



SIMCHAT BAT

for

Gabrielle Jayne K

גבריאלה יפה בת ישראל צביאה וריין

Gavriella Yaffa

Daughter of Arin and Ryan K

October 9, 2005

6 Tishrei 5766

Light shines upon us
Our people have increased
And our joy is made great
For we have borne a child
May there be no end of peace.

Background

Choosing a name for a newborn child often tests our decision-making skills. Rarely do one or two simple words cause parents such consternation, debate and soul searching.

In Jewish tradition, naming carries great significance. The Midrash tells us, “Every person has three names:

The one given by one’s mother and father;

The one that others call her; and

The one she acquires for herself.”

(Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:1:3)

Thus, choosing a name is the first step in shaping the child’s identity. During the biblical period, parents did not name their children after living or dead relatives, fearing that this practice would rob the relative of his/her identity and immortality. Children were named after an event, an animal or plant, or in relation to God. Adam, for example was so named because he was created from *adamah*, the earth. Moses, from the Hebrew “drawn out of the water,” was so named because he was rescued from the Nile by Pharaoh’s daughter.

Children were also named after an animal or a plant in the hope that the child might acquire the characteristics of the name. Thus, parents who named their child Tamar (“palm tree”) hoped that their child would grow straight and tall. Parents who named their child Ari (“lion”) hoped that he would grow up strong.

After the Jews returned from the Babylonian exile (586 B.C.E.), the custom arose to name children after the living, usually the paternal grandfather. In contrast to earlier times, it was thought that the person for whom the child was named would gain immortality. At about the time of the Middle Ages, however, the practice of naming children after the dead gained popularity among Ashkenazi (Eastern European) Jews. Sephardic Jews (from Spain and northern Africa) usually named their children after a living grandparent. Yemenite Jews commonly named their children after their fathers.

In Reform Judaism, a child is named after a relative, living or deceased. We honor the tradition of naming our child in memory of departed loved ones, so their memories will be honored by the life and growth of the child who bears their name.

THE CEREMONY BEGINS

Grandfather Norman:

We would like to welcome everyone here to participate in celebrating this *simchat bat*, a celebration of the birth of a daughter, and to help us welcome this new life into the Covenant of Israel by giving her the Hebrew name by which she will be known in Israel and amongst the Jewish people.

Upon the birth of a boy, Jewish tradition provides a special ceremony, held at home amidst family and friends, to celebrate his birth and enter him into the Covenant. This ceremony is called *brit milah* (or circumcision). Girls traditionally were named in the synagogue or temple during a service. More recently, parents of daughters have created new ceremonies at home to celebrate their births and welcome them into the Covenant of Israel. *Simcha* means Joy and *bat* means Daughter. We are glad today to have the opportunity to celebrate our newest addition and are glad you are here to participate in our *simchat bat* with us.

Grandmother Bonnie:

It is a *mitzvah* (commandment or law) to give a child a Hebrew name. Throughout Jewish history, special emphasis has been placed on Hebrew names. The naming of things, especially of living beings, is seen in Genesis as a role that is inherently human. We, too, have come together to follow in the footsteps of Adam, the first person. We are here to name our daughter, granddaughter, and great-granddaughter—our Precious Gift, our *zeved tov*.

Grandpa Jeff:

Our tradition teaches us that all members of all generations entered into a unique relationship with God at Sinai. This relationship, known as the *brit* or covenant, joins God and the Jewish people in the task of perfecting the world. The naming of a person is also a way of entering him or her into the covenant of our forebearers. When Avram entered into the covenant, he became known as Avraham. Sarai, his wife, became Sarah. So the tradition of giving each new member of the *brit* a covenant-name arose. Today, you have been invited to provide witness as we enter Arin and Ryan's daughter into the covenant with God.

GABRIELLE ENTERS AND IS GREETED

Gabrielle is escorted into the room by her grandmothers, Pat C and Libby K. She is wrapped in her savta (grandmother) Pat's tallit (prayer shawl) that represents the four Matriarchs of the Jewish people: Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, and Rachel.

All say:

בְּרוּכָה הַבָּאָה בְּשֵׁם ה'

(Transliteration):

B'rucha haba'a b'shem hashem.

Blessed is she who enters in the name of the Divine Spirit!

[The grandmothers give the baby to her parents, Arin and Ryan]

Savta Pat:

בְּרוּכָה הַבָּאָה בְּשֵׁם ה'
בְּרוּכָה אֶת בְּעִיר וּבְרוּכָה אֶת בַּשָּׂדֶה
בְּרוּכָה אֶת בְּבוֹאֵךְ וּבְרוּכָה אֶת בְּצֵאתֵךְ

B'rucha haba'a b'shayim Adonai

B'rucha at ba'ir, uvrucha at basadeh

B'rucha at b'voaych, uv'rucha at b'tzaytaych.

Grandparents Libby and Cliff:

Welcome, Little One!

Blessed may you be all your days, all your life.

Blessed may you be wherever you are,

In all of your comings and in all of your goings.

All the Assembled Guests:

And God blessed them and said: "You shall be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with life and you shall be a friend to all living things on this earth." (Genesis 1:26-27)

NAMING

Rabbi Gibson:

Behold, Arin and Ryan are here today with their child in order that she be named in the presence of her family and friends. They have come as a new family of their own to hear words of blessing, words of love and words of Torah. They have come in order that their child may, through her name, take her place in the people of Israel.

[Light candle]

There is a new light in your hearts and in your home. This candle celebrates the birth of your child. This candle celebrates her emergence into light. Fortunate the woman who knows the pangs of birth, for she has held a star. Fortunate the man who fathers a child, for he has held eternity in his arms. This candle celebrates the fire of love out of which this child was created.

[Pour the wine]

This cup is the vessel of your hope. It is filled with the new wine of a life just begun. The sweetness of its taste is the joy this child has brought. May this child, Gabrielle Jayne, *Gavriella Yaffa*, partake of this sweetness. May she grow to be a shining star in her family and people. *Gavriella Yaffa* is named for her paternal great-grandfather, Gilbert Levine, and her cousin, Jay Levine, of blessed memory. May she carry their memories with pride, love, and joy and may her life be an honor to their names.

All: Kiddush: Blessing over wine

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.	<i>Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, E-lo-heinu me-lech ha-o-lam, bo-rei p'ree ha-ga-fen.</i>
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Praised are you, Eternal, Ruler of the world, who creates the fruit of the vine

All: Shehecheyanu: Prayer of thanks for having reached this day

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהִתְיַנְּנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה.	<i>Baruch atah adonai, Elohenu melech ha'olam shehecheyanu, v'ki'amanu, v'higi'anu lazman ha'zeh.</i>
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Praised are you, Eternal, God of the world, who has helped us live, sustained us and caused us to reach this happy day.

Rabbi G:

K'shem she-nich-n'sa l'sh-ma v'ama, ken ti-ca-neis l'Torah, l'chu-pa ul-ma-aseem to-veem.

As Gabrielle Jayne has entered into her name and people today, so may she attain the blessing of Torah, of marriage, and a life of good deeds.

Arin and Ryan:

Our God, we thank you for the precious gift of new life, for the blessing of parenthood that allows us to share in the *mitzvah* of creation. We have shared love and pain and joy in bringing our daughter into life, and have been privileged to participate in the marvel and beauty of creation.

We pray for the continued health of our child.

We pray for her to be strong in body and mind.

We pray for her to grow steadily and sturdily in a home filled with joy.

We pray for her to become a person who greets the world with passion, courage, humility, humor and patience.

May we both find understanding and love so that we may raise Gabrielle to adulthood filled with wisdom, love and the performance of good deeds.

May we raise our child to a life of joy and wonder and may we someday be blessed to bring her to the wedding canopy. Amen.

READING, SIGNING AND WITNESSING OF NAMING CERTIFICATE

Savta Pat:

Here Is Your First Gift

by Judy Bolz

Here is your first gift
(this blessing, this echo):
sound you'll answer to
turning, always, to see who spoke.

Here is your name,
which people we don't know
will call you years from now,
when your infant face

with its astonished look
is just a picture
and our huge, parental love
but a blur of hands.

GABRIELLE'S MISHPOCHAH (Extended Family)

Arin and Ryan's sisters, brothers, and brothers-in-law (together):

The birth of a baby is a momentous experience, not only for her parents, but for the whole family. The circle of the family widens by the addition of this newest member and each of us feels a special responsibility toward helping this new personality reach fulfillment. As your aunts and uncles (those of us that are here today and those of us who could not be), we are delighted to support your parents in your growing, and in your education—both Jewish and secular.

Arin and Ryan:

As many of you know, family is very important to us. In particular, our brothers and sisters are a big part of our life and we are very close to each one of them. We are pleased that Gabrielle's aunts and uncles will be an important part of her life as well. Gabrielle, we want you to know the special gifts that we believe your aunts and uncles will bestow on you as they help us raise you to adulthood:

[Arin and Ryan continue:] You don't know it yet, but you have MANY aunts and uncles. We know that they will be pleased to teach you:

- The value of family and of always being there when your family needs you. And sign language! (Samantha)
- The strength to overcome obstacles and persevere in the face of difficulties. And Spanish! (Julio)
- The ability and strength to do whatever it takes to reach your goals. (Molly)
- The importance of being knowledgeable in many different areas. (Kyle)
- Generosity of spirit—the art of always thinking of the ones you love first. And the value of a good shopping bargain! (Emily)
- The gift of being funny and the ability to make other people laugh. (Rick)
- The importance of using your mind and your intelligence to its fullest capacity. (Brian)
- The strength of body and mind that comes from being a dedicated sportswoman. (Jessica)
- The importance of making and maintaining strong friendships. And to use being the Youngest to the fullest of your ability while you can! (Zac)
- The pleasure and excitement that comes from digging in the dirt to see what's there and of immersing yourself in the world of good books. (Josh)
- The fun of using wit and humor to nurture relationships with friends and family. (Laura); and
- The ability to nurture the drama inside you to entertain and enlighten others. (Bradley)

Aunts and Uncles (together): Gabrielle, we wish you a life filled with gladness and joy!

Great-grandparents Hazel, John, Susan, Mary and Ethel (together):

We are grateful that today we rejoice with our grandchildren at the birth of their daughter. May they grow together as a family in health and in strength, in harmony, with wisdom and love.

Great-grandparents Rose, Bea, and Don (together):

May their home be filled with Torah, with *ruach* or spirit, with values, and with *ma'asim tovim*—acts of loving-kindness. We pray that Gabrielle will appreciate the richness of her heritage, will be comfortable with her Judaism, and find meaning in its expression.

Rabbi G:

May Gabrielle Jayne's life be one of security and trust.

May her life shine with dignity and freedom.

May her life know the creative harmony of peace.

Arin and Ryan, may you together bring your child into the way of Torah, *chuppah*, *v'ma'asim tovim*—Into the way of the Spirit, the way of ongoing Life, and the way of Love.

All the Assembled:

And may it be God's will. Amen.

Thank you for sharing our joy with us!

Sources

Bernard M. Zlotowitz and David P. Kasakove, *Naming the Baby*. Reform Judaism, Spring 1995, p. 78.

From the Jewish Women's Center 's archives:

- *Simchat bat* by Sheyna Mueller
- *Naming of Laurel Ana Patricia Silberman* by Rebecca Silberman, of blessed memory.
- *Simchat bat ceremony for Esther Feige (Madison Faye Stamos)* by Wendy Rubenstein

From www.ritualwell.org:

- *Gift of a Daughter: Zevad Habat* by Carol and Rabbi Neal Rose
- *Here is Your First Gift* by Judy Bolz; poem first appeared in Jewish Currents (June 1989)
- *Simhat Bat* by Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin (Women's League of Conservative Judaism)