

Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters Community Mikveh and Education Center

Immersion Ceremony for Yom Kippur: Turning to Forgiveness

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Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters

Immersing in a mikveh prior to the *Yamim Noraim* (Days of Awe) is a personal *minhag*, a custom, for the sake of spiritual preparation for the New Year. It is not a *mitzvah* or a divine directive. Therefore there are no required *brachot* (blessings). Mayyim Hayyim offers you the following ceremony as a *kavanah*, a special intention for your immersion.

I. Kavanah (intention) Before Immersion

(to be read while preparing)

Water is God's gift to living souls,
To clear us, to purify us,
To sustain us and renew us.

As I immerse myself in *Mayyim Hayyim*, may I open to the possibility of forgiveness.
May my entry into these waters mark my intention to forgive myself, forgive others,
and ask others to forgive me.

(Adapted from Barbara Penzner, The New Jewish Wedding)

May my resistance to this task be dissolved.

II. During Immersion

-First Immersion-

*Slowly descend the steps into the mikveh waters and immerse completely so that every part
of your body is covered in the warm water of the mikveh.*

Following first immersion, recite:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּטַבְּלָה בְּמַיִם חַיִּים.

*Baruch atah Adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam,
asher kidshanu bi-t'vilah b'mayyim hayyim.*

Blessed are You, God, Majestic Spirit of the Universe,
who makes us holy by embracing us in living waters.

(Created by Mayyim Hayyim Ritual Creation Team, 2004)

-Second Immersion-

Before immersion, recite:

The gates are open.

Hear my prayer, God. May I have the courage and clarity to engage in the process of *teshuvah*/repentance.

Take a deep breath and exhale completely, while gently and completely immersing for the second time.

-Third Immersion-

וְעַל כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְפָנֶיךָ, אֱלֹהֵי סְלִיחוֹת, סְלַח לָנוּ, מְחַל לָנוּ, כַּפֵּר לָנוּ.

V'al kulam, Elohah s'lichot, s'lach lanu, m'chal lanu, kapper lanu.

For all my wrongs, O God of forgiveness, forgive me, wipe the slate clean, grant me atonement.

Take a moment for personal reflection.

Let your body soften, as you slowly and completely immerse for a third time.

III. Kavanot After Immersion

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנָשׁוּבָה:
חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֵדֶם.

*Hashiveinu Adonai elekha v'nashuvah
Chadesh yameynu k'kedem*

Turn us to You and we shall return.
Renew our days as before.

May I return to my true self and be strengthened as I continue my journey of *tikkun halev* (repairing the heart), *tikkun hanefesh* (repairing the soul), and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world).