

# Honoring the Process of Coming Out

AN IMMERSION CEREMONY  
FOR AN INDIVIDUAL

## Intention

כוונה KAVANAH

To be read before preparing for immersion:

I know that I am created *b'tzelem elohim*, in the image of God,  
and that a divine spark resides within me. *Hineini*.  
Here I stand, no longer alone, on my way to becoming fully unafraid,  
knowing that I can create safe space for myself,  
knowing that I have a circle of loved and loving ones who will support and protect me,  
knowing that I am sheltered beneath the wings of *Shechinah*,  
knowing my own power.<sup>1</sup>

כָּל הָעוֹלָם כְּלוֹ גֶשֶׁר צָר מְאֹד    *Kol ha'olam kulo gesher tzar m'od*  
וְהַעֲקָר לֹא לִפְחָד כָּלֵל.    *v'ha-ikar lo l'facheid klal.*<sup>2</sup>

All the world is a narrow bridge  
and the essence of living is not to be afraid.

## Immersion

טבילה T'VILAH

To be read at the mikveh's edge before you enter the water:

As the Israelites walked through the sea, so I walk into this *mikveh*  
as I choose to liberate myself from old restraints.<sup>3</sup>

נִבְרַךְ אֶת עַיִן הַחַיִּים, אֲשֶׁר נָתַנָּה לִי    *N'varech et Eyn HaChayyim, asher nat'na li*  
הַעֲצָמָה לְצֵאת כּוֹן הַמְצָרִים.    *ha'otzma latzeyt min ham'tzarim.*

Let us bless the Source of Life for giving me the courage to come out.<sup>4</sup>

## FIRST IMMERSION

*Slowly descend the steps into the mikveh waters and immerse completely so that every part of your body is covered by the warm water. When you emerge, recite the following:*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מְלֶכֶד הָעוֹלָם     *Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam,*  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּטַבִּילָה בְּמַיִם חַיִּים.     *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.<sup>5</sup>

## SECOND IMMERSION

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

*When you emerge, recite the following blessing:*

אֱלֹהֵי, נִשְׁמָה שֶׁנָּתַתָּ בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא.     *Elohai, n'shamah shenatata bi t'horah hi.*  
אַתָּה בְּרָאתָהּ, אַתָּה יִצְרַתָּהּ, אַתָּה נִפְחַתָּהּ בִּי.     *Atah b'ratah, atah y'tzartah, atah n'fachtah bi.*

My God, the soul You have given me is pure.  
You created it, You formed it, You breathed it into me.<sup>6</sup>

## THIRD IMMERSION

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

*When you emerge, recite the following blessing:*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מְלֶכֶד הָעוֹלָם,     *Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha'olam*  
שֶׁהַחַיָּנוּ, וְקִיָּמָנוּ, וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזַמַּן הַזֶּה.     *shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu la'zman hazeh.*

Holy One of Blessing Your Presence fills creation.  
You have kept us alive, You have sustained us,  
You have brought us to this moment.<sup>7</sup>

## ATTRIBUTIONS

This ceremony was created by Matia Rania Angelou, Deborah Issokson and Judith D. Kummer for Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters.

- 1 Gal Berner, Leila. "Our Silent Seasons." In *Lifecycles: Jewish Women on Life Passages and Personal Milestones*, Vol. 1, ed. Debra Orenstein. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1994, p. 135
- 2 Babylonian Talmud, *Berakhot* 60b
- 3 Alpert, Rebecca T. "Coming Out." In *Lifecycles: Jewish Women on Life Passages and Personal Milestones*, Vol. 1, ed.

- Debra Orenstein. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1994, p. 151, [www.jewishlights.com](http://www.jewishlights.com). Adapted
- 4 Ibid, p. 149
- 5 Created by Mayyim Hayyim Ritual Creation Team, 2004
- 6 Morning liturgy
- 7 Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley. *Vetaher Libenu*. Sudbury, MA. 1980, p. 104



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LIVING WATERS COMMUNITY MIKVEH  
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