

Ma'agal Hachayim Final  
Rebecca Hecht and Shani Cohen  
5/14/20

### Ritual for Moving to a New Home

This ritual helps participants to mark the transition from one home to another. It is particularly designed for the needs of a young couple, who may be leaving a temporary home (where they have resided for graduate school, for example) for a new home where they will start a new stage of life. The ritual will recognize the loss of leaving one home as the traveler(s) prepare to establish a new home elsewhere. We suggest that this ritual take place in the interval between boxing up belongings (and even putting them in vehicles for the move) and the departure to the new home. That way, the house is empty of furniture but still a space filled with memories.

The ritual is designed to be customizable so as to speak to the personal situation of the people involved (called Traveler 1 and Traveler 2 in our outline), their comfort and facility with Hebrew and music, and their desire to include friends or family in their ritual. If a single traveler would like to make use of this ritual, they may simply alter the first-person plural language to first-person singular language. The ritual may take anywhere from 5 to 20 minutes, depending on which components the participants decide to use and how many participants they include.

We offer two resources:

- A how-to video created by the student clergy which models one format that the customizable ritual might take
- A ritual outline document which provides the options for customizing your personal ritual experience

Material and preparation necessary for this ritual:

- Mezuzah
- Daf/Google Document with link to musical choices; you may wish to print copies of the ritual in advance to distribute to participants
- Optional: Guitar
- Optional: Ask friends and family to prepare anecdotes or memories in advance to share during the ritual

### **Moving Ritual, Part One**

*The participants should assemble in a space that is close to the front door of the house that will soon be vacated, because that is where the ritual will culminate. We suggest that you sit facing one another.*

*You may choose to sing this opening song or to play it from the link in the resource document.*

*Lechi lach* to a land that I will show you  
*Lech le-cha* to a place you do not know  
*Lechi lech* on your journey I will bless you  
And you shall be a blessing, you shall be a blessing  
You shall be a blessing *lechi lach*.

*Lechi lach* and I shall make your name great  
*Lech le-cha* and all shall praise your name  
*Lechi lach* to the place that I will show you  
*Le-simchat hayyim, le-simchat hayyim*  
*Le-simchat hayyim lechi lach*.  
And you shall be a blessing, you shall be a blessing  
You shall be a blessing *lechi lach*.

Recording:

[https://www.ritualwell.org/sites/default/files/imce\\_uploads/file.2005-06-30.6510658864\\_0.mp3](https://www.ritualwell.org/sites/default/files/imce_uploads/file.2005-06-30.6510658864_0.mp3)

Traveler 1: Thank you for joining us as we say goodbye to this place we have called home. The time has come for us to leave this apartment/house/etc and build a new home together, and while we are excited for the new adventure, we also recognize that we will miss this home too. We are grateful to you for taking the time to help us say goodbye.

Traveler 2: We are going to start by sharing a text (*or a song if the travelers prefer*) that captures some of what we're feeling as we prepare to say goodbye to this home. Then we will make space to share some memories. We'd love to hear stories about the time we've spent in this home. After we share those stories, we're going to take down our mezuzah, the scroll we placed at our front door when we first began to make this house/apartment a home. Now that we are moving, it's time for us to put up our mezuzah on that house's front door and start to make it a home too. We'll share some more music and poetry, and then we'd love it if you would all offer us a blessing at this big moment of transition.

*Travelers may choose either option one, the text, or option two, the song, to share at this moment. We suggest that you read the text out loud either as a group or read in a round (Hebrew, English, or both as you prefer). If you decide to use the song, you may either sing it as a group or to play it from the link provided below.*

**Option One: Text - Everything is But a Moment: Meditation on Kohelet (excerpts), Rabbi Lewis John Eron** (<https://www.ritualwell.org/ritual/everything-moment-meditation-kohelet>)

לכל זמן ועת לכל-חפץ תחת השמים

La'kol zman v'et l'chol chafetz tahat hashamaim

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven (Kohelet 3:1)

עת לטעת ועת לעקור נטוע

Eit lata'at v'et la'akor natua [3:2]

There is a time to plant

– envisioning a future

and a time to harvest

– seeing one's dreams fulfilled.

עת לבכות ועת לשחוק

Eit livkot v'et lischok [3:4]

There is time to weep and a time to laugh;

and sometimes weeping and laughing arrive as one

when memory brings joy and absence, sorrow.

There is a time to keep silence

– listening to our hearts

and a time to speak

– sharing our thoughts with others.

הכל הבלים אמר קהלת הכל הבלים הכל הבל

Havel havalim, amar Kohelet, havel havelim, hakol havel [1:2]

Moment upon moment, everything is but for a moment, says Kohelet

So let us cherish this moment, each moment, and all the moments we share and shared.

*Together:* Amen.

**Option Two: Geshar Tzar Meod**

*Kol ha'olam kulo gesher tzar m'od,  
v'haikar lo l'fakheid k'lal.*

כָּל הָעוֹלָם כְּלוֹ גֶשֶׁר צָר מְאֹד  
וְהַעֲקָר לֹא לְפַחַד כְּלָל

The whole world is a very narrow bridge,  
and the most important thing is not to be afraid.  
—Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav

Musical setting by Rabbi Yosef Goldman: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KgUp9Gusdk>

Traveler 1: We made a lot of memories here, and we'd like to remind ourselves of some of them now as we prepare to say goodbye to this home. We'll share a couple of our favorites, and we'd like to hear some of yours, too.

*Open space for travelers and their friends and family to share as many memories as the travelers would like.*

Traveler 2: We'll be holding those stories close as we now move to the front door and take down our mezuzah, symbolically stating that we are saying goodbye to this physical space as our home.

*All participants move to the doorway of the house/apartment, either standing directly outside, directly inside, or on the threshold, depending on the space.*

Travelers: We are grateful for the memories we have shared here, and we look forward to creating new memories in our next home.

Friends and family: With joy and sorrow, holding you in your excitement and anxiety, we launch you on this journey. (Siddur Sha'ar Zahav, 54) *Adonai yishmor tzeitechem u'vo'achem, mei'ata v'ad olam* – May God watch over you when you go out and when you come in, now and always. (<https://www.ritualwell.org/ritual/closing-apartment>)

*Travelers take down their mezuzah and hold it as they recite the following blessings:*

Travelers: *Barukh attah Adonai Eloheinu ruach ha-olam, ha-tov v'ha-meitiv* – Praised is the One, life of all existence, whose essence is the goodness we experience (the benediction of appreciation for the good things we have experienced).

*Adonai yishmor tzeiteinu u'vo'einu, mei'ata v'ad olam* – May God watch over us when we go out and when we come in, now and always.

(Adapted from <https://www.ritualwell.org/ritual/closing-apartment>)

*You may choose to end your ritual here or to conclude with the song below, either sung or played from the link in the resource document.*

Travelers and friends/family (*all together*): **Bless This House by Cantor Steven Sher**

Bless this house for we are all together.

Bless us all; we may not meet again

Think of all the happiness we found here.

Take it home and share it with a friend.

Come along, sing this song, and you'll never say goodbye.

And you'll see, and agree, friendships won need never die.

- (Bless This House - Steven Sher)

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kv9Ec2sHVL8>

-