Zeved HaBat / Simchat Bat
(The Gift of a Daughter)

A Ceremony Guide
To the Naming of a Jewish Girl

By Dovi Seldowitz
In honour of the birth of our daughter

Portions of this guide were adapted from
"Zeved HaBat: A Ceremony of Blessing and Naming"
by Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton, The Great Synagogue (Sydney)

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This guide is intended to provide an example of how the Jewish ceremony for the naming of a baby girl may incorporate the customs of Jewish communities from around the world. This ceremony guide includes a modified version of the (Sephardic) Zeved HaBat ceremony to acknowledge the Ashkenazi and Chasidic customs relating to the birth of a girl.

Jewish baby naming ceremonies are recognised by rabbis as matters that relate to an admixture of Jewish customs, traditions, personal preferences, and individual circumstances. However, for many Jewish parents, it often seems surprising or even unnerving that there are no “Laws” regarding these matters, and until recently, formal guides on the ceremony of naming a baby girl were difficult to obtain.

This guide is intended to provide parents with an authentic Jewish naming ceremony while acknowledging the differences of community traditions and the legitimacy of personal choice in such intimate and spiritual matters.
In terms of the formality of the service, some parents may desire to have a rabbi lead this ceremony, however, it seems that the Zeved HaBat ceremony was intentionally designed for the direct involvement of the child’s mother and father. It is recommended that the parents familiarise themselves with the blessings and prayers and to take a joint role in leading the ceremony. Similarly, while the wish to host the event in a synagogue is understandable, hosting the ceremony at home has its own set of advantages in terms of comfort and flexibility when caring for a newborn.

The inclusion of the prayers of the Jewish matriarchs is a matter that alludes to a broader concern not to overlook the position of women in the Jewish tradition. The prayers of the Jewish matriarchs should be viewed with consideration that the Talmud considers them to be prophetesses and are therefore co-creators of the Jewish tradition.

Finally, with respect to the Chabad-Lubavitch tradition which emphasises Jewish imagery and symbolism, I have included an Aleph-Bet chart and the Shir Lama’alot mandala/amulet at the end of this guide which may also be printed as a small card to place near the newborn.

Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5782
Sydney, Australia
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A Ceremony Guide to the Naming of a Jewish Girl

The Parents’ Introduction

Oh, my dove,
in the cranny of the rocks,
Hidden by the cliff,
Let me see your face,
Let me hear your voice,
For your voice is sweet
And your face is comely.

If the daughter is the firstborn, add the verse:

Only one is my perfect dove,
The only one to her mother,
The delight of the one who bore her.
Maidens see and acclaim her,
Queens and consorts praise her.

יהודה
סמדר משלכת
מרצళ אטרמרצ_fee
משמייש אתتصميم
כידיקהלת שריב
ימראות יאנה
יונת בברג שגל
לראת המדרגה
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(ME SHEBERACH — THE NAMING CEREMONY)

May He bless our mothers Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, and Leah,
The prophetesses Miriam and Avigail, Queen Esther daughter of Avichayil,

May He bless this beloved girl and let her name in Israel be: _______

With good fortune and in a time of blessing.
May she grow up in good health, peace, and tranquility.

To Torah, Family, and Good Deeds!
May her father and mother merit to witness her joyous times,
At her wedding day, to see her with children, riches, and honour.
May they be live with health into old age. May this be His will and let us say Amen!

EVERYONE REPEATS THE LAST LINE:
Le’Torah u’le’Chupah u’l’Ma’amit Tovim

The One who blessed our mothers Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, and Leah,
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The Mother’s Blessing of Thanksgiving

Baruch atah Adonai Elohenu melekh ha’olam Ha’gomel l’chayavim tovot Sheg’malani kol tov

Everyone responds:

Amen!
Mi shegamal’cha tov,
Hu yig’malech kol tov, selah!

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe,
Who bestows kindness upon the culpable,
for He has bestowed goodness to me.

Amen! May He who has bestowed beneficence upon you
always bestow every beneficence upon you!
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The Priestly Blessing

יִבְרָךְּךָ ה', וְיִשְׁמַרְךָ
יֵאֵר ה', סְפוּר אֵלֶיךָּ, רוֹמָז
יְשַׁא ה', שְׂפִיר אֵלֶיךָ, רוֹמָז לְךָּ שָׁלוֹם

May the Lord bless you and watch over you
May the Lord cause His countenance to shine to you and favour you
May the Lord raise His countenance toward you and grant you peace

An Alternate Nusach (Mi Sheberach)

With Respect to the Ashkenazi practice of naming the daughter at the reading of the Torah:

מי שברך אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב
והז יברך את האשה והולדת ________ (שם האם)
והאמה מניחה על ממילTodd
וירא שם נשיארא ________ (שם אב התינוקה)
בניורו סכעה ואביה ית לאבדה.
בשבר זה יוכל ל.googleapis ולournemouth טובים ואמני

The one who blessed our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, may He bless the woman who has given birth __________ (Hebrew name) the daughter of __________ (father’s Hebrew name) with her daughter who has been born at an auspicious time and may her name be called in Israel ________ (baby’s Hebrew Name), daughter of __________ (baby’s father’s Hebrew name), for her husband, the infant’s father will contribute to charity on their behalf. In reward for this, may they raise her to Torah, marriage, and good deeds. Now let us respond: Amen!
ADDITIONAL BLESSINGS, PRAYERS, AND DIVREI TORAH

There are some who recite either of the following blessings: And if a grandparent or an older sibling is present, they may also recite either of these blessings:

**Option #1 – Ha’tov Ve’hamay’teev**

Baruch atah Adonai

Eloheynu melekh ha’olam

Ha’tov ve’hamay’teev.

**Option #2 – Shehecheyanu**

Baruch atah Adonai

Eloheynu melekh ha’olam

Shehecheyanu ve’kiymanu

Vehigi’anu lazman’ hazeh.

*Others say “lizman” (ליזמן)*
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PRAYERS OF JEWISH MOTHERS IN THE TORAH

And Sarah declared, “God has brought me laughter!”

And Leah declared “What luck!”, “What fortune!”, “This time I will praise God!”

And Chana declared “there is no rock like God!”

IN THE MERIT OF THE JEWISH PROPHETESSES:

Who were the seven prophetesses? Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Huldah, and Esther.

(Talmud Megillah 14a)

The reason why Leah and Rachel are omitted from this list is because their prophecies are not explicitly mentioned in the Torah. By contrast, in the case of Sarah, not only is her prophecy mentioned, but we know that hers was far greater than that of Avraham. Nevertheless, despite their exclusion, we must conclude that Leah and Rachel were also prophetesses.

(Maharal of Prague, Gur Aryeh Bereshit 29:34)

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ALEPH-BET:

When a child is born, they cannot not yet distinguish between light and dark, between sweet and bitter. Nevertheless, we must see to it to set before her eyes the letters of the Aleph-Bet, for through the combinations of the Hebrew letters all of creation came into being.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe, 20 Cheshvan 5744)
اذة-פיית
אֶפְּבִּגֶּדָה וּזְהַת יִפְכָּל
לֵמְבַנְדוֹת עִלְּפֵה תָּיָר
נַשְׁתַּתָה
}