

CEREMONY OF TEVILAH

Rabbi: We are gathered here this afternoon to serve as witnesses, as representatives of the Jewish people, as friends and family, to be with you as you enter the waters of the mikvah.

In our tradition, water has always played a pivotal role. There is something elemental about it. Before the world was created, there existed the presence of God hovering over the surface of the water.

When, in the time of Noah, God wished to make a new beginning of life on earth, the fountains of the deep were opened and waters came forth, returning the earth to its pristine beginnings.

Our patriarchs and matriarchs met at the well, for the source of water was the center of community life. Thus the well, the source of water, marked the promise of new beginnings in their lives.

Water is also a sign of redemption in our People's history. It was the waters of the Red Sea that parted and allowed us to go forth from bondage into freedom.

Water is also a symbol of sustenance. Miriam, the sister of Moses, was deemed to be so righteous, that during her lifetime, when the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, God caused a well, Miriam's well it was called to accompany the people and sustain them with water.

And finally, water as in our Rabbinic tradition, represents learning and knowledge. We are taught, that as water brings life to the world, so too the Torah brings life to the world. As water leaves the high places and rests in the low lands, so too the deeper teachings of our religion leave one who is haughty and proud but cleave to one that is lowly and humble.

All: As you enter the living waters of the mikvah here today, we pray that you continue to immerse yourself in the living waters of our tradition.

As the waters surround you and touch you with their warm embrace, know that the Jewish people embrace you and warmly welcome you into our midst.

Giyor/Giyoret: May my entry into the waters of the mikvah inspire me in my resolve to enter the ancient and endless stream of Jewish life. May I be among those who will help that stream of Jewish life. May I be among those who will help that stream to continue strong and unbroken.

Rabbi: May the God whom we call Mikveh Yisrael, the God who is the source of living waters, be with you now and always.

As you enter the waters in peace, may you emerge as a source of peace to your family, to this congregation, and to the Jewish people.

GIYOR/GIYORET ENTERS THE MIKVAH

Giyor/Giyoret:

BARUCH ATAH ADONAI ELO-HAY-NU MELECH HA-OLAM ASHER
KIDSHANU B'MITZ-VO-TAV V'TZIVANU AL T'VILAT GAY-RIM.

PRAISED ARE YOU, ETERNAL OUR GOD, RULER OF THE UNIVERSE,
WHO MAKES US HOLY BY YOUR COMMANDMENTS, AND HAS
COMMANDED US CONCERNING THE IMMERSION OF CONVERTS.

BARUCH ATAH ADONAI ELO-HAY NU MELECH HA-OLAM SHE-HE-
CHEE-ANU V'KEE-YA-MANU V'HEE-GEE-ANU L'ZMAN HA-ZEH.

PRAISED ARE YOU, ETERNAL OUR GOD, RULER OF THE UNIVERSE,
WHO HAS GIVEN US LIFE AND SUSTAINED US AND ALLOWED US TO
REACH THIS JOYOUS OCCASION.