

ENNOMINATION CEREMONY

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Introduction

The Ennomination Ceremony is a birth ritual intended for use in the liberal Jewish community. It applies equally to girls and boys, and serves a number of purposes. In the Ennomination Ceremony, the child is publicly introduced into the Jewish community. The child is formally given the name Jew, which the child shares in common with other members of the community, and which serves as a basic symbol in the child's religious life. Also, in the Ennomination Ceremony, the child is given a proper name, which signifies the reality and fundamental importance of the child's individuality. Those present at the ceremony represent the liberal religious community's affirmation of the right of the child to individuality, and the freedom implicit in this right. Thus the Ennomination Ceremony bestows upon a child membership in the Jewish spiritual community while affirming the child's freedom in that community to realize her or his special qualities as a unique human being. It goes without saying that the Ennomination Ceremony gives parents and community alike the opportunity to rejoice in the pleasure of new human life.

1.

Parent(s) or Reader

Blessed are all ברוכים הבאים.
who have come
here on this happy Be-ru-chim haba-im.
occasion.

Parent(s) or Reader

There is a new light in (our, your) hearts and in (our, your) home;
These candles celebrate the birth of (our, your) child.
Out of the creative darkness (she, he) has come;
These candles celebrate (her, his) emergence into light.
Fortunate the woman who knows the pangs of birth, for she has held a star;
Fortunate the man who fathers a child, for he has held eternity in his arms.
These candles celebrate the fire of love out of which this child was created.

(The candles are lit)

Parent(s) or Reader

Blessed is the wellspring of life, ברוך מעין החיים
Ba-ruch ma-yan ha-cha-yim,
ground of being, סבת הדריה
si-bat ha-ha-va-yah
by whose power we kindle אשר בכוחו אנו מדליקין
a-sher be-cho-cho a-nu madlii-kin
the light of happiness. נר שמחה.
ner shel sim-chah

2.

The unending generations of life reveal the unity of an ever-changing universe. Hidden in birth and death, the roaring winds, and the gentle voices of loved ones lies the harmony of existence. As we gather here in community, we make manifest the cosmic order that gave us all birth:

Hear, O Israel	שמע ישראל ¹
	She-ma yis-ra-el
human unity	אחדות האדם
	ach-dut ha-a-dam
is unity divine.	אחדות אלהים.
	ach-dut e-lo-hit.
Blessed is the peace of	ברוך שלום
	Ba-ruch she-lom
unity forever and ever.	אחדותו לעולם ועד.
	ach-du-to le-o-lam va-ed.

Parent(s)

Tomorrow is a mystery, and the day after is unknown. In awe (I, we) face (my, our) (daughter's, son's) tomorrows, all that this child may come to be. This new being is dreaming innocence. With (my, our) love and care (I, we) will seek to make (her, his) dreams real in the world.

Parent(s) or Reader

(A cup filled with wine from a new bottle is raised)

This cup is filled with new wine that celebrates a life just begun. The sweetness of its taste is the joy this child has brought.

3.

This cup is the vessel of hopes and wishes, those we speak, and those that reside in the heart's deep silent places.

Blessed is the wellspring	ברוך מעין ²
	Ba-ruch ma-yan
of life	החיים
	ha-cha-yim
whose creative power	אשר כחו הבריאה
	a-sher ko-cho ha-be-riah
fashions the fruit of	בורא פרי
	bor-ei pe-ri
the vine.	הגפן
	ha-ga-fen.

Parent(s) or Reader

On this () day of the month of (), 19(), corresponding to the () day of (), 57(), of the Hebrew calendar,(), give to (our, their) (daughter, son) the English name (), and the Hebrew name (). May (she, he) live and grow in health and happiness.

On this day, (we, they) declare that (we, they) give to (our, their) (daughter, son) the name "Jew," and thus bring (her, him) into the spiritual community of Israel. May this name we now bestow from without come to have ever greater meaning within. May it resonate within the depths of (her, his) being, calling forth a response to the challenge of human existence that brings a life of peace with self and harmony with the world.

Parent(s) or Reader

May your way	יהיה דרכך
be blessed.	Yi-he-yeh (dar-kech, dar-ke-cha)
	מברך.
	me-vo-rach.
May wisdom's light shine	יאר עליך
upon you .	Ya-er (a-la-yich, a-le-cha)
	אור החכמה.
	or ha-choch-mah.
May your journey bring you	יתן לך מסעך
peace.	Yi-ten (lach, le-cha) (ma-sa-ech, ma-sa-acha)
	שלום.
	shalom.

May (we, you) bring (our, your) (daughter, son) into the ways of Torah, Chuppah, ve-Ma-asim Tovim: into the way of the spirit, the way of unfolding life, and the way of loving deeds.

Amen.

The Parents Declaration
 (Optional, as parents wish)

It is the way of parents to care for their children. Yet we would not protect you overmuch or overlong so that our love becomes a prison from which you must escape. As the poet has written:⁴

Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you, and though they are with you, they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts, for they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls, for their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor carries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees his mark upon the path of the infinite, and he bends you with his might that his arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness; for even as he loves the arrow that flies, so he loves also the bow that is stable.⁵

It is in this spirit that today (and) I declare to you:

Your existence is your possession, not (mine, ours). Out of (my, our) love and concern (I, we) intrude in your life for a little while, to help you live and grow. It is (my, our) hope and (my, our) prayer that (I, we) will know when that time is done. For then, with grace and respect, (I, we) must return to you what has been (mine, ours) only in trust, - that which has always been rightfully yours: yourself.

You are not in this world to live up to (my, our) expectations!

You are you
And (I, we) (am, are) (I, we).

Blessed are you (ברוכה, ברוך) [את, אתא]
(Be-ru-chah, ba-ruch) (at, a-tah)
(my, our) child (בתי, בני, בתנו, בנו)
(be-ti, be-ni, be-tei-nu, be-nei-nu)
in the newness of your existence. בחדישות מציאותך.
ba-cha-di-shut (me-tsei-a-tech, me-tsi-at-cha).
Blessed are we ברוכים אנחנו
Be-ru-chim a-nach-nu
who have been enriched אשר נתעשרנו
a-sher nit-a-shar-nu
by your life. בחיך.
be-cha-yech (be-cha-ye-cha).

Notes

¹ An alternative historical reading is:

שמע ישראל יי אלהינו יי אחד.
ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד.

² An alternative historical reading is:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן.

³ An alternative historical reading is:

יברכך יהוה וישמרך.
יאר יהוה פניו אליך ויחנך.
ישא יהוה פניו אליך וישם לך שלום.

⁴ Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet, pp. 17ff.

⁵ An alternative passage is: "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 and consider that (she, he) is unique in the world in (her, his) particular character and that there has never been anyone like (her, him) in the world... Every single person is a new thing in the world and is called upon to fulfill (her, his) individuality in the world."

Martin Buber
The Way of Man (adapted)

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