

4 Cheshvan 5758
November 4, 1997

Dear Dr. Lamm, *k'le*

Nearly thirteen years ago, during one of the very first Jewish Family Law courses that I taught at Lincoln Square Synagogue, I took a look at the faces of the brides-to-be who filled my classroom and saw that they were overwhelmed. Despite all my valiant efforts to transfer to them my own buoyancy about this *הבנה* and its profound philosophical meaning and wisdom, they were quickly sinking under the tide of *הלכה*. On an impulse which can only be explained as *סייעתא דשמיא*, I interrupted the carefully structured lesson and read to them your masterful translation of the *תפלת הכלה* as it appears in *A Hedge of Roses*. The impact was immediate and powerful. They were inspired and encouraged, and we were all able to return to our studies with a renewed sense of commitment.

Ever since that evening, in every *כלה* class that I am privileged to teach, we pause at exactly the same point and refresh ourselves with exactly the same words. Each of the women receives a copy of *A Bride's Prayer*, and I have been told that quite a number of them reread it frequently during the years of their marriage. Well over a thousand *כלות*, most of whom are now wives and mothers, thank you.

This note, I believe, is long overdue, for I realize that I should have asked your permission to distribute these copies in advance. I hope you will forgive me for not thinking to do so. Recently, we were given a state-of-the-art computer with numerous graphic and font capabilities, and I tried my hand at reproducing your translation - hedged with roses, and in a soft, feminine font. The result is attached, and I now ask for your permission to distribute it (free-of-charge, of course,) to my *כלות*.

I am deeply grateful for your time and consideration, and mostly for the invaluable lessons you have taught me and my brides through all of your writings.

Warmest regards to Mrs. Lamm.

Respectfully yours,

Peshi Neuburger
Peshi Neuburger

A Bride's Prayer*

May it be Your will that Your presence dwell between my husband and me, and that You unify Your Holy Name through us. Introduce into our hearts the spirit of sanctity, and remove from us all evil thoughts and plans. Give to my husband and to me purity of soul, that neither of us fix our gaze upon any other person in the world, but that I should regard only him, and he, only me. May he be in my eyes as if there were no other man in the world as good, as handsome, and as charming; and may I be in the eyes of my husband as if there were no other woman in the world as beautiful, as charming, and as fitting for him. May his thought always be about me, and about no one else, as it is written, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife."

And may it be Your will that our marriage prosper; that it be a marriage that will accord with the laws of Moshe and Judaism; a marriage endowed with reverence for G-d and the fear of sin; a marriage in which will be realized the verse, "Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the interior of your house, your children like olive plants around your table;" a marriage wherein my husband will rejoice in me more than in all the delights of the world, as it is written, "A house and wealth is the inheritance of fathers, but only from the L-rd is a wise wife;" a marriage in which there will never come between my husband and me any anger or bitterness, any jealousy or envy, but in which there will be between us only love and fraternity and peace and comradeship, humility and meekness and patience; a marriage in which there will be practiced love and kindness, and the doing of good deeds to

all creatures; a marriage which will yield children who will endure, who will be decent, righteous, wholesome and honorable, who will be healthy and good, in whom there will be no flaw, no defect, no illness, no disease, no injury, no pain, no weakness, no failure, and who will not lack good all the days of their life; a marriage wherein You will bestow upon our souls and our bodies holiness and purity in thought, speech, and action as befits good Jews; a marriage of prosperity and blessing, blessings of Heaven above, and blessings of the deep couching below, blessings of health and fertility.

Now therefore, in order to unite Your Holy name in fear and in love, I prepare for this immersion according to the laws of Moshe and Israel. May it be Your will that You purify us and sanctify us with Your holiness; that You find us and our deeds acceptable, and give us the privilege of doing Your will at all times, all the days of our life; and bless us with Your blessings, for You are the Source of all blessings forever.

Blessed be Hashem forever, Amen.

* Translated and abbreviated by Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm (Hedge of Roses), from a prayer recorded in Hupat Hatanim by Rabbi Raphael Meldola (1754-1828) of Venice to be recited before the bridal immersion.