

ברית מילה

The Covenant of Circumcision

and

Naming Ceremony

for

Daniel Adam Feshbach

לשמחת חיים

In Celebration of Life...

November 24, 1997

24 Cheshvan 5758

In Conformity with Jewish Tradition

Daniel Adam Feshbach

was named and blessed and given the Hebrew name of

דניאל אדם בן מנדל מיכאל ועליזה

Dani=el Adahm ben Mendel Micha=el v=Aliza

November 24, 1997

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Julie A. Novick Feshbach, mother

Michael L. Feshbach, father

Morton B. Novick, grandfather

Murray Feshbach, grandfather

Ruth Novick, grandmother

Muriel J. Feshbach, grandmother

Gina Beth Novick, *kvatterin*
(godmother)

David Steven Feshbach, *kvatter*
(godfather)

Dr. Leslie F. Algase, *Mohélet*

Covenant of Circumcision and Naming Ceremony

Candle Lighting

As Ruth Novick lights the candles, Michael and Julie read:

Michael: There is a new light in our hearts and in our home.

Julie: These candles celebrate the birth of our child.

Michael: Out of the creative darkness of the womb he has come.

Julie: These candles celebrate his emergence into light.

Michael: Blessed is the woman who mothers a child, for she knows how love covers pain.

Julie: Blessed is the man who fathers a child, for he makes a bridge between earth and heaven.

Both: Child of light, you know not yet the love and joy overflowing from our hearts.

The baby is brought into the room and welcomed by the waiting family

The *kvatterin* (godmother), Gina Novick, brings Daniel Adam Feshbach into the room. As the baby is brought into the room, all rise. She gives him to the *kvatter* (the godfather), who then gives him to the *mohelet*.

Mohelet:

Baruch ha-ba b=sheim Adonai.

Blessed is he who comes here in God=s name.

The *mohelet* gives the child to the parents. Those who can return to their seats.

Michael: My son, my child, you are as dear to me as my own breath. May I hold you gently now with the love to keep you close and with the strength to let you grow.

Julie: My son, my child, a piece of my life is yours. You have grown to life apart from me, now I hold you close to my heart, and cradle you in my arms with my love.

Candle Lighting: The lighting of candles as part of the *b=rit milah* is a common practice in many Jewish communities around the world. The custom may have its origin in times of persecution, when the practice was banned, and candles in the window may have signaled friends and neighbors to come to the secret ceremony. The candles we are using this afternoon come from Daniel Adam=s great-grandmother, Morton=s mother Ada Novick.

Godparents: Among the honored participants in the *b=rit milah* are the *kvatter* and *kvatterin*, the godfather and godmother respectively. These terms come from Eastern Europe. The role is strictly ceremonial, and is limited to carrying the baby. We have chosen to honor our siblings, Gina Novick and David Feshbach.

Mohel: The person who conducts the *b=rit milah*, often either a rabbi or a physician. The *mohel* (*mohelet* is the female equivalent) is a person specially trained in both the medical procedure of circumcision and all the Jewish customs surrounding this significant event. Women serving in this capacity is a new development, although permissible under Jewish law. Dr. Leslie Algase of Rochester -- who grew up at Temple Beth Am -- is a certified *mohelet* through the newly formed Berit Milah Board of Reform Judaism.

The chair of Elijah

Mohelet:

זֶה הַכֵּסֵי שֶׁל אֵלִיָּהוּ זָכוֹר לְטוֹב
Zeh hakisei shel Eliyahu zachor latov.

This is the chair of Elijah, whose spirit is in us.
May his remembrance be for good, bearing the promise of God's redemption.
[Give the baby to the parents.]

All: *We rejoice! A child has come into the world. We rejoice as we bring this child into the B=rit, the Covenant between God and the Jewish people.*

Mohelet: The rite of circumcision is a *mitzvah*, a sign of our Covenant with God, as it is written: A God said to Abraham, >You shall keep my Covenant, you and your children after you. He who is eight days old shall be circumcised, every male throughout your generations.=@ (from Genesis 17) And the Psalmist said:

All: *Children are a heritage of God; the fruit of the womb is a precious reward. (Psalm 127:3)*

Mohelet: Our God, and God of all generations, we thank you for all blessings.

All: *For the mystery of creation, for Torah and mitzvot, for companionship and love, for the warmth of family, for the joy and sacred privilege of parenthood.*

Parents:

- If a child lives with tolerance, the child learns to be patient.
- If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.
- If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.
- If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.
- If a child lives with approval, he learns self-love.
- If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.

As have generations of parents before us, we joyfully bring our son into the Covenant of circumcision. Eternal God, You have given a Teaching to Israel, instructing our ancestors to pass it on to their children, to forge their own links in the chain of the generations.

The chair of Elijah: A special chair is used in the *b=rit milah* ceremony, the *Kisei shel Eliyahu*, the chair of Elijah. Elijah is a prophet who is said to have never died; he ascended directly into heaven. Because he stands in the nether realm, he is a figure of liminality ever since, present for Jews at all moments of transition, during the ceremony at the end of Shabbat, which is part of neither the sabbath nor the working week, at the Passover seder, and here, at a *b=rit milah*, where a baby boy passes from a state of undifferentiated existence into a new identity, as part of a particular people and a caring community. The decoration of the chair of Elijah is a custom practiced by Jews all over the world.

Mohelet:

זכר לעולם בריתו
דבר צוה לאלף דור
ברוך אתה יי כורת הברית

God remembers the Covenant forever, the word commanded to a thousand generations. God made this Covenant with Abraham, renewed the bond with Isaac, and established it as a statute with Jacob an everlasting Covenant with Israel. We praise you, O God, who establishes the Covenant.

Please Rise

ברוך אתה יי אלוהינו מלך העולם,
אשר קידשנו במצותיו וציונו על המילה

*Baruch Atta Adonai, Eloheinu Melech HaOlam,
Asher Kiddishanu B=mitzvotav v=tzivanu >al ha-Milah.*

We praise you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of Existence, who hallows us with *mitzvot*, and who commands us concerning the *mitzvah* of circumcision.

Parents:

ברוך אתה יי אלוהינו מלך העולם, אשר קידשנו במצותיו
וציונו להכניסו בבריתו של אברהם אבינו

*Baruch Atta Adonai, Eloheinu Melech HaOlam, Asher Kiddishanu B=mitzvotav,
v=tzivanu l=hachniso bivrito shel Avraham Avinu.*

We praise you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of Existence, who hallows us with *mitzvot*, and who commands us to bring our son into the Covenant of Abraham our father.

Those with seats may be seated.

Interlude in the public service

**Immediate family and a small group of others
bring Daniel to Michael=s study**

The *sandaks* takes their places

**The Circumcision is performed
The baby is swaddled in a wimple.**

Participants rejoin the guests as the ceremony continues

The Naming Ceremony

Mohelet:

אלוהינו ואלוהי אבותינו ואמותינו
קים את הילד הזה לאביו ולאמו
ויקרא שמו בישראל

דניאל אדם בן מנדל מיכאל ועליזה

ישמח האב ביוצאת חלציו
ותגל אמה בפרי בטנה
זה הקטן גדול יהיה
כשם שנכנס לברית כן יכנס
לתורה לחופה ולמעשים טובים

Our God, and God of our mothers and fathers, sustain this child, and let him be known in the house of Israel as *Daniel Adam* the son of *Mendel Michayel* and *Aliza*. May his name be a source of joy to him, and bring happiness to his parents. May Michael and Julie rejoice in his growth of body and soul, and with love and wisdom may they be privileged to teach him the meaning of the covenant into which he has entered this day. May they inspire him to seek truth and the ways of peace. May Daniel Adam grow into adulthood as a blessing to his family, friends and community. As he has entered the covenant, so may he enter into the study of Torah, a marriage worthy of God=s blessing, and a life of good deeds. And let us all say: *Amen*.

Sandak: The *sandak* is the one who assists the *mohelet* by holding the baby, or helping the baby to drink wine, during the circumcision. The custom in America is often for the grandfather(s) to fill this honored role, as our fathers, Morton Novick and Murray Feshbach, do on this day.

Wimple: In Eastern Europe, the cloth used to wrap an infant after his *brit milah* was later cut, painted or embroidered with the infant=s name and other details of the day, and sewn into strips, for use either as a Torah binder, or as an *atarah*, the neckline piece on a *tallit*, which could be used by the child as his own prayer shawl on the occasion of his *Bar Mitzvah*. Michael=s mother Muriel Feshbach has supplied the material and will add the embroidery for Daniel Adam=s wimple.

The Significance of the Name

Michael Feshbach, on the significance of the name Daniel

Julie Novick, on the significance of the name Adam

Michael and Julie:

We dedicate our son to *Torah*, to never ending fascination with study and learning. With a book he will never be alone.

We dedicate our child to *Chuppah*, a loving marriage, and to never-ending growth as a human being, capable of giving love as well as receiving it. With loving family and friends, he will never be alone.

We dedicate our child to *Ma=asim Tovim*, an ethical life, to a never ending concern for family and community, justice and righteousness. While he cares for others, he will never be alone.

Muriel Feshbach:

Let this cup of wine, from the Kiddush cup Michael and his brother David purchased for us on our silver anniversary, symbolize the spiritual nourishment that Daniel Adam will receive in his new home. As this cup overflows with sweet wine, so may his life be sweet.

ברוך אתה יי אלוהינו מלך העולם
בוראי פרי הגפן

Baruch Atta Adonai, Eloheinu Melech HaOlam, Borei P=ri Hagafen

We Praise You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of Existence,
who creates the fruit of the vine.

Hebrew Names: The ritual bestowal of a Hebrew name upon a baby boy is part of the *B=rit Milah* ceremony. (While it was traditional to name girls at a synagogue service sometime during the first month, naming ceremonies for girls that are equivalent in importance -- and sometimes even also held in the home on the eighth day, are now being created by the Reform movement and other creative elements within modern Judaism. The custom in Ashkenazic communities -- that is, among Jews who originated in Northern, Central and Eastern Europe, is to name a child after deceased relatives, but never after a living person. The giving of a Hebrew name to be used throughout life in Jewish religious observance -- especially in settings in which these names were *different* than Aeveryday@ names -- has been a significant factor in the survival of Jewish identity throughout the ages, from the slavery in Egypt down to the present day.

Rebecca Kagan and Ari Kagan:

Let this *challah* symbolize the physical nourishment
that Daniel Adam will receive.
May he never know want.

ברוך אתה יי אלוהינו מלך העולם
המוציא לחם מן הארץ

Baruch Attah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech HaOlam, HaMotzi Lechem Min HaAretz

We Praise You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of Existence,
who brings forth bread from the earth.

Mohelet:

May God who blessed our ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, bless this infant who has entered into the Covenant of Israel. May Michael and Julie know the privilege of raising Daniel Adam in wisdom, love and understanding. May Daniel Adam's heart and hands be faithful in service to God. Let us say: *Amen*.

Elana Kagan:

At my naming nine years ago, my mother read these words to me.
Last year I read these words at my cousin Benjamin's naming, and I read them now for his
brother Daniel. This comes from the Talmud:

May you live to see your world fulfilled.
May your destiny be for worlds still to come.
And may you trust in generations past and yet to be.

May your heart be filled with intuition
and your words be filled with insight.
May songs of praise ever be upon your tongue
and your vision be on a straight path before you.

May your eyes shine with the light of Torah,
and your face be radiant with the brightness of the sun.
May your lips speak words of wisdom,
and your hands be filled with the goodness of your heart,
even as you yearn to hear the words
of the Holy Ancient One of Old.

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate *Berachot* 17a

Julie:

With all my heart, with all my soul, with all my might
I thank you, God, for the gift of this wonderful child.
I thank you for a healthy pregnancy, a natural delivery,
a speedy and ongoing recovery.

With all my heart, with all my strength, with all my might,
I pray for the continued health of this child,
for him to be strong in mind and body,
to grow steadily and sturdily in a home filled with joy,
for him to become a person who greets the world
with passion, courage, humility, honor and patience.

I pray for the ability to love and nurture this child,
to provide for him and educate him,
to understand him, and allow him
the freedom to grow.

Priestly Blessing

Michael:

יברכך יי וישמרך
יאר יי פניו אליך ויחונך
ישא יי פניו אליך וישם לך שלום

*Y'varech'cha Adonai v'Yishmerecha.
Ya'eir Adonai Panov Eylecha, v'Y'chunecha.
Yisa Adonai Panov Eylecha, v'Yaseym L'cha Shalom.*

May God bless you and keep you.
May God always smile on you, and through you.
May God's light always shine upon you, and may you come to know
the greatness of blessings: the blessing of wholeness,
of completeness, of peace,
of Shalom.

All:

*Holy One of Blessing, we give thanks to You,
for enabling us to celebrate together, to reach this special occasion of joy.*

ברוך אתה יי אלוהינו מלך העולם
שהחיינו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה

*Baruch Attah Adonai Eloheinu Melech HaOlam
Shehechyanu v=kiyimanu v=higiyanu, lazman hazeh. Amen.*

Siman Tov uMazel Tov