

Jewish Affirmation Ceremony
Cantor Lindsay Kanter
June 7, 2024

Chelsea-

I am so thrilled to welcome you to the bimah this evening, as we celebrate your commitment to Judaism. I met Chelsea almost a year ago, when she reached out to me to discuss becoming better acquainted with her Jewish faith.

Chelsea: you were raised in a multi-faith home, and were not very exposed to Jewish religious practices or traditions. There were no other Jewish kids at your school, and connecting to Judaism proved to be rather difficult. Yet, you felt compelled to apply for a "young professionals" birthright trip in December 2016, forcing you out of your comfort zone, giving you the space you needed to connect to Judaism and Israel.

This experience, along with meeting your fiance Josh, was a big leap forward in your Jewish journey. This year, you entered into a deep period of learning: After many months of study, reading, and introspection, I am thrilled to be here with you as you affirm your Jewish faith.

Oh God, as we prepare to welcome Chelsea,
Known in Hebrew as *Shayna Bat Martin HaCohen v'Marlene*
We pray that You grant her a blessed and rewarding life.
May she truly be a blessing to herself, to her family and friends,
To our congregation, to K'lal Yisrael, and to all humanity. Amen.

Chelsea: Please read this statement of affirmation aloud:

5.1 Affirmation of Commitment to Judaism *Statement of Affirmation*

My ways are not the ways of Abraham,
who forged new paths, testing You — as You tested him.
Nor am I Sarah, amused by Your promises.
I am not Isaac, source of laughter and happiness,
or Rebecca, source of blessing to those who followed her.
Nor am I Jacob, who strove with You, and with himself;
or Leah, longing to be truly loved;
or Rachel, weeping for her children.
I am not Moses, radiating the light of Your presence;
or his brother Aaron, administering the people's sacrifices on Your
 holy altar;
or their sister Miriam, seeking out nurturing water in the midst of the
 parched wilderness,
 and dancing jubilantly to celebrate Your triumph.
I am not Esther, risking my safety and high status for the sake of the
 common good;
and I am not Elijah, experiencing You in the gentle comfort of a still,
 small voice.

I am none of them, for I must find my own way to You.
I hold them all within me, as I draw from their legacies.

And now, as I stand before You, O God,
[and before this holy congregation,]
I affirm my faith in You
and in the precepts, culture, and traditions of my people.

I pray that you will continue to bless me
with an upright heart and a steadfast soul,
that I may continue to be a worthy representative of the Jewish
 people and a light unto the nations.
May my hands and heart be faithful in serving You, the God of truth;
and may I continue to embrace learning and good deeds.

Chelsea:

May you have the wisdom of Abraham, finding the courage to question and the certainty that there is an answer. May you have the strength of Jacob, wrestling with the messenger and questioning the message. May you find the same joy Miriam found at the shores of the sea, bursting into a song of gratitude and awe. May you follow in Ruth's footsteps, taking strength in the faith of our people.

We rejoice as we welcome Chelsea into our community.

We celebrate this remarkable occasion by joining together in the *Shehecheyanu*, praising God for allowing us to reach this joyous moment.

(Sing *Shehecheyanu* in Hebrew)

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.

Rabbi Adam and I will offer one of our oldest blessings upon you: The Priestly Blessing

Y'varech'cheich Adonai v'yishm'reich

—> May God bless you and keep you.

Ya'eir Adonai panav eilayich vichuneich

—> May God's light shine upon you, and may God be gracious to you.

Yisa Adonai panav eilayich v'yaseim l'ach shalom.

—> May you feel God's Presence within you always, and may you find peace.

Mazal tov!

(Lead kahal in *Siman Tov*)