

A POLYDOX CONVERSION CEREMONY
TO REFORM JUDAISM

by
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Creative Symbolism Series

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Institute of Creative Judaism
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למלאות נני מנוכה, נביאים ואמנו
את צד

בבוק ארבי י"י אלפני מלק
הצולק, אל קצנו החיות
וציוני למצב את המנוכה
זאת חמת

Blessed is the Source of Wisdom and
Growth, by whose Power we are inspired
to renew moments of dedication in
the covenant of freedom.

וכצ"ל קו את הנכ *

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*אמנו נסמך ממש 'בראשית'
(מנוכה) ה' האנו ה' ה' ה'

Reader

ברוך הבא בשם יי ברכנוכם מביית יי

Blessed are you who have come in dedication
to the pursuit of truth.
Blessed are you who have come in dedication
to the search for meaning.
Blessed are you who have come in dedication
to the life of authenticity.

Group: Amen.

Reader (or Group)

As we gather in this (small and) joyous
assembly, we recognize with grateful
hearts the divinity of this moment. The
words we speak bear witness to deep pur-
pose and the realization of true inner
being. They promise triumph over the
anguish and loneliness of human existence.
This is a moment of holy possibility.
May our devotions bring us hope and
strength, fulfillment and peace. Amen.

Address by Rabbi*
(or member of group)

* See Appendix A

Reader

Now, _____ (Name) _____, in the presence of these witnesses who represent the Reform Jewish Community, I ask you to respond with sincerity and conviction to these following questions:

1. Do you of your own freedom take the name Jew as a symbol of your faith?
2. Do you pledge your loyalty to the ideals and hopes of the Reform Jewish Community?
3. Do you promise to (establish a home) (pursue a life) of beliefs and practices founded on the Reform Jewish principles of individual freedom and community responsibility?

Ark is Opened

(Reader takes Torah scroll from the ark)

Reader

The Torah scroll symbolizes the essence of the Jewish quest: an unceasing search for truth; an endless struggle for the good; a covenant of peace between the person and existence. You have now accepted the eternal challenge of Torah. In freedom you have chosen for yourself the name Jew. I now hand the Torah to you as a sign of your dedication and ask you to recite these scriptural words of union and affirmation.

Affirmation

How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob
 Thy dwellings, O Israel!
 Entreat me not to leave thee,
 And to return from following after thee;
 For wither thou goest, I will go,
 And where thou lodgest, I will lodge;
 Thy people shall be my people.

Reader

May you be strengthened in the solemn commitment you have made. As a Rabbi in Israel, and with the confirmation of these witnesses, I welcome you in joy to the community and faith of Reform Judaism (and confer upon you the Hebrew name _____).

(Torah is returned to ark)

Ark is Closed

Reader

You are now a Reform Jew. Bear your name Jew with dignity and pride, for it is a noble and mighty symbol created by a past of tears and challenge, pointing to a future of happiness and peace. In shared community and mutual affirmation, we will now labor, ever more closely together, to realize the holy promise the future holds.

13p' ...
 Behold, how good and how pleasant
 it is
 For brethren to dwell together in
 unity!

4.

Appendix A

A Rabbi's Address (optional)

A conversion ceremony may perhaps be compared to a birthday celebration. Throughout the year, minute by minute, day by day, we slowly become a year older. When that process has been completed, the occasion is noted by a celebration. We are not miraculously and suddenly transported to another age level. We have simply completed a significant step in one of life's stages.

Affiliation with the Reform Jewish Community in the act of conversion signifies a gradual, personal process of introspection and self-realization. One cannot realize all at once the many possibilities of Jewish religion and community. Such a transformation takes place in steps, much as a flower opens its petals in the light and warmth of springtime.

But though the process of conversion is personal and gradual, we delight in visible symbols of important decisions. It is for that reason that the ceremony of conversion is held, enabling the convert to announce in public with conviction and joy the personal decision to join the Reform Jewish Community that (she, he) has made.