

Upon Reaching Menopause

AN IMMERSION CEREMONY

Intention

כוונה KAVANAH

To be read before preparing for immersion:

My body no longer follows its monthly rhythms. My last blood marked the end of one stage of my life...My cycles of bleeding are over. I counted my life on the calendar of those cycles, I depended on their familiar rhythms, and now they are gone, irrevocably gone...¹

לְכֹל זְמַן וְעַת לְכֹל-חֶפֶץ *Lakol z'man v'eit l'chol chayfetz*
תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם. *tachat hashamayim.*

A season is set for everything, a time for every experience under heaven.²

A time of flow and a time of stillness,
A time of ending and a time of beginning,
A time for menstruation and a time for menopause.

Immersion

טבילה T'VILAH

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

The word “woman” evokes all that is sensual, sensitive, knowing. It speaks to what is nurturing, nourishing, and life-giving. A woman is creator, provider, healer, warrior.

Embracing this new life stage, I see menopause as an indicator of a new era about to emerge—and I rejoice in the wisdom I've acquired through the years.³

As I prepare to step into the waters of the *mikveh*,
I will pause on each of the seven steps to honor the stages of my life.

My infancy

My toddlerhood

My childhood

My teenage years

My young adulthood

My mature adulthood

My becoming a *mitbogerret*, a menopausal woman

And when I reach the bottom step, I enter the water for the first time as a woman in menopause.

FIRST IMMERSION AS A MENOPAUSAL WOMAN: BEING PRESENT IN THE MOMENT

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:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, 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 makes us holy with Your commandments and commands us concerning immersion.

SECOND IMMERSION: EXPANDING THE MOMENT

Before you immerse, reflect on the following:

Who have I become? Who am I, standing in this moment?

What are my joys, my fears, my hopes, my dreams?

בְּיָדוֹ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי *B'yado af'kid ruchi*⁴

I rest my soul in the palm of God's hand. I trust that blessings will come.

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

THIRD IMMERSION: OPENING TO THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE FUTURE

To be read before you immerse:

I don't know what the future will bring or how this great change in my body will manifest itself in my life. I open to what will be. I welcome this stage of Womanhood, the *Bat Binah*, the Wise Woman, and rejoice in the possibility of new creativity.

וּשְׂאֵבְתֶם מַיִם בְּשֵׁשׁוֹן מְמַעֲיֵי הַיְשׁוּעָה. *Ush'avtem mayim b'sason mimaay'nei hay'shuah*⁵

Draw water in joy from the wells of regeneration.

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, שֶׁהֵחֵינֵנוּ, וְקִיְּמָנוּ, וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזְמַן הַזֶּה. *shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu la'zman hazeh.*

Blessed are You, Majestic Spirit of the Universe, who gives me life,
sustains my body, and brings me to this moment of transition.⁶

I ascend the steps, open to the unknown and ready to receive what is to come.

ATTRIBUTIONS

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

1 Mansfield, Elaine. "Gathering in the Gorge: A Menopause Ritual" 1992

2 Ecclesiastes: 3:1

3 Fabius, Carine. *Ceremonies for Real Life*.

"Menopause: Celebrating Freedom and Wisdom" Wildcat Canyon Press. Tulsa,

OK 2003, p. 161. Adapted

4 Adon Olam

5 Isaiah 12:3

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



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