

In Generational Gratitude, for Jewish Women of Color

AN IMMERSION CEREMONY

Intention

כוונה KAVANAH

To be read before preparing for immersion:

Today, I come to the mikveh with an open mind and open heart.

פֶּתַח לְבַי בְּתוֹרַתְךָ וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ תִּרְדֹּף נַפְשִׁי. *P'tach libi b'toratekha u-v'mitzvotekha tirdof nafshi.*

Open my heart to Your wisdom, so my soul will pursue Your ways.¹

I am grateful to my ancestors whose traditions,
languages, and cultures have brought me to this time and place.

I have arrived at this moment joyfully to celebrate my existence and resistance.
Like Miriam, who helped to deliver Moses through the shores of the Nile, defiance and water are tied.
I recognize the inherent beauty of our world and the continued struggle towards liberation
for myself, my loved ones, and all peoples.
I am grateful for the inherent freedom and dignity already in me and my community.

Immersion

FIRST IMMERSION

To be read at the mikveh's edge before immersion:

Like the waters in Eden, water can create. Like the waters of the world's flood, it can also destroy.
Water is always moving. I stand before these waters as the latest of my ancestral line
who have practiced the ancient tradition of *mikveh*. Before I immerse myself,
I acknowledge and am grateful for water's power and sovereignty as a living ancestor.

Blessed are You, Eternal Our God, for guiding us through *shekhina*, the Divine presence,
and all of gifts that are shared so generously with us.

SECOND 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 blessing:*

I carry liberatory history with me as I gratefully immerse every inch of my beautiful body in this water.
I am my full self at this moment. My values embraced, my heart cherished,
my spirit in awe of this connection. Past, present, and future all meeting in one sacred place.

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.²

THIRD IMMERSION

Relax and let your body soften, as you slowly and completely immerse for the third time.

When you emerge recite the following:

Let these waters restore my being and bring strength to those around me. May I have the continued capacity to speak truth, grow, learn, and feel joy. May my prayers and good deeds be felt by my descendants through the ages to give them the strength and courage to take action in their time.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, *Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha'olam*
שְׁהַחֵיָנוּ, וְקִיַּמָּנוּ, וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזְמַן 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.³

Reflections

WRITING PROMPTS FOR AFTER IMMERSION

In private, read and reflect after immersing yourself:

It is now time for me to return to my community. May I be able to find those who nourish my being and find others who strive towards uplifting my existence.

מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם שְׁהַחֲזַרְתָּ *Modeh ani l'fanecha Melech chai v'kayam Shehechezarta*
בִּי נִשְׁמַתִּי בְּחֶמְלָה, רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתֶךָ *bi nishmati b'chemla Raba emunatecha*

I offer thanks to You, Living and eternal God, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me;
Your faithfulness is great.⁴

ATTRIBUTIONS

This ceremony was created by Rosa Blumenfeld, Rebecca Maria Goldschmidt, and Alice Yasuna for Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters.

1 Brachot 17a:4

2 Created by Mayyim Hayyim Ritual Creation Team, 2004

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

4 Mishna Berurah 1:8



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