



# BEIT DIN + MIKVAH GUIDE

**“GOD IS ISRAEL’S MIKVAH (RITUAL BATH),” (JEREMIAH 17:13).  
JUST AS THE MIKVAH PURIFIES THE IMPURE,  
SO TOO, THE HOLY BLESSED ONE PURIFIES ISRAEL.  
BABYLONIAN TALMUD, YOMA 85B**



We're thrilled to be welcoming you into the Jewish people! Here's a run-through of what you can expect on the day of your formal conversion.

## SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND JEWISH PRACTICE ESSAYS

Before the big day, you will prepare two short essays.

The first is a Spiritual Autobiography, which is about 3-5 pages describing what your journey to this moment has been like, and what you hope to continue studying and working on once you've formally joined the Jewish people. Here are some guiding questions that will help you in your writing:

- What has your journey into/in Judaism been like?
- What do you find meaningful about being Jewish?
- What does your life look like Jewishly, both on Shabbat/holidays and during the week?
- What were some of the greatest challenges in converting?
- What is it that attracted you to Judaism?
- Why does this moment in particular feel like the right time to convert?
- How will your decision impact the faith tradition of your family/upbringing? Are there elements you've had to 'give-up' that have been difficult?
- What is going to look different after you've converted?

The second is an essay describing your Jewish Practice, which consists of 1-2 paragraphs (or a list of bullet-points) for each of the following areas of Jewish identity and practice:

1. Prayer
2. Shabbat
3. Torah Study
4. Kashrut
5. Gemilut Hasadim/Tzedakah
6. Jewish Peoplehood and Connection to the State of Israel.

Please describe where you are currently in relation to each area, what you struggle with, and what your goals for the future are.

You will go through several rounds of edits with us on these documents.

## PICKING A HEBREW NAME

During this time, you will also pick a Hebrew name, which you will use when called upon formally for Jewish rituals. Your name will take the form of

\_\_\_\_\_, (*ben/bat/mi-beit*)

*Avraham Avinu ve-Sarah Imanu*

\_\_\_\_\_, (son/daughter/from the house)  
of our ancestors Abraham and Sarah.

If you have a Jewish father, you may choose to use their Hebrew name instead of “Avraham Avinu ve-Sarah Imanu.”

Generally, people pick one or two Hebrew names, which may reflect values or characteristics they value or strive for. They may also be the names of Biblical or Talmudic figures that they admire. Please be in touch for help with this process.

## BECOMING A TI MEMBER

Before completing your conversion, we ask that you submit a [membership application](#) and plan to be an active member of our community. While there is a cost associated with membership, we will never allow finances to be a barrier for entry and are happy to work out arrangements with you.

## MIKVAH FEE

Please note: The mikvah charges a fee of \$180 for conversions. You can pay in cash or check, or with a credit card at <https://www.columbuscommunitymikvah.org>.

If *hatafat dam brit* is required (see above), the mohel charges a fee of \$75, payable by cash or check, or via Venmo at @Dotan-Herszage.

If any of this prevents any obstacle for you whatsoever, please be in touch and we'll find a way to make it work for you.

## BEIT DIN: A CONVERSATION WITH THE COMMITTEE

Once your edited document is ready, I will send it to the other members of the *beit din* [Jewish religious court], three Jews [often but not always clergy] who will read your essay in advance, listen to you speak about your journey, and formally decide to admit you into the Jewish people. Don't worry! You won't have made it to this point if you aren't ready. The goal is for you to be able to show that you can speak intelligently about your relationship to Judaism, as well as speak honestly about the areas in which you hope to improve through further study and commitment.

The *beit din* will meet at the mikvah, which is located at 2736 East Main St in Bexley (behind Johnson's Ice Cream, in the rear parking lot), in the mikvah waiting room, and have a conversation with you for about 30-45 minutes. You will be sent out of the room so that the *beit din* can discuss privately its thoughts on your preparedness for conversion. You will then be welcomed back into the room with the formal decision to admit you into the Jewish people.



## AT THE MIKVAH: HATAFAT DAM BRIT AND IMMERSION

The mikvah preparation area consists of a private bathroom, a shower, and a ritual immersion pool. In preparing for immersion in the mikvah, a candidate is expected to

- Remove all clothing
- Remove any and all makeup and nail polish (including nail gel). It is recommended that you come without any on.
- Remove any jewelry, contacts, or any other items not naturally a part of your body which could conceivably prevent the water of the mikvah from directly touching any and all parts of your skin.
- Shower (Clean towels, shampoo, and soap are available to you as you prepare for immersion.)

When appropriate, the ritual of *hatafat dam brit* (a symbolic pinprick of blood drawn from the penis) will be performed by a mohel at this time. This procedure is short and relatively painless. If circumcision is required, it will have been performed medically in advance of your *beit din*. Please contact me directly if this is the case, as this is a serious medical procedure. We'll be happy to connect you with a urologist for a private consultation.

Once you are prepared, you will enter the mikvah in the presence of [a] gender-appropriate witness[es]. In the case of a *beit din* whose members are not of the same gender as you, a gender-appropriate mikvah attendant will be invited to participate and witness on their behalf. You will completely disrobe and descend into the mikvah, immersing three times. For each immersion, you must be fully submerged in the water, from head to toe. Following each immersion, you will recite the following blessings in Hebrew, in this order:

### First immersion followed by:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה י"י אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל הַטְּבִילָה.

Ba'rukh a'tah A'do'nai E'lo'hei'nu me'lekh ha-o'lam, a'sher ki'de'sha'nu be-mitz'vo'tav ve-tzi'va'nu al ha-te'vi'lah

Translation: Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who makes us holy through mitzvot and commands us to immerse.

### Second immersion, followed by:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה י"י אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהֶחְיֵנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

Ba'rukh a'tah A'do'nai E'lo'hei'nu me'lekh ha-o'lam, she'he'he'ya'nu ve-ki'ye'ma'nu ve-hi'gi'a'nu la-ze'man ha-zeh.

Translation: Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has given us life, sustained us, and brought us to this very moment.

### Third immersion, followed by:

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל י"י אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ י"י אֶחָד.

She'ma Yis'ra'el A'do'nai E'lo'hei'nu A'do'nai e'had.

Translation: Listen, Israel! Adonai is our God, Adonai is One.

After emerging from the mikvah, you will be considered Jewish, both spiritually and halakhically (according to Jewish law). You will get dressed, and return to the mikvah waiting room, where you will be greeted by members of the *beit din*, and presented with your certificate of conversion, bearing your new Hebrew Name.

## CELEBRATING WITH AN ALIYAH ON SHABBAT

If you'd like, you can also pick a date for your first aliyah to the Torah on Shabbat. You will recite the blessings below before and after the Torah reading, and the rabbis can recite a special blessing in honor of your decision to join the Jewish people. You can also just say the blessings and avoid any public recognition of your conversion if you'd prefer, or find other honors during the service (including non-speaking parts!). Be in touch with Rabbi Braver ([abraver@tiferethisrael.org](mailto:abraver@tiferethisrael.org)) for more information.

### Blessing Before Aliyah

Ba're'khu et A'do'nai ha-me'vo'rakh

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְּבֹרָךְ

(Congregation Responds)

(בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.)

(Ba'rukh A'do'nai ha-me'vo'rakh le'o'lam va'ed)

בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת  
תּוֹרָתוֹ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:

Ba'rukh A'do'nai ha-me'vo'rakh le'o'lam va'ed

Ba'rukh a'tah A'do'nai, E'lo'hei'nu me'lekh ha-o'lam, a'sher ba'har ba'nu  
mi'kol ha-a'mim, ve-na'tan la'nu et to'ra'to. Ba'rukh a'tah A'do'nai, no'tein  
ha-to'rah.

### Blessing After Aliyah

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת, וְחַיִּי עוֹלָם נָטַע  
בְּתוֹכָנוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:

Ba'rukh a'tah A'do'nai, E'lo'hei'nu me'lekh ha-o'lam, a'sher na'tan la'nu to'rat  
e'met, ve-ha'yei o'lam na'ta be-to'khei'nu. Ba'rukh a'tah A'do'nai, no'tein  
ha-to'rah.

### Translation: Before Aliyah

Bless Adonai, the Source of Blessing!

(Congregation Responds: Blessed is Adonai, the Source of blessing,  
forever and ever!)

Blessed is Adonai, the Source of blessing, forever and ever!

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, ruler of the universe, who has chosen us  
from among all peoples by giving us Torah. Blessed are You, Adonai, who  
gives the Torah.

### Translation: After Aliyah

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, ruler of the universe, who has given us a  
Torah of truth, planting eternal life within us. Blessed are You, Adonai, who  
gives the Torah.

