

Brit Banot

29th of Cheshvan, 5772



Welcoming the Family

Prior to ceremony the parents and children are in a room together privately. As the family enters they walk through the guests, allowing each guest to take a moment with the girls (alternative to passing the girls).

KOHENET:

בְּרוּךְ הַבָּאוֹת בְּשֵׁם יי
Baruch habaot b'shem adonai

May you be blessed in the name of the Holy One.

We come together today to welcome BABY ONE and BABY TWO into the community of Israel. The Brit Bat ritual is a relatively new occurrence in Ashkenazic Jewish tradition. Up until around thirty years ago, daughters were welcomed with little fanfare; simply an announcement of her new name by the father from the bimah during Shabbat services. Modern Judaism has shed the idea that daughters are less worthy of celebrating than sons, even if the way we welcome them into the covenant is different.

Words of welcome – acknowledgement of interfaith family

PARENTS:

We give thanks for the opportunity to join together with our family and actively welcome our daughter into the community of Israel. She would be Jewish whether or not we take this action, but each generation must actively choose to *live* as Jews. It is our hope that this will set a good foundation for our daughter and our family to live a Jewish life.



Blessings for BABY ONE & BABY TWO

KOHENET:

Rejoice, oh Israel, a daughter has been born
She is
The bloodline
The past
The future
From mother to daughter

A son is a blessing, a daughter a treasure
She is
The promise
The possessor
The creatix
Only she can birth Yisrael

No marks on her flesh, no Bet Din
She is
Born
Whole
Innate
The light of Zionⁱ

The covenant between G!d/dess and the Jewish people is dynamic. We received it, but we also accepted it. The covenant is G!d/dess ' promise to us, yet it requires our active participation in the practices that are integral to Jewish life. We are partners with G!d/dess in every aspect of daily existence, the great and the commonplace. The active acceptance of our side of this partnership helps to elevate what is mundane to the realm of the holy.ⁱⁱ This is why we are here today. These girls would grow into beautiful women without this ritual, but all of our lives are enriched are by participating and marking the creation of this family and their commitment to Jewish life.



READING (Kohenet or Family/Friend):

Every Person, Adapted from Martin Buber

Every person born into this world represents something new, something that never existed before, something original and unique. It is the duty of every person in Israel to know that there has never been someone like her before. For if there had been someone like her before, there would be no need for her to be in this world. Every single person is a new thing in the world and is called upon to fulfill her particularity to the world.ⁱⁱⁱ

KOHENET:

We are born not with purpose, but with potential. It is potential that grows under the watchful eyes of parents, family, and friends. Our potential flourishes when we know others believe in us. Today is the first of many times that you will have to offer your blessings to Alexa and Ella throughout their lives. The family has books here for you in which you can write your blessings to the girls, but first let us offer a collective blessing.

ALL:

A Blessing for My Daughter^{iv}

Myrna Rabinowitz

May you walk through life as a person with other people,

May you walk through life as a person kind and just and caring.

May you walk through life as a woman with other women,

May you walk through life as a woman proud and strong and sharing.

May you walk through life as a sister and a daughter and a mother

May you walk through life as a sister nurturing and giving.

May you walk through life with Shechina guiding you.

May you walk through life with Shechina, and know the joy of living.



Entering BABY ONE AND TWO into the Covenant of the Tents of our Mothers

Four chairs are set in the center for family matriarchs. These chairs are the chairs of the Matriarchs, and so the matriarchs of this family are seated in this place of honor. These family matriarchs will offer the gifts of the Mothers of Israel to the girls.

KOHENET:

Today we honor the entry of these two beautiful girls into the covenant of Israel. There are many ways we can choose to enter our daughters into the covenant. We are told that Abraham brought men into the covenant through circumcision and that Sarah would bring the women into the covenant by bringing them into their tent and having them take formal residence there. So today, in the name of Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, we perform this ceremony and bring these daughters of the Jewish people into the tents of the matriarchs and the covenant of the Jewish people.

PARENTS:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהִכָּנִיס אֶת בְּתוּלָנוּ בְּבְרִית עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheynu Melech ha-olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu lehachnis et
bitayu b'orit am Yisrael.*

Blessed are you Holy One, your Presence fills creation, forming the holy teachings that connect us through the generations and guide our lives, giving us the responsibility of initiating our daughter into the covenant of the people of Israel.

Fathers and Grandfathers hold tallit over the women during this section. The mothers stand on each side of the chairs. Either the mothers hold daughters during this or they are held by the grandmothers during the blessings.



KOHENET:

At a bris, we reserve a chair for Elijah the prophet. At this brit bat, we have set chairs for the Matriarchs of Judaism. We now welcome these girls into the tents of the women of Israel by offering the gifts of the matriarchs that they may inherit the best of what it means to be a Jewish woman.^{vi}

MATRIARCH 1:

I offer you the gifts of Sarah the Matriarch, co-founder of Judaism, who gave us the candle-lighting ceremony. Beautiful and holy princess, she celebrated in sacred groves and a simple tent, bringing the light of the Shekhinah wherever she traveled. Laughing mother of ageless beauty, may your blessing pave the way for Alexa and Ella.

MATRIARCH 2:

I offer you the gifts of Rebekah, who traveled courageously while still a teenager, leaving her family to journey towards a new life. Courageous mother of difficult choices, may your blessing pave the way for Ella and Alexa.

MATRIARCH 3:

I offer you the gifts of Rachel, beautiful and brave, whose memory is cherished through time as the advocate of Israel. Loving mother, who loves and is loved so deeply, may your blessing pave the way for Alexa and Ella.

MATRIARCH 4:

I offer you the gifts of Leah, visionary mother of many tribes, progenitor of priests and kings. Mother of multitudes, may your blessing pave the way for Ella and Alexa.

Girls are wrapped in tallit and returned to their parents' arms.



KOHENET:

Holy One, sustain this child, who is to be known in Israel as HEBREW NAME and referred to in the world as ENGLISH NAME.

PARENTS OF BABY 1: *explain the name and finish with*

Help us nurture her and encourage her to fulfill the blessing in her name.

KOHENET:

Holy One, sustain this child, who is to be known in Israel as HEBREW NAME and referred to in the world as ENGLISH NAME.

PARENTS OF BABY 2: *explain the name and finish with*

Help us nurture her and encourage her to fulfill the blessing in her name.

ALL:

May you always have –
Enough happiness to keep you sweet,
Enough trials to keep you strong,
Enough hope to keep you happy,
Enough failure to keep you humble,
Enough success to keep you eager,
Enough friends to give you comfort,
Enough wealth to meet your needs,
Enough enthusiasm to look forward,
Enough faith to banish depression,
Enough determination to make each day better than yesterday,
And let us say: Amen.^{vii}



Closing Prayers – Blessing the Family

KOHENET:

יְבָרַכְךָ יְהוָה, וַיְשִׁמְרֶךָ

Yivarechecha Adonai v'yismerecha

May the Holy One bless you and keep you that
you may grow together and as individuals.

יְאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶנְךָ

Ya-er Adonai panav aleilcha vichuneka

May the Holy One shine on you and show you grace that
you may be gentle and patient with one another.

יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיַּשִּׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

Yisa Adonai panav aleichca v'yaseim l'cha shalom

May the Holy One shine on you, and grant you wholeness and peace that
your family may know a life of happiness and love

ALL:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגַּעְנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה

Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech haolam, shehechianu, v'kiamanu v'higianu lazem hazeh

Blessed are you Holy One, your Presence fills creation,
keeping us alive, sustaining us, and enabling us to reach this moment!



NOTES

Ceremony crafted from original materials and those drawn from sources below.

With much love,

Kohenet Ketzirah haMa'agelet Lesser

ⁱ *Simchat Bat*, Kohenet Ketzirah Lesser 2011

ⁱⁱ *Celebrating your New Jewish Daughter: Creating Jewish Ways to Welcome Baby Girls into the Covenant-New and Traditional Ceremonies*, by Debra Nussbaum Cohen (Location 352, Kindle Edition)

ⁱⁱⁱ *Celebrating your New Jewish Daughter: Creating Jewish Ways to Welcome Baby Girls into the Covenant-New and Traditional Ceremonies*, by Debra Nussbaum Cohen (Page 86)

^{iv} *Celebrating your New Jewish Daughter: Creating Jewish Ways to Welcome Baby Girls into the Covenant-New and Traditional Ceremonies*, by Debra Nussbaum Cohen (Location 1018, Kindle Edition)

^v Parts of this section are original material and parts were taken from several sources including <http://www.ritualwell.org/lifecycles/babieschildren/babynamingsimchatbat/sitefolder.2005-06-07.5117027380/AwakeningTheSenses.xml>, *The New Jewish Baby Book: A Guide for Today's Jewish Family* by Anita Diamant, and *Celebrating your New Jewish Daughter: Creating Jewish Ways to Welcome Baby Girls into the Covenant-New and Traditional Ceremonies*, by Debra Nussbaum Cohen

^{vi} Adapted from Appeal to the Matriarchs by Leah Novick, as found at http://telshemesh.org/air/appeal_to_the_matriarchs_leah_novick.html

^{vii} *Celebrating your New Jewish Daughter: Creating Jewish Ways to Welcome Baby Girls into the Covenant-New and Traditional Ceremonies*, by Debra Nussbaum Cohen (Page 173)