



Gechter Simchat Bat
Sunday, August 19th 2012
Rosh Chodesh Elul

Thank you for joining us to welcome our daughter into the Jewish people with a name of her own. This is a true simcha (joy) which we will mark with blessings, singing, and eating. At this morning's services Sam was called to the Torah, and a prayer was said announcing our daughter's name.

Today, many traditions are being created to welcome a Jewish girl into the community. The following ceremony was composed by Elisha, and incorporates elements from a brit milah, other baby girl ceremonies, and Jewish weddings.

Welcoming The Baby

We begin by standing as the guest of honor is ushered in, to greet her and to greet the presence of God. Her family members and Elisha's doula serve as kvaters (a Yiddish term that loosely translates as God-parent), escorting her into the room as we sing B'shem Hashem.

All:

בשם השם אלוהי ישראל מימיני מיכאל ומשמאלי גבריאל
ומלפני אוריאל ומאחורי רפאל ועל ראשי, ועל ראשי, שכנת אל

B'shem hashem elohei yisrael miyemini michael umismoli gavriel
umilfanai uriel ume'acharai refael ve'al roshi, ve'al roshi shekhnat el

In the name of God, the Lord of Israel, on my right is the angel Michael, on my left the angel Gabriel, in front of me the angel Uriel and behind me the angel Rafael, and above me the presence of God.

Kvaters

Ronit, Brian, Ben, Zack and Max Barrett, Sam's sister, brother-in-law and nephews

Ben Horen, Elisha's brother

Danny Stolarsky, Sam's first cousin

Marilyn and Michael Horen, Elisha's parents

Ruben and Judy Gechter, Sam's parents

Jenna Rothbard, Friend and Doula

At the conclusion of B'shem Hashem, Baruch Habah, Blessed is the one arriving, is sung.

Tallis Swaddle

The baby arrives in the arms of her parents and the three are wrapped in Sam's tallit. Baby G's first three weeks have been filled with many swaddlings. This imagery of wrapping and covering is a symbol of protection. The Torah is covered; the Shabbat table is covered; indeed, covering someone you love is an intimate expression of caring. Elisha gave this Tallit to Sam at their wedding and they were wrapped in it at the conclusion of their chuppah.

We sing together hamalach hagoel, a verse from Genesis wherein Jacob blesses the children of his son Joseph. It is often sung as a lullaby to children:

All:

הַמַּלְאָךְ הַגָּאֵל אֶתִּי מִכָּל-רָע, יְבָרֵךְ אֶת-הַנְּעָרִים, וַיְקַרְא בְּהֵם שְׁמִי,
וַיִּשֶׂם אֲבֹתַי אַבְרָהָם וַיִּצְחָק, וַיְדַגּוּ לְרַב בְּקִרְבֵּי הָאָרֶץ.

Hamalach hagoel oti mikol ra yevarech et ha-n'arim vikareh bahem sh'mi V'shem avotai Avraham v'Yizchak v'yidgu larov b'kerev ha'aretz.

May the angel who has delivered me from all harm bless these children. May they carry on my name and the names of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, and may they grow into a multitude on earth.

Miriam's Chair

Today the grandparents sit on Miriam's Chairs and are honored as Sandeks, holding the baby on their knees as designated protectors of the child. The Biblical prophetess Miriam had the ability to see the potential in the world, and to praise God for the goodness therein. She saved her brother Moses by sending him down the Nile in a basket of rush, and led the women in a song after the crossing of the Red Sea. Thus we place our daughter in Miriam's chair in the hopes that she be able to see the world in new ways and that she rejoice with others before God.

The baby is given to Sandeks Oma and Zadie.

Blessings for Our Daughter

We wish to bestow a multitude of blessings on our daughter. Today family and friends will help us recite seven of them. They parallel the seven blessings given at a wedding. These are a compilation of traditional blessings acknowledging a variety of milestones.

The following are honored with reciting the brachot (blessings):

1. Danny, Sam's first cousin :

Shehechyanu - this blessing thanks God for sustaining our lives so that we can experience such moments of joy.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיָּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha-Olam Shehechyahnu vekiyamanu vehegianu lazman ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has kept us alive, and sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

2. Ben, Elisha's brother:

Kol Haneesfim - this prayer, written for grace after meals at a Simchat Bat, acknowledges the importance of community in the new baby's life.

הַרְחֵמֵן הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת כָּל הַנְּאֻסָּפִים הַמְקַדְיָמִים בְּשָׁלוֹם
וּבְשִׂמְחָה נְקֻהָלִים בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ בִּתִּי בְּיַחַד עֹנִים
אֵלֶּה פֶה הַיּוֹם כּוֹלְנוּ חַיִּים

Harachaman Hu Yivarech et kol haneesafim hamakdimim bshalom ubishimcha nikhlim.
Brucha At biti Byachad Onim Eleh Po Hayom Kulan Chayim.

May the one who has mercy bless the people assembled here who have come to joyfully welcome this child and offer blessings. Blessed are you little girl they answer together, today we are all filled with life.

3. Ronit, Sam's sister:

Tov Umetiv - this blessing is recited with gratitude for a healthy pregnancy, birth, and a healthy baby, and also establishes the festive meal as a Seudat hodaah - a meal of thanksgiving.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַטּוֹב וְהַמְטִיב

Baruch Atah Adonay Hatov V'hameitiv

Blessed are you God Who is good and beneficent.

4. Michael, Marilyn, Judy, Ruben; grandparents:

Blessing over the Children - each week before Shabbat our parents give us the following blessing no matter where we are in the world. We have already begun, and will continue, to give Baby G this bracha every Friday night.

יְשִׁימָךְ אֱלֹהִים כְּשָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רַחֵל וְלֵאָה יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ
יְאַרְ יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֵלֶיךָ וְיִחַנְךָ
יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֵלֶיךָ וְיִשֵּׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

Ysi-meikh Elohim Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, v Leah. Y'va-re-kh'kha Adonai v-yish-m'rekha.
Ya-er Adonai panav ei-lekha vi-khun-e-ka. Yisa Adonai panav ei-lekha v-yasem lekha Shalom.

May God make you like Sarah, Rivka, Rachel and Leah.

My God bless you and guard you.

May God's face shine on you and be gracious unto you.

May God's face smile at you and grant you peace.

5. Elisha:

Blessings from the Mother - Elisha recites this traditional prayer in Hebrew.

Great and mighty God, by your great love I come to Your house to offer thanksgiving for all You bestowed on me. Pain seized me, in my distress I cried to you and you heard my voice and helped. You healed my sickness and crowned me with kindness and compassion. For-sake me not and continue to bestow your blessings on me. Strengthen and support me together with my husband, may we raise the girl that has been born to us to revere You and serve You in truth and to walk Your path. Protect this tender child in all her ways. Favor her with knowledge, understanding and discernment, and let her portion be in Your Torah, so that she may sanctify Your name and become a comfort to us as we grow old. As for me, may my prayer come to You at a time of favor. God in Your great love answer me with faithful salvation.

6. Sam:

Blessing from the Father - Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, the 18th century Hassidic master, wrote the following prayer to guide and inspire parents.

Dear God, teach me to embody those ideals I would want my children to learn from me. Let me communicate with my children wisely--in ways that will draw their hearts to kindness, to decency, and to true wisdom. Dear God, let me pass on to my children only the good; let them find in me the values and the behavior I hope to see in them.

7. Batya, friend of the parents:

Hannah's Prayer - this 17th century Italian prayer is recited on behalf of all of those who would like to be pregnant. We also have in mind a wish that all families receive the support they need to spend time with their families as they grow.

Just as you answered Hannah long ago, God, so You answered this couple. You saw them through the darkest hours and brought them to this time of light. Thank you, God, for being with them and for giving Elisha and Sam this child of their dreams. May it be your will God of our mothers and fathers, and God of this child, that You again act with graciousness and mercy for all those who seek the blessings of a child. May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to You, our Rock and Deliverer.

Her Name

The baby is given to her Saba and Savta who will serve as the Sandeks for her naming.

The L'chaim (to life!) toast is exclaimed when drinking to a person's health and well-being. It is recited over grape juice from Sam and Elisha's kiddush cup.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha-Olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who created the fruit of the vine.

All Respond: L'Chaim

The prayer for naming a girl is now recited. It blesses the mother, the child, proclaims her name, blesses both parents and concludes with a threefold wish for the child to grow in wisdom, have meaningful relationships and engage in good deeds.

מִי שְׁבַרְךָ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרְהֵם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב
וְאִמֵּיתֵנוּ שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רַחֵל וְלֵאָה
הוּא יְבָרְךָ אֶת הָאִשָּׁה הַיּוֹלֶדֶת עֵתֵל רַדֵּל בֵּת מֵאִיר לֵב וּמֵאֲרֹשׁוֹ
וְאֶת בִּתָּהּ ——— בֵּת עֵתֵל רַדֵּל וְשִׁמוֹאֵל דּוֹד
הַנוֹלָדָה לָהּ בְּמִזְלֵ טוֹב
אֲנֵי בֵרַךְ אֶת אֲבִיָּהּ וְאֶת אִמָּהּ
וְיִזְקוּ לְגִדְלָהּ לְתוֹרָהּ וְלִמְעֻשֵׁים טוֹבִים. וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן

Misheberach Avoteynu Avraham Yitzchak Vyaakov, Vimoteynu Sarah Rivkah Rachel Vleah, Hu Yivarech et Haisha Hayoledet Etel Radel Bat Meir Lev VMariyasha.

Vet Bitá _____ Bat Etel Radel V Shmuel David

Hanolda La Bmazal Tov

Anah Barech Et Aviyha Vet Imah

Vyizku Lgadla Ltorah, Ulechupa, Ulemaasim Tovim. Vnomar Amen.

He who blessed our ancestors Abraham Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah, may He bless Elisha (whose Hebrew name is Etel Radel Bat Meir Lev V Mariasha) who has given birth and her newborn daughter _____ daughter of Etel Radel and Shmuel David, born in favor. Bless we, pray you, her parents, that they may have the merit to raise her to Torah, the marriage canopy and to good deeds. Let us say Amen.

All:

Amen - Vyizku Lgadla Ltorah, Ulechupa, Ulemaasim tovim.

Amen - May they have the merit to raise her to Torah, the marriage canopy and to good deeds.

We will now share about the names we chose for our daughter and their significance.

Festive Meal

Please join us as we mark this occasion with a festive meal.

Mazal Tov !