern of hovering, immersion, and impregnation, is one that YHWH has set and continues to use this day.

Immersion is also an act of repentance, following rebellion against YHWH. (YHWH is the violated one.)

In the beginning Adam and Chawaw (Eve) allowed sin to corrupt them and were therefore rendered ritually unclean. They were cast from YHWH's awesome presence. The Midrash teaches that after Adam was banished, he sat in a river that flowed from the garden. This was his immersion after sin that showed his desire to return to the Creator. As Adam sat in the moving waters that flowed from the Garden he could remember his former state and he no doubt mourned the loss of closeness with the Creator.

### A life and death experience

The next mikvah found in the Scriptures shows us how immersion not only brings forth new life, but also washes away the old life. Mikvah washes away the evil and brings a new start. After many years of wickedness increasing in the earth, YHWH decided to destroy the world with the great flood. Only the righteous were saved from this washing away of all that was immoral. In Beresheet / Genesis 7 we learn that that the wicked were in essence "drowned." Their lives of sin were totally destroyed. Noah and his family would repopulate the planet with a righteous seed. Mikvah's purpose is to spiritually cleanse the sinner from all that is contrary to Torah. In Acts 2: 38, Kefa (Peter) replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Yahshua HaMoshiach for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Ruach HaKadosh (Holy Spirit)".

### The Hebrews and Mikvah

The role of mikvah continues with the Passover story of the Hebrews. First, Yisra'el is enslaved in bondage to Pharaoh. They cry out to YHWH in prayer and the Maker hears them. He delivers the nation, setting them free from slavery through ten horrible plagues. However, as the nation flees the evil ruler, they come to a dead end. Pharaoh is pursuing them from behind and before them is the massive Red Sea. What will happen? The Torah says that the immense waters of the Red Sea parted and our ancestors walked across the deep on dry land. With the walls of water on either side of them, the Yisra'elites experienced mikvah, "our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea..." -- 1 Corinthians 10: 1-2.

The same waters that receded for the Yisra'elites though, flooded Pharaoh and his army as they tried to cross the Red Sea. The Hebrew word "t'vilah" even appears in Shemot / Exodus, when Pharaoh's army was overtaken by the sea waters. "YHWH is a man of war, YHWH is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea," Shemot / Exodus 15: 4. The word translated drowned is actually "mikvah." Pharaoh and his goons were in essence immersed and killed by the waters. T'vilah is symbolic of the womb, of new life, of bringing death.

Shortly after this mikvah the nation would receive the Torah from YHWH at Mount Sinai. And again, the Hebrews would experience another t'vilah. "YHWH said to Moshe, Go to the people, and set them apart today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready by the third day: for on the third day YHWH will come down in the sight of all the people upon Har Senai; And Moshe went down from the mount to the people, and set-apart the people; and they washed their clothes. And he said to the people, Be ready for the third day: approach not your wives in intimacy," Shemot / Exodus 19: 10,11,14. For Yisra'el to continue in intimacy with YHWH they had to wash themselves, separate themselves, and

prepare for the Set Apart One. Notice that after they had already been baptized in the Red Sea, yet, they experienced t'vilah again. This time, immersion's purpose was to cleanse the nation to experience YHWH.

And from here, it is no surprise that the Torah continues to contain many references to mikvah and immersion in water. Mikvah has many avenues of purpose, yet one goal, the goal of being set apart. This is made clear through the many washings connected with Temple worship. In Tanakh times, the tabernacle and the temple were the place of YHWH's presence. A person could only approach the Most High at these places, if they were ritually clean. The unclean were cut off from worship until their condition had been dealt with.

There are many ways that we become unclean, which we will discuss further during this teaching. However, t'vilah mikvah mayim (immersion in a collection of moving waters) was, and is, a central part in dealing with uncleanness. For example, the leper would go through washing rituals found in Vayikra / Leviticus 14, not for physical cleansing but spiritual cleansing. Like Naaman who immersed seven times and was healed, mikvah completed the healing process for leprosy. The priests also went through immersions in preparation for temple service in Vayikra / Leviticus 16. Throughout the Torah, mikvah is established as a vital and necessary part of Temple worship. Thus, ritual baths were built at the Temple site to be used by those seeking to immerse themselves for ritual/spiritual cleanliness. People who became unclean were not allowed to approach YHWH without first immersing themselves. Those who are clean were allowed access to the temple site while many who were unclean were put outside the camp. Immersion and sometimes a wait, was and is simply a part of the remedy for becoming unclean. "You must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place, which is among them," -- Vayikra / Leviticus 15: 31.

Again, we can discern from the Torah that the main purpose of t'vilah is that of separation. Separation is the calling of all believers. It is one reason why we were called out of darkness to walk in the light of YHWH. Separation is central to the besorat (gospel) of the Messiah. The Creator desires His people to be set apart, or kadosh, in Hebrew. As we separate ourselves from this world we actually separate ourselves unto YHWH. In the Torah we have been called to draw lines of separation between the common and the pure, the clean and the unclean, the profane, and the holy. "And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean," Vayikra – Leviticus 10:10.

All believers have been called to the priestly worship of YHWH through our covenant with Him. We are to walk in cleanliness, to be free of defilement, and daily, to demonstrate YHWH's high moral standards. We become unclean when we cross the lines that YHWH has set for living with His Torah.

There are three various degrees of being unclean: temporary, punishment, and a person can become unclean through natural bodily functions. This isn't an essay on ritual purity, but this subject must be discussed as we look at the role of mikvah. Believers today must still deal with the issue of being spiritually and ritually clean. One may become impure for many different reasons: eating unclean foods, turning to a medium or spiritualist, and even, sinning defiantly. Yahshua did not abolish uncleanness from the world. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill," Mattitياهو-- Matthew, chapter 5

### Niddah and Conversion

Torah also requires mikvah for the woman coming off her time of "niddah" or menstrual cycle. This time of uncleanness reminds the believing household of YHWH's word and its provisions for every part of life. Though it has been ignored for thousands of years, believers must now deal with family purity or Taharat Hamishpachah. Torah says that a woman is unclean during her cycle and seven days after its end, until she immerses in a mikvah. During this time a man and woman may not engage in sexual relations. Judaism still teaches that one week from the woman's flow she must visit a mikvah.

Rivkah Slonin wrote at [www.chabad.org](http://www.chabad.org), "Immersion in the mikvah is the culmination of the Taharat Hamishpachah discipline. In many ways mikvah is the threshold separating the unholy from the holy, but it is even more. Simply put, immersion in a mikvah signals a change in status -- more correctly, an elevation in status. Its unparalleled function lies in its power of transformation, its ability to effect metamorphosis.

Utensils that could heretofore not be used can, after immersion, be utilized in the holy act of eating as a Hebrew. A woman, who from the onset of her menses was in a state of Niddah, separated from her husband, may after immersion be reunited with him in the ultimate holiness of married intimacy. Men or women in Temple times, who were precluded from services because of ritual defilement, could, after immersion, alight the Temple Mount, enter the House of Elohim and involve themselves in sacrificial offerings and the like. **The case of the convert is most dramatic. The individual who descends into the mikvah as a gentile emerges from beneath its waters as a Hebrew."**

The idea of immersion symbolizing conversion is not new to Christianity. This process originally began with Judaism and continues as part of the process even today. The Encyclopedia Judaica says that immersion is one of two paths that a new convert must take to enter Judaism. The other avenue into the Jewish faith is that of circumcision (brit milah). Interestingly, Rav Shaul in the Messianic Writings also compares brit milah and mikvah. While most people would view the worship

center or synagogue as the central place of gathering, the Talmud states that a mikvah pool should be built before a synagogue building. According to the Mishnah, a group of Jewish families living together do not attain the status of community until they have built a mikvah!

Within the Biblical faith, these actions have the connotation of drawing near.

### Our Messiah whom we Follow

As John the Baptist called "repent for the kingdom of heaven is near," he was urging his listeners to stop their Torah breaking and return to YHWH through repentance coupled with immersion. "Let us draw near with a true lev (heart) in full assurance of emunah (trusting faithfulness), having our levim (hearts) sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure mayim (water)," Ivrim / Hebrews 10:22. Again, the vivid word picture used by Rivkah Slonin beautifully illustrates the power of t'vilah. **She wrote, an individual "descends into the mikvah as a gentile and emerges from beneath its waters as a Hebrew".**

Immersion gains another image with the life, death, and resurrection of Yahshua our Master. "Having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of Elohim, who raised him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, Elohim made you alive with the Master. He forgave us all our sins," -- Colossians 2: 12-13. T'vilah shows that we have died to our old life and have been raised anew into Messiah. Again, we descend a gentile and ascend an Yisraelite – a believer in Messiah. "If you belong to Messiah, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," – Galiyut - Galatians 3: 29.

The apostles and the early believers continued the Jewish practice of mikvah as a symbol of conversion. "Upon hearing, they were baptized into the name of the Master Yahshua," Acts 19: 5. Notice what name the new believers were baptized into. Every single baptism in the Messianic Writings, from Acts to Revelation, is done in the name of Yahshua. Baptism testifies that "ye are washed: ye are sanctified: ye are justified in the name of the Master Yahshua, and by the Spirit of our Elohim," I Corinthians 6:11.

The formula is important. The KJV uses a Trinitarian formula found only in Matthew 28. Just read the King James Version of Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

First, understand that the word "name" is singular. It's one name. We also allow scripture to interpret scripture. This is not the only account of the Great Commission. In the book of Mark, KJV it says, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he*

who does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues”

Luke shows no 3 god formula. Luke 24:47 KJV, “ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things. 49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

We are shown exactly what is to be proclaimed in Acts 2:38 with Kefa / Peter. KJV, “He said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Y'shua HaMoshiach ( Jesus Christ) for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Kefa / Peter understood that when Y'shua said to immerse in “my name” that he meant “in my name!” Other verses in the book of Acts from the KJV clarifies this as well.

Acts 4:12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Y'shua – vs. 10)

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of YHWH and the name of Y'shua HaMoshiacht, both men and women were baptized.

Acts 8:16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Master Y'shua.

Acts 10:48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Master.

Acts 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Master Y'shua.

Acts 22:16 'And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of Y'shua.'

Respected historical sources verify that the early believers and even the first Christian church did not use a threefold baptismal formula. Read these texts to see the proof:

Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (1951). II, 384, 389: "The formula used was "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" or some synonymous phrase; there is no evidence for the use of the trine name... The earliest form, represented in the Acts, was simple immersion... in water, the use of the name of the Lord, and the laying on of hands. To these were added, at various times and places which cannot be safely identified, (a) the trine name (Justin)..."

Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (1962), I 351: "The evidence... suggests that baptism in early Christianity was administered, not in the threefold name, but 'in the name of Jesus Christ' or 'in the name of the Lord Jesus.'"

Otto Heick, A History of Christian Thought (1965), I, 53: "At first baptism was administered in the name of Jesus, but gradually in the name of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible (1898). I, 241: "[One explanation is that] the original form of words was 'into the name of Jesus Christ' or 'the Lord Jesus,' Baptism into the name of the Trinity was a later development."

Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church (1947), page 58: "The trinitarian baptismal formula,,, was displacing the older baptism in the name of Christ."

The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (1957), I, 435: "The New Testament knows only baptism in the name of Jesus... which still occurs even in the second and third centuries."

Canney's Encyclopedia of Religions (1970), page 53: "Persons were baptized at first 'in the name of Jesus Christ' ... or 'in the name of the Lord Jesus'... Afterwards, with the development of the doctrine of the Trinity, they were baptized 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.'"

Encyclopedia Biblica (1899), I, 473: "It is natural to conclude that baptism was administered in the earliest times 'in the name of Jesus Christ,' or in that 'of the Lord Jesus.' This view is confirmed by the fact that the earliest forms of the baptismal confession appear to have been single-not triple, as was the later creed."

Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed. (1920), II 365: "The trinitarian formula and trine immersion were not uniformly used from the beginning... Bapti[sm] into the name of the Lord [was] the normal formula of the New Testament. In the 3rd century baptism in the name of Christ was still so widespread that Pope Stephen, in opposition to Cyprian of Carthage, declared it to be valid."

Even the method of baptism during Biblical times was different than today. The person would first wash himself and make sure he was very clean. Then, he would walk into the water by himself, and squat down into the fetal position. This was usually done three times and was witnessed by someone who stood nearby to make sure the immersing person was completely covered by the water. This "witness" would declare the immersion complete "in the name" or "as a follower of Yahshua".

According to www.brita.com, the human body is composed of between 70 and 80 percent water. We might look like we are skin and bones, but in reality we are actually walking water bottles. We are a well-spring of water. (Knowing this surely brings new meaning to the old saying that someone is a "tall drink of water!") Anyway, water is an integral part of life. Without it, farmland becomes desolate deserts and animal life ceases. Every part of every life is dependent upon water.

Scientists tell us that the earth is mostly water. They report that this wet mixture of hydrogen and oxygen, known as H<sub>2</sub>O, is the most abundant resource in the world. It is used in hospitals, homes, and power plants. Most religions draw out water for baptismal or washing services as water is used throughout Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Shinto, and Judaism.

In this study, we will learn that the process of mikvah is an outward symbol of inward changes that have taken place in our lives, it is who we are.

There are some powerful insights about immersion to be learned, so let's fasten our life preservers and dive in!

We may have been immersed as part of our "salvation" or "deliverance" experience. This first immersion for repentance was symbolic of us entering into covenant / relationship with the Most High. However, because of our sinful choices, we should once again seek to be immersed. Many Jews today mikvah before Shabbat, and before the High Holy days, especially Yom Kippur. Adapting this tradition could do nothing but help our spiritual walk. Wouldn't our holidays seem even more special if we went to a mikvah pool or even showered right before we celebrated?

### Draw near through immersion

Mikvah is also part of the repentance process. Because of our Torah-breaking sinfulness, we have been cut from fellowship with Elohim. However, we have been given a pattern to follow, to heal the broken breach. This path includes immersion. The nevi'im (prophet) Yesha'yahu explains the pattern like this, "Wash yourself and make yourself clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do tov; seek mishpat (judgment), relieve the oppressed, defend the fatherless, and plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, says YHWH, though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool," Yesha'yahu - Isaiah 1:16-17.

Just saying that we're sorry is not enough. And repentance is not the be-all & end-all when it comes to returning to the Father. We are to: turn from our evil doings, wash (do mikvah), change our life.

Mikvah is an important part of salvation. BUT mikvah is NOT just a one time event.

Immersion is how YHWH has prescribed we can come near to Him. Let's look at a few more verses on this subject from another prophet, Yermi'yahu.

"O Yerushalayim, wash your lev (heart) from wickedness, that you may be saved. How long shall your worthless thoughts stay in you" Yermi'yahu - Jeremiah 4: 14. "See, I will bring it health and relief, and I will cure them, and will reveal to them the abundance of real shalom and emet. And I will cause the exile of Yahudah and the exile of Yisrael to shuv, and will build them, as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, by which they have sinned against Me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, by which they have sinned, and by which they have transgressed against Me," Yermi'yahu - Jeremiah 33: 8.

Immersion into water is an integral part of our drawing near to YHWH. Like a wedding ring shows the promise of marriage, mikvah is symbolic of our marriage to YHWH. After the wedding band the bride and groom may enjoy the honeymoon, and after our mikvah into Yahshua can we enjoy the fruit of abundant and eternal life. Talk about drawing near!

### Clinging to Our Hope

Going to a mikvah is also like going to a funeral. Our own. Our dipping into the waters is symbolic of our dying to self and being resurrected a new creation in Messiah. "And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward Elohim. It saves you by the resurrection of Yahshua HaMoshiach, who has gone into heaven and is at YHWH's right hand--with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him," 1 Kefa – 1 Peter 3:21,22.

When we immerse ourselves we are following the example of Yahshua. We are also clinging to our hope that His blood will remove all sin and uncleanness from Him. Without Him we have no hope. With Him, we can trust that "he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness," Yochannan Alef - First John 1: 19. **To see how vivid this idea is within the Scriptures, let's first turn to the book of Yermi'yahu / Jeremiah, for an amazing look at our hope.**

"Although our sins testify against us, O YHWH, do something for the sake of your name. For our backsliding is great; we have sinned against you. O Hope of Israel, its Savior in times of distress, why are you like a stranger in the land, like a traveler who stays only a night?" Yermi'yahu - Jeremiah 14: 7, 8. Our sins give evidence against us that we are in desperate need of salvation. We cannot work ourselves to Heaven or solve our own Spiritual problems. We need a Redeemer. We need our Savior Yahshua. Well, the words translated "O Hope of Israel" in the above verse points to our salvation. The normal Hebrew word of "hope," which is "tikvah" is not used here. Instead a different word is found within the ancient Hebrew text, which alters the meaning and the translation greatly.

The Hebrew reads, "Mikvah Yisra'el Yahsha!" The literal, correct, translation for this verse would read, "O the Immersion of Israel is Salvation / Yahshua." Our mikvah into Yahshua's blood and water is our salvation. "One of the soldiers pierced Yahshua's side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water," Yochannan - John 19: 34. All of this corresponds with the prophecy, "On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness," Zecha'rayah - Zechariah 13: 1. As we cling to our hope, we are cleansed of sin AND uncleanness through the Messiah's sacrifice. "Be immersed into Him and be washed in His precious blood," -- Hebrews / Ivrim 9: 22. **Selah! (Think about and quietly meditate on this)**

### Experiencing Who We Are

Finally, mikvah mayim (water immersion) gives us the opportunity to experience who we really are. Mikvah into Yahshua is part of the restoration of all things and should be part of our daily and weekly lives. "For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws," Ezekiel 36: 24-29.

While we draw near to Him and cling to our hope, we can identify with Yahshua. "Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Yahshua the Master were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Moshiach was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection," Romiyah - Romans 6: 1-4.

Even the name of our nation points to our identity. We are Israelites, we are Hebrews. The word Yisraelite means "one who rules and reigns with Elohim." The word Hebrew or Ivrim, means "one who crosses over." As Hebrews, Ivrim, our ancestors crossed over the Red Sea and were baptized. "Our forefathers were all under the cloud and they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea," 1 Corinthians 10: 1, 2. We too cross over from the world and enter into agreement with YHWH. **We are Ivrim. We are a living mikvah! We have gone down into the water as one who was far off from YHWH (a gentile) and ascend out of the water a Hebrew! We already know that our body is two-thirds water, now we can understand this idea more fully. This is who we are; we are a living, waking, breathing mikvah.**

Go and Get It Done!

After Yahshua's resurrection, He appeared to the believers and gave them the Great Commission. Part of this calling is to be immersed in His name and live the life of a called out one. "Go therefore, and make talmidim of all nations, doing mikvah upon them in My Name: Teaching them to shomer all things, which I have commanded you: and, see, I am with you always, even to the end of the olam hazeh," -- Mattitiyahu / Matthew 28:19-20. Mikvah is part of the besarot (good news). It is who we are. Scientists tell us that our bodies are two-thirds water, so when we immerse we are returning to our true self. We are uniting with YHWH and clinging to our hope in YHWH.

*To review:*

### A – Apart

YHWH has called us to be His set apart people.

"For you are a kadosh people to YHWH your Elohim: YHWH your Elohim has chosen you to be a special people to Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth," – Devarim / Deuteronomy 7: 6. Part of being holy and part of staying holy is to go through mikvah. Yahshua has said, "He who believes and is immersed will be saved; but he who disbelieves will be condemned." Mikvah reminds us that we have been set apart.

### B – Baptism

Mikvah was obviously part of the process of becoming a follower of Yahshua.

Acts, chapter 2:38, " Then Kefa (Peter) said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Yahshua the Messiah for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Ghost)."

### C – Command

A command is something that requires obedience. YHWH is like the old man who had nine cats. A friend came over to visit and noticed that there were nine little kitty doors. He asked the old man why the cats couldn't all use the same door. The old guy replied: "When I say "Scat!" I mean 'Scat!'" Mikvah is something that we have been commanded to do. So do it!

Yochannan - John, chapter 14:23, "Yahshua answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

### D -- Directions

The method of baptism is one of the most argued points of doctrine

Some say that the correct method is sprinkling

--They take a smattering of water and shake it over someone's head

Others say the correct method is pouring

--They take a pitcher of water and pour it over someone's head

There are those that say that the right process is immersion  
--They say that someone must be totally plunged into water  
Still others say that it doesn't matter what method you use  
--As long as you call it baptism

The Bible clearly describes the baptismal process: Needs water – anytime someone is baptized, it is with water. There needs to be plenty of water. Yochannan-John, chapter 3:23, "And Yochannan also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized."

Going down into water, Acts, chapter 8 verse 38, " And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."

Coming up out of water, Acts 8:39, "And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the YHWH caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

Which of the methods just mentioned, meet the baptismal requirements, as given in Scripture? Certainly can't be sprinkling or pouring. It can only be immersion!

#### E -- Explanation

But most important is the meaning of baptism: the complete surrender of everything we are and everything we have to follow Yahshua HaMoshiach and be obedient to Him.

One reason that it identifies us with the death of Yahshua

- a. The water is not magical
- b. The pronouncement of baptism is not magical
- c. The person performing the baptism is not magical.
- d. It is only because it's through baptism that we come into contact with the death of Yahshua and therefore his blood that baptism is effective.

The Bible teaches us that only the blood of Yahshua can wash away our sins.

In Colossians, chapter 2:11, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Messiah: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of Elohim, who hath raised him from the dead." Here baptism is compared with the covenant of circumcision. Circumcision was an outward sign of the complete surrender of ourselves to YHWH. Even our most private parts were yielded to Elohim, TO ENTER INTO COVENANT WITH YHWH.

Baptism is a process in which we say to YHWH and to the world that you no longer want to live under the power of sin but under the Kingship of Yahshua HaMoshiach. Baptism is not effective because we got wet. It's effective because it's part of the process of pledging our unending devotion to Yahshua as Master. Baptism is only effective if it makes a difference in the way that you live. There are plenty of people in churches all over that believe that got eternity taken care of because they got wet. All that happened is that they went into the water a dry sinner and came back up a wet one!

#### F – Final Thoughts

Before we can enter into the presence of YHWH, we have to be cleansed / purified. When YHWH led Yisrael out of Mitsrayim [Egypt], He brought them to Mountain Siynay, to make beriyth [covenant] with them. They could not enter into His presence with the filth and uncleanness upon them; they had to be cleansed in a miqweh first. "and YHWH said to mosheh, 'go to the people and set them apart today and tomorrow; have them wash their clothing.' " -- Shemoth / Exodus 19: 10.