

שמחת בת

Simmchat Bat

Maya Johanna Rubin

מלכה שיינה תחיה

December 15, 1996

5 Tevet, 5757

Monaco Room

Turnberry Isle Resort Yacht Club

Aventura, Florida

Born on November 25, 1996

14 Kislev, 5757

Six pounds and eight ounces

to the

Rubin Family

Raquel, Aryeh, Felissa and Angelica

WELCOME

Dear Friends:

Welcome and thank you for sharing in our Simchat Bat, our joy in the birth of Maya Johanna. Today we are formally and ritually welcoming our daughter, Maya Johanna, into a Covenant with our God, into our people and into our family. The Simchat Bat is a relative newcomer to the panoply of Jewish rites, in contrast to the birth of a son that observes the prescribed brit in which the infant is circumcised in a ritual that dates back to the time of Abraham and Sarah.

One needs only to refer to Genesis to observe the scant heed paid to the birth of a daughter. Of Jacob's twelve children, Dina was the only girl and yet her naming did not receive the attention and detail as did all of her brothers. It was as if the narrator specifically highlighted the unimportance of Dina's birth.

Like many Jews today, I believe that the absence of law and tradition leave us ample room to maneuver, improvise and invent customs for our people providing its contributions are meaningful to our continuity, and also providing it does not trample upon our existing codes of laws, rituals and customs. Previous generations did not face the challenges of bringing up daughters in today's society where the role of women is very much different than only several decades ago. There is a place and there is a need for creativity within our tradition.

While there are some precursors of a simchat bat in Jewish history, the Sepharadi Las Fadas (The Fairies) and Zeved Habat (Gift of a Daughter), and the Ashkenazi Hol Graasch, they are primarily naming and gift giving ceremonies. Girls were never formally entered into the Covenant, and as Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin observes, "except as part of their father's and their husband's households."

Innovations within the tradition, no matter how noble or justified often meet with stiff resistance, and with time become an accepted part of the tradition. The ceremony of the bat mitzvah is today is almost as widespread as the bar mitzvah of a boy. Yet, the formal celebration of a bat mitzvah did not even exist until Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the originator of the Jewish Center and the founder of the Reconstructionist movement, had his daughter called to the Torah on March 18, 1922. It is hard to believe, but the formal bat mitzvah is less than seventy-five years old. The records show that he met with significant opposition on this issue.

Rabbi Kaplan was fond of saying that he had four reasons for

instituting the bat mitzvah ceremony; his four daughters Judith, Haddasah, Naomi and Selma. In collating, adding to, editing, and compiling this version of the Simchat Bat, I have my own three reasons; Felissa, Angelica, and Maya. It is my expression of elation of another daughter joining our family, with our family experiencing even more love than before, which I had thought not possible. Had I been an artist I would have painted a picture, a poet I would have written a poem, a sculptor I would have created a statue. Alas, I am none of these; so my exaltation is manifested in the formulation of a simchat bat.

In compiling the text of the service, I relied on the male brit for structure and context, and on several existing versions of the Simchat Bat that are already in use. The particular model I based it on was compiled by Nessa Rapoport, a leading author and thinker on Jewish issues, on the occasion of the birth of her daughter, Mattie. Dr Devora Steinmetz, director of Beit Rabban (she authored the Horachamons that we will be using for the Grace After Meals), Rabbi Yitz Greenberg, president of the Jewish Life Network, and several other Orthodox rabbis who have requested anonymity were quite helpful. The responsibility for its content, though, is mine alone.

My contributions to the Simchat Bat consist of sometimes subtly, and sometimes heavily editing existing prayers, adding, changing, and reversing the language of gender, formatting the structure and the like. I did add several sections that I had not observed in other versions, and the burden of their content rests solely with me. The most meaningful of these and of tender poignancy to our family is the memorial section commemorating the deaths of the one and a half million children who died in the Holocaust. The first two of Maya's three Hebrew names, Malka Sheina Techiya, are after victims of the Shoah; Malka, after my father's sister who was transported from Lodz, while pregnant, to the Warsaw ghetto where she delivered. She and her child perished; Sheina, after Raquel's great aunt who died of typhus and malnutrition at the age of 16 after being interned in a labor camp in Romania. Neither left any descendants. The third name, Techiya, means renaissance and renewal.

May we all, in the years to come, participate and partake in each other's happy and momentous occasions.

Aryeh Rubin
December 13, 1996
3 Tevet , 5757

*Please rise and welcome our daughter Maya Johanna
מלכה שיינה תחיה
as she is brought in by the kvaterin and let us all say:*

בְּרוּכָה הַבָּאָה בְּשֵׁם יי.
Blessed is she who comes in the name of God.

נְשַׁבְּעָה בְּטוֹב בֵּיתְךָ, קֹדֶשׁ הַיְכָלְךָ.
May we fully enjoy the goodness of thy house, the holy
shrine.

Ode to Jerusalem הלל לירושלים
אִם אֲשַׁכַּחְךָ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם תִּשְׁכַּח יְמִינִי: תִּדְבַּק לְשׁוֹנֵי לְחֻפֵּי
אִם לֹא אֲזַכְּרֶנּוּ אִם לֹא אֶעֱלֶה אֶת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עַל רֹאשׁ
שְׁמִחָתִי:

If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her
cunning. If I do not remember you, let my tongue cleave to
the roof of my mouth; if I do not set Jerusalem above my
highest joy. (*Psalms 137:5-6*)

The Naming קריאת השם
אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ, קַיִם אֶת הַיְלָדָה
הַזֹּאת לְאֵמָה וּלְאָבִיהָ, וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמָהּ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
מַלְכָּה שְׁיִינָה תַחֲיָה בֵּת רַחֵל וְאַרְיֵה לֵיב אֱלִיעֶזֶר
יִשְׁמַח הָאָב בְּיוֹצֵא חֶלְצוֹ וְתִגַּל אֵמָה בְּפָרִי בִטְנָהּ,
יִשְׁמַח אָבִידָּ וְאִמָּהּ. וְתִגַּל יוֹלְדָתָהּ:

Our God and God of our ancestral fathers and mothers,
sustain this child for her mother and father. Let her be
called in Israel, Malka Sheina Techiya daughter of Rachel
and Aryeh Leib Eliezer. May her father be glad of the fruit
of his loins and her mother rejoice in the fruit of her womb,
as it is written: "Let your father and mother be happy and
may she who bore you rejoice."

ברכת ציבורית Communal Blessings

מי שִׁבְרָךְ אֲמוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה
וְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב,
הוּא יְבָרְךָ אֶת הַיְלָדָה הַנִּעֲמָה

מלכה שיינה תחיה בת רחל ואריה לייב אליעזר
ואחות של פרידה ציפרה חיה ושרה חנה רפאלה
זאת הקטנה גדולה תהיה. ויזכו אמה ואביה לגדלה
לתורה לחפה ולמעשים טובים ולראותה בבנות
ובבנים עשר וכבוד דשנים ורעננים
ינובון בשיבה ונאמר: אמן

He who blessed our ancestral mothers Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah and our ancestral fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, bless this sweet child Malka Sheina Techiya (Maya Johanna) daughter of Rachel (Raquel) and Aryeh Leib Eliezer and the sister of Freida Ziporah Chaya (Felissa) and Sara Chana Rafaela (Angelica). May this small one grow big, and may her father and mother be worthy of raising her to Torah, the marriage canopy, and good deeds, and to see her blessed with daughters and sons, rich in honor, and radiant joy to a wise old age. And let us say, Amen.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲמוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ, גִּדֵּל אֶת הַיְלָדָה
הַזֹּאת לְחַיִּים אַרוּכִים, חַיִּים שֶׁל שְׁלוֹם, חַיִּים שֶׁל
טוֹבָה, חַיִּים שֶׁל בְּרָכָה, חַיִּים שֶׁל פְּרֻנְסָה, חַיִּים שֶׁל חֲלוּץ
עֲצָמוֹת, חַיִּים שְׂיֵשׁ בָּהֶם אֲשֶׁרֶת חֲמוּץ וְרַדִּיפֵת צֶדֶק,
חַיִּים שְׂיֵשׁ בָּהֶם אֲהַבֵּת שְׂמִים וְיִרְאֵת חֶטָּא: חַיִּים שְׂאִין
בָּהֶם בּוֹשָׁה וְכִלְמָה, חַיִּים שֶׁל עֶשֶׂר וְכָבוֹד, חַיִּים שֶׁתְּהֵא
בְּנוֹ אֲהַבֵּת תּוֹרָה וְאֲהַבֵּת שְׂמִים, חַיִּים שְׂיִמְלֵא יְיָ
מִשְׁאֵלוֹת לְבִנּוֹ לְטוֹבָה, אָמֵן סְלָה:

Our God and God of our ancestral mothers and fathers,
raise this child to a long life, a life of peace and well-being,
a life of blessing and sustenance, a life filled with bodily
vigor, a life with commitments to social action and the
pursuit of justice, a life of devotion and fear of
transgression, a life free from shame and disgrace, a life of
wealth and honor, a life marked by our love for Torah and
love of Heaven, a life in which the wishes of our hearts
shall be fulfilled for happiness. Amen.

Parent's Blessing For A Child ברכת ההורים

*The child is placed on the lap of the sandek,
and the father and mother recite:*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַטּוֹב וְהַמְטִיב.
Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe who
is good and does good.

The audience responds:

אָמֵן. כָּשֶׁם שֶׁנִּכְנְסָה לְבְרִית, כֵּן תִּכְנַס לְתוֹרָה וּלְחַפָּה
וּלְמַעֲשֵׂים טוֹבִים.

Even as she has been introduced into the covenant, so may
she be introduced to the Torah, to the marriage canopy, and
to a life of good deeds.

Blessing of the Wine ברכת הגפן

אֵין שִׂמְחָה אֶלָּא בַיַּיִן

There is no rejoicing save with wine. (Tractate Pesahim 109A)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן:
Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who
creates the fruit of the vine.

We now place a symbolic drop of wine on Maya's lips

In Memory לזכר נשמת

Just as we break a glass at a wedding at a moment of our highest joy to recall the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, today in the midst of our exalted happiness of bringing a new life into the world, we light these candles to commemorate the one and a half million children who died in the Shoah.

כִּי נֵר מִצְוָה וְתוֹרָה אֹר

For the commandment is a lamp; and the Torah is light;
(Proverbs 6:23)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיָּמְנוּ
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה :

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has granted us life and sustenance and permitted us to reach this season.

Blessing of Gratitude

ברכת הגומל

The experience of childbirth is itself a miracle in the guise of nature. The mother recites the *Birchat Hagomel* for having been saved in a moment of danger.

Raquel recites:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַגּוֹמֵל לְחַיִּבִים
טוֹבוֹת, שֶׁגָּמְלָנִי כֹּל טוֹב :

Blessed art thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who bestowest favors on the undeserving, and hast shown me every kindness.

The audience responds:

מִי שֶׁגָּמְלָךְ כֹּל טוֹב, הוּא יְגַמְלָךְ כֹּל טוֹב סָלָה :
May he who has shown you every kindness ever deal kindly with you.

Blessings in Song ברכות דזמרה

יוֹנְתִי בַּחֲגוּי הַסֵּלַע בְּסִתְרֵי הַמְּדַרְגָּה הֲרֵאִינִי אֶת־מְרְאִיךָ
הַשְּׁמִיעֵנִי אֶת־קוֹלְךָ כִּי־קוֹלְךָ עָרֵב וּמְרְאִיךָ נְאוּהָ:

O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff, let me see your countenance, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your countenance is comely. (Song of Songs 2:14)

יוֹנְתִי תַמְתִּי אַחַת הִיא לְאִמָּהּ בְּרָהּ הִיא לְיוֹלְדֹתָהּ:
אַחַת הִיא

My dove, my perfect one, is only one; she is unique of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bore her. (Song of Songs 6:9)

כְּשׁוֹשָׁנָה בֵּין הַחוֹחִים כֵּן רַעֲיָתִי בֵּין הַבְּנוֹת
Like a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. (Song of Songs 2:2)

Priestly Blessing ברכת כהונה

יְשִׁימָךְ אֱלֹהִים כְּשָׂרָה רַבֶּקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה
יְבָרְכֶךָ יְיָ וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ. יָאֵר יְיָ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶנֶךָ. יֵשֶׂא יְיָ פָּנָיו
אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם

May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah. May the Lord bless you and protect you; may the Lord countenance you and be gracious to you; may the Lord favor you and grant you peace.

We recite the following prayer on behalf of ourselves and in the name of Maya Johanna.

רְבוּנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, אָנִי שְׁלָךְ וְחִלּוּמוֹתַי שְׁלָךְ. חִלּוּם חִלְמָתִי
וְאִינִי יוֹדֵעַ מָה הוּא. יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי וְאֵלֵהֵי
אֲבוֹתַי וְאִמּוֹתַי, שְׁיִהְיוּ כָּל חִלּוּמוֹתַי עָלַי וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל

לְטוֹבָה בֵּין שְׁחֻלְמֹתַי עַל עֲצָמַי, וּבֵין שְׁחֻלְמֹתַי עַל
אֲחֵרִים, וּבֵין שְׁחֻלְמוֹ אַחֲרַיִם עָלַי. אִם טוֹבִים הֵם,
חֲזִיקֵם וְאַמְצֵם, וְיִתְקַיְמוּ בִי וּבְהֵם כְּחִלּוּמוֹתַי שֶׁל יוֹסֵף
הַצַּדִּיק. וְאִם צָרִיכִים רְפוּאָה, רְפְּאֵם כְּחִזְקֵהוּ מִלְּדָד
יְהוּדָה מַחְלִיו, וְיִכְשֵׁם שְׁהַפְּכֵת אֶת קָלְלַת בְּלַעַם הַרְשָׁע
מִקָּלְלָה לְבִרְכָה, כִּן תִּהְפּוּד כָּל חִלּוּמוֹתַי עָלַי וְעַל כָּל
יִשְׂרָאֵל לְטוֹבָה, וְתִשְׁמְרֵנִי וְתִחַנְּנֵנִי וְתִרְצֵנִי. אָמֵן.

Master of the World! I am Yours and my dreams are
Yours. I have dreamed a dream and I do not know its
meaning. May it be Your will, Adonoy, my God, and God
of my ancestral fathers and mothers, that all my dreams
regarding myself, and regarding all of Israel be for the
good; those I have dreamed concerning myself, and those I
have dreamed about others, and those that others have
dreamed about me. If they are good dreams, strengthen and
reinforce them and may they be fulfilled in me and in them,
like the dreams of Joseph, the righteous. But if they require
curing, cure them like Hezekiah, king of Judah, who was
healed from his sickness; As You transformed the curse of
the wicked Bilaam, from a curse to a blessing, so may you
transform all my dreams regarding myself and all of Israel
for goodness. May You guard me, may You be gracious to
me, and may You accept me favorably, Amen.

And now, let's party!