

# 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>

נְבָרֵךְ 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, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם      *Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam,*  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּטְבִילָה 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, נְשָׁמָה 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, מֶלֶךְ 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. 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.



Mayyim Hayyim  
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