

Mystery of the Covenant:

A New Ceremony of Simchat Brit

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WHAT MOMENT BETTER ILLUSTRATES THE *tzelem Elohim* (the image of God) than bringing a child into the world? Through conception, gestation, and delivery, many of us are blessed to discover that we, like HaShem, have the capacity to partner in creating life.

In the best of circumstances, parents conceive an infant out of shared passion for each other and a mutual yearning to love, teach, and nurture a new life. Birthing that child can seem nothing less than miraculous, especially for the mother whose life force animates the child for nine months. In adoption, the efforts to bring home a child require a remarkable degree of tenacity, ingenuity, and years of fervent hope, prayer, and commitment—a different kind of miracle.

Even in the worst of circumstances, when a child is born of unthinkable transgression but the mother continues the pregnancy, the birth and caring can (though not always) serve to heal the trauma and bring love and faith back into the mother's heart.

For these and many other reasons, bringing a child ritually into “the tribe” soon after birth is no light matter. In fact, bringing a newborn ceremonially into the *mishpachah* can and should be one of the most powerful religious moments in a family's experience. Ideally it engages the deep structure, scripture, liturgy, and theology of our tradition. Because it is commonly a home-based ceremony, it is critical that it evoke the *Shekhinah*

(Divine Presence,) introducing the palpable reality of Mystery into a child's consciousness and into a family's center, to dwell in the *mishkan* (sanctuary) of their hearts and their home.

Brit Milah, the covenant of circumcision, with the inherent tension and intensity of a public surgical procedure, is without doubt one of the most dramatic ritual events in the Jewish tradition. Its prayers and blessings have logical roots and its scriptural foundation is clear. This combination works to jolt the consciousness of all those present into a strong waking state, allowing HaShem's presence to permeate even our strongest defenses. The ceremony for welcoming Jewish boys into our covenant contains all of the elements appropriate to the occasion.

But what is our experience of Jewish ceremonies welcoming daughters? Some of the existing ceremonies don't even name the brit (covenant) into which the female child is brought. Surely there is more we can do to activate the Shekhinah in our midst, to declare to her: "HERE IS ANOTHER JEWISH SOUL! HALLELUYAH!" and leave those in attendance transformed. To create a satisfying, meaningful ceremony, we can identify compelling texts, appropriately complementary blessings, and dramatic ritual elements that capture the deep foundation of a daughter's entry into the brit .

The following scriptural and theological analysis, with resulting ritual suggestions, is offered in an effort to draw us closer to a Simchat Brit, or Rejoicing of the Covenant, that captures the awe and blessing of bringing a 'baby woman', as the Doonesbury comic would say, into our people.

Why "Simchat Brit?" First and foremost, because initiation is about a lifetime contract. A title such as *Simchat Bat* (literally Rejoicing in a Daughter) that does not acknowledge the covenant, does not capture the purpose of this welcome. Next, the covenant we are initiating the girl into isn't hers alone, as the title Brit Bat would suggest. Naming the covenant for the ritual element at its center, as is done in Brit Milah, seems to say that covenant is about the circumcision, but we know that circumcision is merely the sign, not the covenant itself. Simchat Brit, on the other hand, captures our joy at bringing a new soul into the community. Moreover, because the term is gender neutral, it could be used for welcoming boys as well.

What is This Brit?

"I am El Shaddai. Walk in my ways and be tamim (perfect/simple). I will establish my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." Avram threw himself on his face, and God spoke to him further: "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the father of a multitude of nations. (GENESIS 17:1)"

...I will make you exceedingly fertile, and make nations of you; and kings shall come forth from you." (GEN. 17:6)

"As for your wife Sarai, you will not call her Sarai but her name shall be Sarah. I will bless her — indeed I will give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she shall give rise to nations, rulers of people shall issue from her." Abraham threw himself on his face and laughed... (GEN. 17:15)

Though expressed as a covenant with Abraham and a blessing for Sarah, clearly the same contractual commitment – brit – the one for which circumcision is a sign, was shared between our first father and mother.

How do we know that Sarah was included in the deal and not merely a tool for its manifestation? The text makes clear that both Abraham and Sarah will birth kings and rulers of people. The narrative clearly places Isaac, Sarah's only born, as the next progenitor of our lineage, not Hagar's son Ishmael, nor the six sons of Abraham's other wife, Keturah. Later in the text, it is Sarah, not Abraham, who understands that Ishmael must be exiled in accordance with the law of the day to protect the inheritance of Isaac and the line of the covenant. Without Sarah as birth mother, then, the covenant would not have manifested, and without her actions regarding Ishmael, it could well have been broken.

Looking at this from a mystical perspective, one could say that God placed the seed for multiplicity and expansiveness in Abraham (*hesed*), but the power of delineating boundaries (*gevurah*), as well as both *hokhmah* and *binah* — wisdom and discernment to manifest the Divine will — were given to Sarah.

Thus, ceremonies for naming girl children should give due honor to Sarah as an equal partner both in receiving and transmitting the covenant.

What is the Sign of the Brit?

For men, the sign of the covenant is obvious in the *pshat* or literal reading of the text:

“You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.” (GEN. 17:11)

If a *Simchat Brit* is to parallel the Brit Milah ritual, seeking a corresponding sign for women makes sense. For Sarah, what was that physical sign? One need not look too deeply for the answer, though it does lie between the lines of the text. At age ninety Sarah was no longer menstruating (GEN. 18:11). Intriguingly, just like Abraham (and Jewish men after him), Sarah needed to bleed to mark the covenant. One could even posit that in order to enter the covenant, men needed to be more like women and bleed from their sexual organ. But even if one did not want to go that far, it is clear that Sarah had to defy nature and begin to menstruate again at 90.

Menstruation, of course, is not unique to the Jewish world, but neither is circumcision. Menstruation, one might say, is naturally occurring, and not something that we do to our bodies to affect, transform, civilize, or make more perfect the natural path. Yet some women do not bleed or do not bleed regularly without intervention. Today we have medical technologies that can cause the blood to flow for some women when it has stopped or has never begun, giving us just a tiny hint of the creative power that God gave Sarah. Perhaps our participation in what had heretofore only been possible as a miracle is a sign that now is the time to finally recognize blood as the *ot* or sign of the covenant for Sarah and all of her progeny.

As early as the mid-12th century, Rabbi Joseph Bekhor Shor mused that, within a Judaic context, menstrual blood was the correlative to circumcision.¹ If we are to successfully assert that the blood of a woman is a seal of the covenant, it may first be necessary to recognize and honor this blood as a sanctified life force, generative and capable of making kingdoms. Far from being exclusively *tamei* or polluted, as is the prevailing view, the Torah teaches us that some women’s blood — most specifically post-birth blood (lochia) — is actually *d’mei taharah*, purifying blood! From this foundation (which we will explore in greater depth below) we can build a ceremony that welcomes Jewish girls into the covenant with coherent and powerful text, ritual, and symbolism.

Blood and Brit

In the Torah portion Mishpatim, blood is a sign of Israel’s covenant with God at a moment when we collectively accept the commandments. Moshe recites the rules and precepts, and the people proclaim that they will do them. Moshe then writes the laws down and reads them aloud so the people hear them a second time. Again the people proclaim that they will do them. Then Moshe takes the blood of the sacrificial bull and dashes it on the people, proclaiming, “This is the blood of the covenant (*Hinei dam ha-brit*) that the Lord now makes with you concerning all of these commands.” (EXODUS 24:1-8) Here we see an example of how the sign of a covenant — blood — can also be the embodiment of a covenant.

In parashat Tzav, the priests are purified and consecrated into holy service on behalf of this covenant through a ritual of anointing them with oil and dabbing them with blood from a sacrificial ram. The blood was put on the ridge of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the big toe of the right foot (LEVITICUS 8:10-30). Some commentators say that the choice of location of the blood was to activate the priest’s necessary capacity to listen (ear), to act powerfully in the world (thumb), and to exercise wise leadership in giving direction (foot).

The use of blood as an embodiment of the covenant is echoed in the circumcision ritual, where *dam brit* is the third phase of the circumcision. First the foreskin is cut (*milah*). Then the membrane on the glans is unpeeled and removed (*peri’ah*). Finally, in the stage of the surgery called *dam brit*, the blood is drawn out from the incision.

In his extensive analysis of the blood symbolism in circumcision, Lawrence Hoffman² observes that blood is as essential to the Brit Milah as the circumcision itself. He notes that when those who are already circumcised convert, blood must still be drawn from the penis. Exploring the use of Ezekiel’s text, “Then I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood, and I said to you: ‘In your blood, live!’ and I said to you: ‘In your blood, live!’” (EZEKIEL 16:6), Hoffman cites a midrash from Chapter 9 of Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, asserting that we evoke the salvific power of circumcision blood when we recite this otherwise confusing Ezekiel passage during the Brit Milah. That midrash says that because Pharaoh forbade circumcision, on the day they left Egypt all of the Israelite men were

circumcised. Their blood was mixed with the blood of the sacrificial ram and put on the doorposts to save the Israelite firstborns from death. Hoffman notes what surely hundreds of commentators have discussed before him — that Torah and the rabbinic tradition see female menstrual blood and post-birth blood as polluting, as opposed to the shedding of blood either in Brit Milah or the sacrificial system.

Woman's Blood

In parashat Metzora we find the laws of *niddah* — the untouchability of women for seven days of menstrual impurity (LEVITICUS 15:19). This text has controlled our view of the natural blood flow from women as polluting and problematic. Yet, when we look at Tazria, just a few chapters earlier, what do we see?

When a woman at childbirth bears a male, she shall be *tamei* (impure) for seven days; she shall be impure as at the time of her menstrual infirmity. On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. She shall remain *bidmei taharah* (in a state of blood purification or blood purity) for thirty-three days; she shall not touch any consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary until her period of purification is completed. If she bears a female, she shall be *tamei* (impure) two weeks as during her menstruation, and she shall remain in a state of blood purification for sixty-six days. (LEVITICUS 12:2-5)

Far from supporting the notion that a woman's blood and hence her state of being is inherently impure, the transformation of post-birth blood (*lochia*) from *tamei* to *tahor* (pure), without ritual, without human intervention, and without divine intervention may be unheard of in the biblical scheme of distinction between tainted and pure. In all other scenarios that I could identify, something either had to stop (e.g., menstrual bleeding or seminal emission or skin scaling) for an impurity to stop, or a ritual of purification performed by a Kohen needed to take place to transform a person from *tamei* to *tahor* (e.g., ritual ablutions after touching the dead). One could argue that 33 or 66 days would be sufficient for post-birth blood to stop flowing, but clearly the time periods set are not related to blood flow per se. And while a ritual sacrifice ends the period of blood purification (e.g., after 33 days when a boy is born) there is no ritual to start the purification.

Here we see that a woman's body by its very nature is capable of being a vessel for a transformation, quite apart from the cessation of that which is *tamei* (e.g., the disappearance of skin lesions, the end of the menstrual cycle), and without recourse to prayer or ritual (e.g., the use of the blood and the ashes of the red heifer to purify the Kohen after he makes contact with death, as found in Numbers 19:1). Who else has this inherent power? Not the Kohen. As mentioned above, he must perform rituals and sacrifices for this transformation to occur. Not Moshe, not Aharon, not any man. Only HaShem and the body of a woman who has given birth have this power. Here we see that it is in fact woman's nature that parallels HaShem's most transformative potential, not man's culture.

Many commentators assert that separating life from death was a primary rabbinic project. One example of this is found in the laws of *kashrut*, where the Torah tells us not to seethe a kid in the milk of its mother. The rabbinic tradition expands this to prohibiting eating meat and milk together. Some say this is to keep the life force (milk) separate from death (meat). In the laws of *niddah*, women who are menstruating are restricted in their touch of both holy objects and men because menstrual blood is matter that could have nourished life, but in the absence of conception is lifeless, dead.

The purifying power of *lochia* reinforces this established framework and takes it one step further. Not only does a woman's blood give life, but it also has alchemical properties unknown to any other human matter. Thus, while menstrual blood, blood which represents death, is *tamei*, the blood which nourished life--*lochia*--also has the power to purify.

Hold the Moyl, It's a Goyl!

For thousands of years significant cultural and theological imbalance has existed between the way girls and boys are welcomed into the Jewish community. Though we might find ways to rationalize away the impact of this imbalance, anthropologists tell us that what we ritualize and how we do it deeply affects gender identity formation and subsequent cultural roles.

Because of this, over the past three decades, authors, parents, scholars, rabbis, and lay people have worked to create welcoming ceremonies for girls with meaning and power. Some are closely modeled on Brit Milah; others depart significantly. Though many noteworthy ideas have been proposed, a standard theological paradigm for welcoming girls has not emerged.

From Mary Gendler's proposal to break the hymen, to Rabbi Richard and Carol Levy's suggestion to tap a girl's cheek (mimicking the cheek slap mothers give daughters when they first start to bleed), to immersion rituals evoking mikvah, to Rabbi Daniel Siegel's suggestion that Rosh Hodesh be the covenant to celebrate and frame a girl's welcome, many ceremonies have alluded to blood or menstruation (via mikvah or moon cycles). However, Mary Gendler's suggestion has not been adopted, and none of the other ceremonies has overtly involved the blood of a woman.

Problematic dualisms are raised by Brit Milah and the lack of a satisfying counterpart for girls. Laura Geller puts it this way: "It ritualizes for us a disturbing inequality of our tradition: Mothers give birth and fathers give tribe. Mothers birth babies and fathers birth Jews."

Hoffman's analysis raises even more troubling dichotomies between our welcome for boys and girls. In analyzing why it is problematic that women's (natural) blood is seen as polluting but men's (culturally drawn) circumcision blood is salvific, Hoffman repeats the oft-noted dichotomy within the rabbinic tradition--that culture is viewed as superior to nature, with men controlling the cultural world and women representing the natural world. This hierarchy of value is not without impact. In fact, it is the foundation of an entire tractate of the Talmud (Niddah) and has had a profound and lasting effect on all of *halakhah* (Jewish law) as it applies to family relations and the roles and behavior of women.

These highly problematic dichotomies need not and should not continue.

The Hiddush and the Foundation for a Simchat Brit

What if we were to turn this binary opposition on its head and say that, for the unification of the Holy One — *Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu* — and the Shekhinah, nature and culture must both be sanctified and the false hierarchy abandoned? Is there foundation in Torah, midrash, or halakhah for this?

It seems clear that the self-transforming nature of lochia offers a proof-text in the Torah that nature and culture can both be purifying, can both be sanctified, and can provide the theological foundation for a Covenant of Blood, a Dam Brit that welcomes baby girls just as it welcomes baby boys into the tribe of the people Israel.

Although we've seen that blood has loosely been introduced as a component of ceremonies welcoming girls, it has not played a central role in

any of them. Let us explore a ceremony where lochia, referred to in the Torah as *d'mei taharah*, is the core of a Simchat Brit.

Because Brit Milah works so well as a ceremony at so many levels, paralleling the ritual seems both helpful and powerful. Because a mother's lochia changes from *tamei* to *d'mei taharah* on the 8th day when a boy is circumcised and on the 15th day when a girl is born (LEVITICUS 12:3-5), it seems fitting that a Simchat Brit would take place 15 days after the birth of a girl.

Although arguments can be made to the contrary, it seems appropriate that Abraham's receipt of the brit continue to be celebrated with a ceremony, Brit Milah, where men bring baby men into the covenant, into the culture of Jewish men. A Simchat Brit should likewise be a ritual of women bringing baby women into the covenant that Sarah received, into the culture of Jewish women. The text spoken, the choice of actors in the ritual and their placement on the 'stage,' and the ritual objects and substances used should all reflect or embody the transmission of the legacy of Jewish women to the newest member of our tribe. Men, of course, should be present as witnesses and the father should have a role of honor.

Below is a proposed service for a Simchat Brit, including new text, ritual objects, and a central role for the purifying blood of the mother in sealing the transmission of peoplehood. If the child is adopted, and there is no birth mother present, a pinprick from either or both parents' fingers can provide the parental blood. The 'stage directions' for the ritual have the birth mother using her lochia in the key role, but modifications can and should be made when blood is used from a pinprick and/or for different family configurations, including single parents, two mothers, two fathers, etc. The Brit Milah ceremony used as a model here is the one found in the ArtScroll Siddur.

Simchat Brit

The ceremony takes place 15 days after the birth. If that day is a Friday, it is recommended that it be done well before Shabbat begins. If it falls on a Saturday, it is recommended that it be done after Havdalah if the parents want to start with candle lighting. It can be done during Shabbat without the candles.

The mother lights two Shabbat candles. The parents choose a *kavvanah* (intention) for the candle-lighting that they wish to

focus on and share with participants:

- Welcoming the Shekhinah into their home
- Welcoming an additional soul into the people Israel
- Separation of the soul of the mother and soul of the daughter that took place at birth
- Covenant of Shabbat which, like blood, is associated with the concepts of both brit and time.

All declare when the child is brought in:

Brukhah Ha-Ba'ah Blessed is the one who arrives!

Two seats are prepared, one for the godmother to hold the girl and one for Miryam. Place baby on Miryam's chair.

The parent who is not the birth mother, or if there is no birth mother present, the parent who chooses this role says:

Zeh ha-kisei shel Miryam ha-nevi'ah, z'khurah la'tov. Shiru l'Adonai ki ga'oh ga'ah.

This is the chair for Miryam the prophetess, who is remembered for good. Sing to HaShem, who has triumphed gloriously.

All sing:

Ashirah l'Yah b'hayyai. I will sing to God with my life (Chorus of Shefa Gold melody).

The godmother holds the child and the mother comes in front of the child, as a mid-wife would sit in front of a birthing mother.

Parents:

We have been ready and willing to perform the positive commandment and blessing of birthing leaders of great nations since the moment you were conceived/hoped for.

Birth Mother or Chosen Parent:

Amar Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu al Sarah: uveirakhti'ha v'haitah l'goyim malkhei amim mimenah yihyu.

The Kadosh Barukh Hu said about Sarah: 'I will bless her so that she shall give rise to nations; rulers of peoples shall issue forth from her.'

Today I welcome you into my lineage, a noble lineage, begun by Sarah,

who it is said was a great prophet; continued by Rivkah who had the capacity to hear and then to follow the will of HaShem in regards to her children and our lineage; carried on by Rachel and Leah, who learned how to make the most of a difficult situation; taken on by Miryam who taught us to sing and dance and bring our joy with us through dangerous and difficult birthings; and expanded by the daughters of Zelophehad who brought women's power through property into our collective consciousness and invited HaShem to change the rules—proving that people CAN challenge and thereby change God's law. Today we also invoke the faithful Ruth, who showed us that love and conviction and right action are attributes of all God's people, and who helped us appreciate the remarkable gift we receive when those outside our birth family choose to join us.

Parents:

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hakhnisah b'vrit shel Avraham v'Sarah.

Blessed are you, Great Mystery, our God, Imaginer of the World, who sanctified us with commandments and willed us to bring her into the covenant of Abraham and Sarah.

Mother takes lochia blood which has been placed on gauze. (A pinprick from either or both parent's fingers can also provide the parental blood.) Mother dabs her daughter between the eyes with the blood, saying:

May you have vision like Sarah and may your vision/hazon have the power to transform, as does this blood.

All: *Kein yehi ratzon*

Mother dabs blood on the right ear of the child and says:

May you listen carefully so that you hear HaShem's will, like Rivkah did, and may your connection to Divine intention/ratzen transform that which is need of alignment with the Holy One of Blessing as does this blood.

All: *Kein yehi ratzon*

Mother dabs blood on the heart and says:

May you find the balance to live in your heart though life brings you circumstances that are not to your liking, as did Rachel and Leah, and may your heart

balance/tiferet transform those difficulties into peaceful creativity as does this blood.

All: *Kein yehi ratzon*

Mother dabs blood on feet and says:

May you dance with joy on the shores of your liberation, and may your dance transform nations, as does this blood.

All: *Kein yehi ratzon*

Mother dabs blood on the right thumb and says:

May you have the strength to fight for what is right and fair, like the daughters of Zelophehad, and may your advocacy transform the world as does this blood.

All: *Kein yehi ratzon*

Mother draws blood with a pinprick from daughter's left thumb and dabs it with clean gauze, then folds the blood together with her own blood (lochia if the birth mother, a pinprick if not) and, moving aside any clothing, dabs it directly on her heart, on the heart of the other parent, on the heart of any siblings, and on the belly of the baby, and says:

May you know what it means to give of yourself in just the right amount, to welcome the stranger, to feed the poor, to nurture those you love, and mingle your life force with the family you choose as gracefully and faithfully as did Ruth, and may your blood transform, as does mine.

All: *Kein yehi ratzon.*

K'shem she-nikhnasah la-brit, kein tikaneis l'Torah ul'huppah ul'maasim tovim.

Just as she has entered the covenant, so may she enter into the Torah, huppah, and good deeds.

Parent:

Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, borei pri ha-gafen.

Blessed are you, Great Mystery, our God, Imaginer of the World, who brings forth the fruit of the vine.

One parent drinks the wine, passes it to the other parent to drink,

who then dips a finger in the wine and puts it on the baby's lips.

Parents give a personal (unscripted) blessing to the daughter.

Naming

Parents and rabbi/officiant recite the following, in English and/or in Hebrew. (Note: Change the traditional wording if the child is adopted or if there is a single parent or two fathers or two mothers.)

Our God and God of our forefathers and foremothers, preserve this child for her parents, and may her name be called in Israel _____ (baby's Hebrew name) daughter of _____ (parents' names). May her father rejoice in the issue of his loins and her mother exult in the fruit of her womb, as it is written, "May your father and mother rejoice and may she who gave birth to you exult." And it is said, "Then I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood, and I said to you, 'In your blood, live!' And I said to you, 'In your blood live!'" and it is said: God remembered the covenant forever; the word of God's command for a thousand generations — that God made with Abraham and with Sarah and their son Isaac. Then he established it with Jacob and Rachel and Leah as a statute for Israel, an everlasting statute. Give thanks to HaShem, for God is good, God's kindness endures forever!

Eloheinu v'Elohei avoteinu v'imoteinu, kayeim et ha-yaldah ha-zot l'aviah ul'imah, v'yikarei sh'mah b'Yisrael _____ (baby's Hebrew name) bat _____ (parents' names). Yismach ha-av b'yotzei halatzav, v'tageil imah b'pri vitnah. Kakatuv: Yismach avikha v'imekha v'tageil yolad'tekha. V'ne'emar: Va-e'evor alayikh va-ereikh mitbosseset b'damayikh va-omar lakh b'damayikh hayyay, va-omar lakh b'damayikh hayyay! V'ne'emar: zakhar l'olam brito, davar tzivah l'eleph dor, Brito asher karat im Avraham v'Sarah u'b'nam Yitzchak, va-ya'amideihu l'Yaakov l'hok, l'Yisrael v'Rachel v'Leah brit olam. Hodu l'Adonai ki tov, ki l'olam hasdo. Hodu l'Adonai ki tov, ki l'olam hasdo.

Master of the Universe, may it be Your will that she be worthy, favored, and acceptable before You and may You in your abundant mercy send through Your holy angels a holy and pure soul to _____ (baby's Hebrew name).

Ribono shel olam, y'hi ratzon milfanekha she-t'hei hashuvah, um'rootzah, um'kooblah l'fanekha, v'atah b'rachamekha ha-rabbim, sh'lach al y'dei malakhekha ha-kedoshim neshamah kedoshah ut'horah l'_____
(baby's Hebrew name).

All:

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, shehecheyanu, v'higianu, v'kiymanu, la-zman ha-zeh.

For all who seek ways to live a life immersed in the vast beauty of our tradition as we fully honor both women and men, may this paper and this ritual provide an opening for experiencing the full power and possibility of our covenant and of a spiritually and ritually engaged path.

Sources:

1. According to Shaye J.D. Cohen, *Why Aren't Jewish Women Circumcised* (Berkeley: U. of CA Press, 2005), Rabbi Joseph Bekhor Shor mused that menstrual blood "within the context of the observance of the Jewish rules of menstrual purity and impurity, is the female analogue to male circumcision," although he did hold the blood as disgusting and impure (pp. 20-21).
2. Lawrence Hoffman, *Covenant of Blood* (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1996).
3. Mary Gendler, "Sarah's Seed: A New Ritual for Women," *Response* 8, no. 4 (Winter 1974-75), pp. 65-75; Laura Geller, "Welcoming Children into Name and Covenant", *Lifecycles* v.1, Rabbi Debra Ornstein, editor, *Jewish Lights Publishing*, Woodstock, Vermont, 1994, pp. 62-65; Rabbi Daniel Siegel, "Moon: White Sliver of Shechina's Return," in S.H. Weiner and J. Omer-Man, eds., *Worlds of Jewish Prayer*. (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1993).

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