

After Giving Birth

AN IMMERSION CEREMONY

Intention

כוונה KAVANAH

To be read before preparing for immersion:

I stand here today having given birth to my child; feeling grateful for the miraculous workings of my body. I honor my body for its wisdom and for its ability to nurture the creation of another human being, for sheltering that being, for completing this pregnancy. As I prepare for this immersion, I look in the mirror and notice the ways that my body has been transformed by this act of creation.

Take a few moments to really look in the mirror.

Immersion

טבילה T'VILAH

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

As I step into the waters of the *mikveh*, I am mindful of the steps I have taken to become a mother. May this immersion remind me to take moments for myself along the journey of parenting that lies ahead.

I am grateful to God for my body's amazing capacity to grow life and give birth. Now I prepare to reclaim my body for myself. I pray that my health will be sustained and my spirit be nourished.

תִּזְכֹּר נַפְשִׁי אֶת קִדְשַׁת הַגּוּף *Tizkor nafshi et k'dushat haguf.*¹

I call to mind the holiness of body.²

FIRST IMMERSION

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

Following the first immersion, recite:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, ייַּי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ,
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל הַטְּבִילָה. *Baruch atah, Adonai
Eloheinu, Melech ha'olam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav,
v'tzivanu al hat'vilah.*

Praised are You, Adonai, God of all creation, who sanctifies us with Your commandments and commands us concerning immersion.

SECOND IMMERSION—WELCOMING

To be read before you immerse:

A son:

I immerse today in honor of all the generations who came before me to bring me to this point. As I am held in the waters of the *mikveh*, I also immerse in honor of future generations who may come through my son. May my child be a joyful link in the infinite and beautiful chain of life.

A daughter:

I immerse today in honor of all the generations who came before me to bring me to this point. As I am held in the waters of the *mikveh*, I also immerse in honor of future generations already held within my daughter and who may come through her. May my child be a joyful link in the infinite and beautiful chain of life.

Take a moment for personal reflection.

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

THIRD IMMERSION—GRATITUDE

To be read before you immerse:

Humbly I stand before You today, blessed with the gift of life.³

I am grateful to the Source of All Life for protecting me and bringing me safely through the passage of birthing. May I continue to be protected and guided in my growth as a mother. I pray that the wisdom I have gained through my life until this time will serve me well as I take on this new life role.

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

When you emerge, recite the following blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵחַיְנוּ, וְקִיַּמְנוּ, וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנוּ הַזֶּה. *Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha'olam shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu la'zman hazeh.*

Blessed are You, Majestic Spirit of the Universe, who gives me life, sustains the rhythms of my body and brings me to this moment of renewal.⁴

ATTRIBUTIONS

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

¹ Falk, Marcia. *The Book of Blessings: New Jewish Prayers for Daily Life, the Sabbath, and the New Moon Festival*. [San Francisco, Calif.]: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996, p. 13. Excerpted. Copyright © 1996 by Marcia Lee Falk

² Ibid, p. 12. Excerpted

³ Tiferet Siegel, Hanna. "Birkat HaGomel." Excerpted

⁴ Interpretive English translation by Matia Rania Angelou, Deborah Issokson and Judith D. Kummer



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