

Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin B'not Ruth Conversion Program

Conversion Process

Procedure

Before beginning the conversion process, it is important to really think about what you are getting yourself into very carefully. The Torah teaches that you can become a righteous gentile by keeping only seven mitzvot (commandments). Therefore, if you are not completely committed to becoming Jewish, it is preferable to remain a righteous gentile, rather than converting without being able to fulfill the obligations of a Jew one hundred percent.

If you have thought carefully about the option of becoming a Bat Noach, keeping the seven Noachide Laws, and you still desire to become Jewish, here is the procedure and requirements for applying for conversion through Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin:

A Year in the Jewish Community

Before beginning the conversion course, you will need to have intensive contact with a Jewish community for one year. It is recommended to strengthen your connection with the Jewish community by going regularly to the synagogue and taking weekly classes with the Rabbi and Rebbetzin.

Two Letters from Orthodox Rabbis

When your year is completed, you will need several letters of recommendation from Rabbis and others that know you well. At the very least you need one or preferably two letters from Orthodox Rabbis that testify that you have been involved in the Jewish community for at least one year, and that you are sincere in your intention to convert and live

an observant Jewish life. It is preferable to have at least one of these letters written in Hebrew. If your rabbi is unable to do so, there are people who can translate the letters and certify that the translation is accurate for you in Israel (at a cost). We will need these letters to help you open a conversion file with the Chief Rabbinate of Jerusalem Conversion Court (Beit Din) once you arrive.

Additional Letters to bring with you

In addition to the letters from Orthodox Rabbis, letters of recommendation attesting to your longstanding and continuous connection to Judaism and your observing a religious life-style are beneficial. If, for example, you previously studied Jewish subjects, you should ask for a letter from your teacher. If you spend Shabbats with a religious family, you should ask the family members to write on your behalf. As mentioned above letters written in a foreign language are best translated into Hebrew. If you are married to a Jew or have a serious boyfriend who is Jewish, you need to bring similar letters of recommendation for him.

Documents needed to open Your File at the Beit Din of Conversion

- A photocopy of your present and all previous passports
- A certificate of criminal record good conduct from abroad, with a notarized verification and translation (this translation can be done in Israel)
- If presently in Israel, a copy of your visa.
- Your CV / resume (if possible in Hebrew).
- A detailed request letter translated into Hebrew. The letter should include an explanation of your motivation to convert, be it religious, social, marital, or family related. The letter should highlight Jewish family members, a connection to Jewish communities in Israel or abroad, Jewish study, relationship(s) with religious and/or traditional Jewish families. We recommend the

letter be one page in length and include heartfelt feelings about your process.

- Information on previous conversion procedures/attempts in Israel or abroad, with relevant documentation.
- Two recent, clear passport-type photographs.
- Copy of reform or conservative conversion certificate when applicable.
- Proof of your father's Jewishness or any Jewish roots in your family when applicable.

(If you are presently in Israel, additional documentation may be requested).

Application to B'not Ruth

At the end of your first year connecting to the Jewish community, you may begin the application process to get accepted at B'not Ruth. You can download the application and medical form which includes a personal essay question of why you wish to convert. After we receive your application and the application fee, you will be invited to a telephone interview with the director, Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum. Within a week after your interview you will receive email notice regarding your status of acceptance into B'not Ruth conversion program.

Opening Your File at the Beit Din of Conversion

If you become accepted as a conversion candidate into B'not Ruth, you will need to learn full time in our program for one year. When you arrive, we will help you fill out and submit the necessary paperwork to the Chief Rabbinate of Jerusalem Conversion Court (Beit Din) in order begin the process of opening a file to convert. Thereafter, you will receive a letter informing you that you will be contacted to set up an appointment to meet with a representative of the beit din. Our Rabbi overseeing the conversion program will accompany you to this meeting.

When you meet with the representative of the beit din, you will need to bring all of the above listed documents with you. The representative of the Beit Din will ask you a few basic questions; most often about your family background and the reason why you are interested in converting, and your connection to the Jewish community. He may also ask you a few elementary questions in Judaism, and he will look carefully at your passport and your letters of recommendations and make copies for your file with the Beit Din. Once this office approves your request to convert, your request to open a file to convert will be forwarded to the Ministry of the Interior (Va'adat Charegim).

Once the Ministry of the Interior approves your file, it is at this point that your file is considered "open" and your year of learning in a conversion program will begin. At this time, you will be eligible for a visa extension. Please note that we will make every effort to help you open your file but we cannot guarantee the file will be approved. Final approval of your file is determined only by the Chief Rabbinate and the Ministry of the Interior. If for some reason your file is not approved, there are additional conversion options that are listed below.

Approving Your File by the Israeli Ministry of Interior

Throughout this time, your visa must be valid. Our rabbi overseeing the conversion program will follow up with the Beit Din until your conversion file has received this final approval. Once your file has been approved by the Ministry of Interior (Va'adat Charegim) you will be able to obtain a conversion visa that is valid for six months. This visa is renewable until you are able to complete your conversion. Currently it is taking a minimum of four to six months for files to be approved. This means that your original three-month tourist visa will most likely expire before your conversion file receives the final approval.

You must maintain a valid visa during your stay in Israel, as you never quite know when your file will move to the desk at the interior ministry.

It is possible to renew the three month tourist visa by leaving the country briefly, until your file is approved by the interior ministry.

Once your file has been approved, then you can officially begin the year long learning period before you are invited to your Beit Din appointment for your final conversion.

Additional Conversion Options at B'not Ruth

It has been our experience, at Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin, that our conversion candidates are generally ready to convert after one year of fulltime study in our program. It is therefore, our policy to enable our students to convert after one year of serious study at Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin. In the case it will take longer than a year to convert through the Chief Rabbinate of Jerusalem Conversion Court (Beit Din), Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin offers two alternative conversions:

- 1) Local orthodox conversion under the auspices of [Rabbi Yisrael Rozen](#) in Alon Shevut.
- 2) Charedi conversion under the auspices of [Rav Nissim Karelitz](#) (nephew of the Chazon Ish) in B'nei Brak.

Our conversion Rabbi will be happy to discuss these alternatives with you, to determine which conversion is most suitable for you. Please note that these alternative conversions are not recognized by the Interior Ministry of Israel, and as such you will not be able to make Aliyah (immigrating to Israel) based on this conversion.

Your Year in Our Conversion Program: B'not Ruth

During your enrollment in B'not Ruth you will learn full time both the practical Halachot (Jewish laws) and fundamental principles of the Jewish Faith. You will also improve your textual skills and learn to read

and comprehend the Torah (Bible) in the Hebrew language. Beyond the textual curriculum, you will be prepared for more than just converting. Our program is a holistic program which addresses your mind, body and soul. You will be able to learn about herbology, exercise your body in meditative movement, learn from Chassidic texts and experience the entire cycle of the year. You will be set up with an adoptive family within our community with whom you will develop a relationship. Your adoptive family will open their home to you for Shabbat and holiday meals and you may also drop in occasionally to talk or to help out. Tutors will be available to help you review your learning and practice reciting the prayers and the appropriate blessings for food. Once a month you will meet privately with [Rabbi Benarroch](#), our conversion Rabbi who will test your progress. You will also meet with [Rebbetzin Chana Bracha](#), our Director with whom you can discuss things that come up on your personal journey.

Completing your Conversion

After having studied at B'not Ruth for a full year, and our director and conversion rabbi are assured that you are ready to complete your process and convert, we will arrange a meeting with you and the Beit Din of Conversion.

In case your file at the Chief Rabbinate of Jerusalem has not yet cleared for conversion, we will arrange for you to convert through one of our additional conversion options. You will meet with a Rabbi from the Beit Din of Conversion who will ask you questions in Judaism to see if you are progressing in your learning, and ready to convert. If the Rabbi finds you ready for conversion, you will receive a date for your final conversion when you will be tested by a panel of three Rabbis from the Beit Din.

About one year after your file has been approved; the panel of Rabbis from the Chief Rabbinate of Jerusalem Conversion Court and representatives from the interior ministry will meet again to approve your file for final conversion. If everything goes smoothly, you will be invited again to meet with the secretary of the Beit Din. He will ask you

questions in Halacha, in the Jewish Faith and about your personal Mitzvah observance. If the Rabbi finds you ready for conversion, you will receive a date for your final conversion when you will be tested by a panel of three Rabbis from the Beit Din of the Chief Rabbinate of Jerusalem. With this conversion you will finally be eligible for making Aliyah and settle in Israel.

Documents needed for your Final Beit Din of Conversion

You will need a letter of recommendation from our institution and from Rabbis and teachers who know you, testifying that they believe you are ready to convert and take on all the mitzvot of a Jewish woman. It is recommended to bring as many letters as you can to this meeting, including letters from women in the community with whom you have developed a relationship.

Becoming Jewish at Last

The conversion Rabbi of B'not Ruth, will accompany you to your final Beit Din. It is also recommended to bring one of the members of your adoptive family and a close friend. Each of them may be asked to testify about you at the Beit Din. The Beit Din will then test your knowledge and commitment to Judaism, if the Rabbis find you ready to convert, they will ask you to recite the declaration of faith to the Jewish religion and recite the *Shema Yisrael* prayer in front of the Beit Din. At the Beit Din you will receive your date for your *mikvah* appointment. You will finalize your conversions with immersion in the Mikvah on the set date and become a full-fledged Jew. Now your real journey begins, and we at Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin welcome you to remain in our learning community for at least 3-6 months for a discounted fee. During this time, you will receive personal guidance in the dating process, while taking part time classes and establishing yourself in Israel. We hope to lead you all the way to the Chuppah (marriage canopy) and beyond, as you establish your own Jewish home!