

# Being Present in the Moment

## A HANDWASHING AND CUP OF MIRIAM CEREMONY

### BEFORE THE CEREMONY

*For the Guide:*

*Fill the handwashing cup with tap water and Kos Miryam—Cup of Miriam with drinking water.*

*For the participant:*

*Prepare your hands as you would for immersing in the mikveh; remove rings, bracelets and nail polish and wash hands with soap and water. Remove lipstick.*

## Handwashing נטילת ידיים NITILAT YADAYIM

*Participant reads:*

I stand here today to acknowledge and affirm this moment in my life journey.  
I wash my hands using our ancient ritual; moving toward a state of pure intent,  
present and open to (*state your personal intention for this ritual*).

*Guide:*

Pour water from the washing cup over both the participant's hands three times;  
first time with palms up, second with palms down and third with palms up.

*Participant reads:*

תִּזְכֹּר נַפְשִׁי אֶת קְדוּשַׁת הַגּוּף    Tizkor nafshi et k'dushat haguf  
בְּנִטְיַלַּת יָדַיִם    binitilat yadayim.<sup>1</sup>

Washing the hands, I call to mind the holiness of body.<sup>2</sup>

## Cup of Miriam כוס מרים KOS MIRYAM

*Pick up the Cup of Miriam and hold it aloft.*

I hold this cup of clear spring water, a reminder of *meyyim hayyim*,  
living waters, waters of hope and healing from Miriam's well.

זֹאת כּוֹס מִרְיָם, כּוֹס מַיִם חַיִּים.    Zot kos miryam, kos mayyim hayyim.  
חֲזַק וְנִתְחַזַּק.    Chazak, chazak, v'nit'chazeik.

This is the Cup of Miriam, the Cup of Living Waters. Strength, strength and let us be strengthened.<sup>3</sup>

As I drink from this cup, I call to mind the gift of transformation and healing.

*Drink from the Cup of Miriam.*

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת עֵין הַחַיִּים, *N'varech et Eyn haHayyim,*  
שֶׁנִּתְּנָה לָנוּ מַיִם חַיִּים. *shenat'nah lanu mayyim hayyim*

Let us bless the Source of Life who has given us Living Waters.<sup>4</sup>

### AFFIRMING THE MOMENT

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, *Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha'olam*  
שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ, וְקִיָּמָנוּ, וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנוּ 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>5</sup>

### OPTIONAL READINGS

#### *A Prayer for Resilience:*

Please, God, help me to recognize my frailty. May I always remember that  
no matter how far I have fallen, no matter how bleak my life may seem,  
no matter how lost I feel, that I can always begin again. Amen.<sup>6</sup>

#### *A Prayer for Comfort and Strength:*

When I feel tainted, God, remind me that I am holy. When I feel weak, teach me that I am strong.  
When I am shattered, assure me that I can heal. When I am weary, renew my spirit.  
When I am lost, show me that You are near. Amen.<sup>7</sup>

#### *A Prayer for Gratitude:*

With gratitude to God, I have come today to celebrate the blessings in my life.  
I honor those who have helped me along the way and give thanks for their supportive presence.  
I am thankful for the journey that has brought me to this moment.

### ATTRIBUTIONS

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

1 Marcia Falk. *The Book of Blessings: New Jewish Prayers for Daily Life, the Sabbath, and the New Moon Festival* (Harper, 1996; Beacon, 1999), p. 13. Copyright © 1996 by Marcia Lee Falk

2 Ibid, p. 12

3 Loo, Stephanie. "Kos Miryam: Development of a Women's Ritual." In the journal *Neshama*, (Summer, 1990). [Cabot, VT]: Neshama

4 Hebrew and English text written by Matia Rania Angelou

5 Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley. *Vetaher Libenu*. Sudbury, MA. 1980, p. 104

6 Levy, Naomi. *To Begin Again* [New York, NY]: Alfred A. Knopf. 1998, p. 112

7 Ibid, p. 260



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