Conversion to Judaism

Conversion to Judaism follows a period of intense preparation, usually not less than one year in duration, often more. During this preparatory period, you study about Judaism, participate in the life of the synagogue and Jewish community, and develop and deepen your personal relationship with God, Torah, and the Jewish people. The people close to you should participate in as much of the process as possible.

Requirements:

1. **CBST Membership** – you must be a member in good standing of CBST to begin the conversion process at CBST. Before completing the process you must be a member for at least one year.

2. **Classroom Study** – completion of an intensive introduction to Judaism class such as the 30 week *Derekh Torah* course sponsored by the 92nd Street Y (contact the Bronfman Center for Jewish Life at 212.415.5767 or bronfmancenter@92ndsty.org), or the 18-session *Judaism Alive* course at the Manhattan JCC (contact the JCC Manhattan at (646) 505-4444 or info@jccmanhattan.org).

3. **Individual Study and Regular Meetings with the Rabbi** – After the completion of *Derekh Torah* or its equivalent, it is your responsibility to contact the rabbi to continue working towards your conversion at CBST. From this point to the completion of your conversion you will meet regularly with the rabbi for study and support. This study will be framed by the essays that the rabbi will ask you to prepare (see attached sheet). The rabbi may assign additional readings to address your needs and interests and to fill in some of the gaps which the class left open.

4. **Participation in Jewish Community and Synagogue Life** – You must participate regularly in synagogue observance of Shabbat and festivals for at least one year. You should enroll in at least one Lehrhaus class of your choosing. You should also subscribe to a Jewish periodical (e.g The Jewish Week, The Forward, The Jerusalem Report, Lilith, Tikkun).

5. **Establishing a Jewish Home and Daily Life** – How do you live Jewishly every day? Begin to incorporate Jewish ritual and practice into your daily routine. Experiment with ways of observing and celebrating Shabbat and festivals at home, alone and with family and friends. Explore kashrut.
6. **Hebrew** – Hebrew is the language of the Jewish people. Minimally, you must acquire the ability to read Hebrew aloud and familiarize yourself with a basic Jewish vocabulary. The rabbi will help you find a tutor or a class.

7. **Tzedakah/Tikkun Olam** – Ongoing involvement in a mitzvah that serves some social good (e.g. volunteering at a soup kitchen, staffing a help-line, visiting the sick or homebound)

8. **Visiting Israel** – Israel is the Jewish homeland. It is at the center of what is perhaps the most complex legacy of Jewish history and identity.

9. **Brit Milah** – Ritual circumcision or Hatafat Dam Brit (when necessary)

10. **Beit Din/Mikveh** – The final step in the conversion process is coming before a *Beit Din* (religious court) and immersion in the ritual bath.

11. **Community Welcome** – On the Friday night following your Mikveh, you will receive a public blessing from the rabbi at CBST’s main Shabbat service. Your chosen Hebrew name will be announced and we will welcome you formally into the community as a Jew.