

**Shayla:** Does baptism need to be by immersion?

**Meforshim:**

**Our tradition and teaching was that it is a symbol and any way of doing it is alright.**

I agree that it is a symbol, but God takes His symbols pretty seriously; just ask Moses about the whole striking the stone episode when you get to heaven!

Having said that, I have sprinkled: someone who was phobic about water, a prisoner who could not leave his jail cell, and someone on their death bed. Other than those types of situations, however, I believe it best to do it the way God commanded.

- **Matthew 15:3 HCSB** He answered them, "And why do you break God's commandment because of your tradition?"
- **Matthew 15:9 (cp Mark 7:7) HCSB** **They worship Me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commands of men."**
- **Mark 7:8-9 HCSB** Disregarding the command of God, you keep the tradition of men." (9) He also said to them, "You completely invalidate God's command in order to maintain your tradition!"
- **Mark 7:13 HCSB** You revoke God's word by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many other similar things."

**We were told that if we submitted to baptism by immersion that would be as if the first symbol "did not work".**

My argument (for detailed Scriptural teaching on the issue of infant baptism go [here](#).) is that if it preceded faith it didn't "work" anyway!

**Either way would be a matter of our heart and will and if our heart and will was right the first time, there is no need to do it again a different way.**

I agree that it is primarily an act of the heart. Just as marriage without love is a travesty, so is baptism that is not done with kavanah and faith in the Messiah. However, if our hearts are truly right, if we really do love the Lord, we will have no problem obeying His mitzvot.

- **John 14:21 HCSB** The one who has My commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me. And the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father. I also will love him and will reveal Myself to him."
- **John 15:10 HCSB** If you keep My commands you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commands and remain in His love.
- **John 15:14 HCSB** You are My friends if you do what I command you.
- **1 John 5:2-3 HCSB** This is how we know that we love God's children when we love God and obey His commands. (3) For this is what love for God is: to keep His commands. Now His commands are not a burden,

**We were also taught that the river Jesus was baptized in was too shallow to have been completely under and He could not have "come up out of". Is all of this wrong?**

Frankly...yes...whoever told you that should be taken out behind the seminary and beat with an ugly stick. The reason John chose that particular area to baptize is because it had already long been used to baptize (by immersion) converts to Israel and Israel's God. There were "mikvehs", ritual baths designed for the purpose of ritual immersion already built there. The word "mikveh" literally means a "collection" – specifically a collection of water. Halakha dictated that full immersion in water was required to regain ritual purity after ritually impure incidents had occurred. Some things required "living" or "fresh" water, water from a spring, river or groundwater well for the cleansing to take place. "Living" or continuously flowing

water has the advantage of being able to purify in a way that standing water simply cannot. So, the mikveh was designed with this in mind. In biblical days, these mikvehs (baptisteries) were built next to a river or spring, with some of the water detoured to run through the mikveh and out the other side. The tank was large enough for two people (much less one) to immerse themselves. There were actually steps down into them as you can see in the following photo.

