

# A Celebration of New Life

with reflective readings from the  
common faith traditions in Scotland





## INTRODUCTION

**The birth of a child is a special and happy occasion for all families throughout the world, bringing new life from love, and with it, new hope. These inspiring readings from the 7 common faith traditions in Scotland were first presented in an extended form during a lunchtime reflection at the International Congress of Midwives in Glasgow on June 1st 2008.**

It is my own hope that you will feel inspired to celebrate this new life with joy and happiness as you read these quotes about the universal experience of Birth. I offer grateful thanks to all who have taken the time to contribute these readings.

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## BAHA'I FAITH

O son of bounty! Out of the wastes of nothingness, with the clay of My command I made thee to appear, and have ordained for thy training every atom in existence and the essence of all created things. Thus, ere thou didst issue from thy mother's womb, I destined for thee two founts of gleaming milk, eyes to watch over thee, and hearts to love thee. Out of My loving-kindness, 'neath the shade of My mercy I nurtured thee, and guarded thee by the essence of My grace and favor. And My purpose in all this was that thou mightest attain My everlasting dominion and become worthy of My invisible bestowals.

(Baha'u'llah, *The Persian Hidden Words*.)

O God! Rear this little babe in the bosom of Thy love and give it milk from the breast of Thy mercy. Cultivate this fresh plant in the rose-garden of Thy love and nurture it by showers from the clouds of Providence. Make it a child of the Kingdom and lead it to the divine world. Thou art powerful and kind! Thou art the Giver, the Bestower, whose blessings precede all else!

(*Prayer for a Baby*, Abdu'l-Baha, *Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v1*, p. 50.)

## BUDDHISM

The human body at peace with itself  
Is more precious than the rarest gem.  
Cherish your body  
It is yours this one time only.  
The human form is won with difficulty,  
It is easy to lose.  
All worldly things are brief  
Like lightning in the sky.  
This life you must know  
As the tiny splash of a raindrop;  
A thing of beauty, that disappears  
Even as it comes into being.  
Therefore, set your goal  
Make use of every day and night  
To achieve it.

*(Precious Human Life, by Tsong Khapa  
[The Man from Onion Valley]  
Tibetan Buddhist Teacher, 1357 - 1419.)*

## CHRISTIANITY

“Think of a child asleep in his  
mother’s arms; the abandon with  
which he gives himself to sleep can  
only be because he has complete  
trust in the arms that hold him.

Our rest in a world that is full of  
unrest is Christ’s trust in his Father;  
our peace in a world without peace  
is our surrender, complete as the  
surrender of the sleeping child  
to its mother, to God who is both  
Father and Mother.”

*(From Wood of the Cradle, Wood of the  
Cross, by Caryl Houselander.)*



## HINDUISM

Glory, glory, all glory to you, O Mother Saraswati; you are renowned throughout the three spheres as the treasure-house of all great noble virtues. Let all sing to the glory of your name!

O bestower of learning and skill, illumine the world with light of knowledge and dispel the darkness of ignorance and infatuation.

O Mother, pray accept my gift of incense, light, both green and dry fruits and endowing the world with eyes of knowledge ferry it across the ocean of this phenomenal world.

O compassionate goddess, be kind to the poor and the destitute and revealing to them the lotus-feet of the Lord, lift the veil of delusion which covers their conscience.

(Blessings said at the time of a birth, from the Vedas.)

## ISLAM

And We have enjoined man in respect of his parents - his mother bears him with faintings upon faintings, and his weaning takes two years - saying: "Be grateful to Me and to both your parents, to Me is the eternal coming. (31:14)

And We have enjoined on man doing of good to his parents; with troubles did his mother bear him and with troubles did she bring him forth; and the bearing and the weaning of him was thirty months. (46:15)

(From The Qur'an)

## JUDAISM

Blessed is the One who has allowed me to participate in the miracle of creation.

Blessed is the One who has fashioned the human body in wisdom and exquisite tenderness.

Blessed is the One who connects the generations through the covenant of birth.

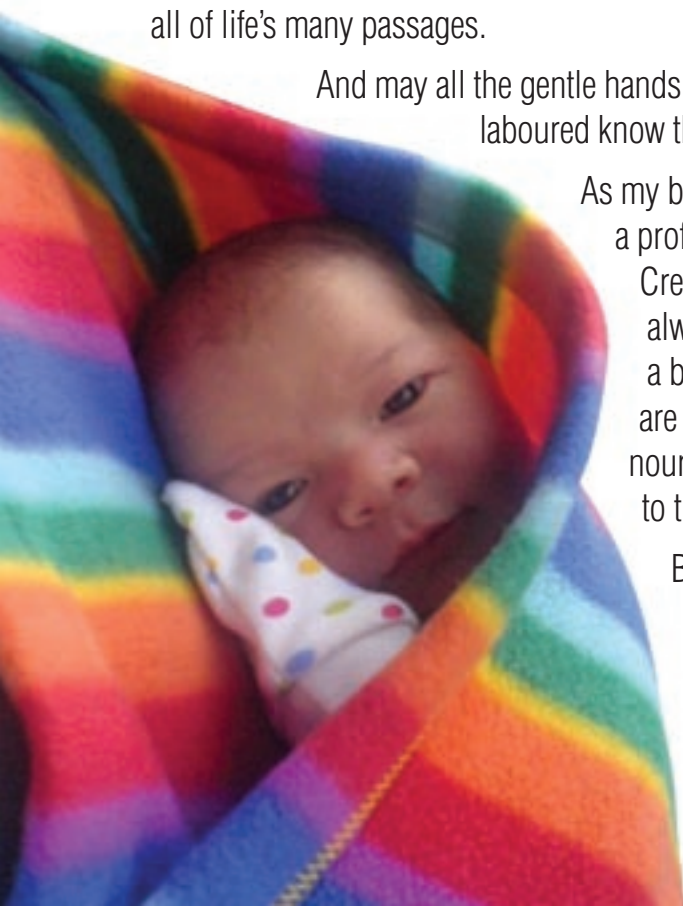
Thank you for this child, a precious emergence of Divine light. As you protected her/him during her/his birth, may she/he be protected through all of life's many passages.

And may all the gentle hands that touched me as I laboured know the blessing of their work.

As my body was blessed with a profound experience of the Creator on that day, may I always remember myself so: a being in which miracles are daily made, a vessel that nourishes holiness and offers it to the world.

Blessed is the Creator, Who is good and does good.

*(Meditation on Birth, by  
Reuben Zellman.)*



## SIKHISM

Blessed is the mother who gave birth and blessed and respected is the father of one.

In the first watch of the night, O friend, the Lord placed your soul in the womb.

In the tenth month, you were made into a human being, O my friend, and you were given your allotted time to perform good deeds.

You were given this time to perform good deeds, according to your pre-ordained destiny.

God placed you with your mother, father, brothers, sons and wife.

God Himself is the Cause of causes, good and bad-no one has control over these things.

Says Nanak, O mortal, in the first watch of the night, the soul is placed in the womb.

This human body has been given to you.

This is your chance to meet the Lord of the Universe.

Nothing else will work.

Join the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy; chant and meditate on the Jewel of God's Name.

(Guru Arjan Dev Ji, SGGS p.32, p77, & p.378.)



O LORD, you have searched me and known me. For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.

(From Psalm 139, Old Testament, The Bible.)



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