# Yellow Babies\_

There are two types of illness that may cause a delay of the bris: a systemic illness that affects the entire body and localized ailment that affects only a specific part of the body.

If an infant contracts an illness, such as fever, which affects the entire body, he must be completely cured for seven full days (i.e., seven twenty-four periods) before the *bris* may be performed. If, for example, the child was pronounced healthy at 3:00 p.m., Tuesday, the *bris* may not take place any earlier than 3:00p.m. of the following Tuesday.

However, an illness affecting a specific part of the body needs no

**66** It is often most noticeable

when the baby is 2 to

4 days old, with the

bilirubin peaking at

around 3 days of age.

Most of the time, it does

not cause problems and

goes away within 2 weeks. 99

waiting period and the *bris* may be performed promptly after full recovery.

The most common cause for delaying a bris is a condition called jaundice (ילורים). This is manifested by the skin of the child becoming a shade of yellow (See שו"ע יו"ד ם'). The

generally accepted opinion is that as soon as the jaundiced condition clears up the child can have a *bris*. However, if the condition is serious enough to warrant a blood transfusion, the *bris* must wait a full seven days from the time of recovery.

#### The following is a simplified explanation of jaundice, and why it affects the timing of a *bris*:

Every human body contains millions of red blood cells. These cells have life-spans of approximately 120 days. After this period, the cells are broken down in the body, and form a substance called bilirubin. The bilirubin travels through the liver where it is processed, broken down further and finally passed through the stool and possibly through the urine if exposed to the sun. Therefore, to reduce the bilirubin level the baby should be fed and have regular stools to eliminate the bilirubin from the body.

The infant has had blood cells from the fourth month of his conception, and these, too must be broken down. Until birth, his mother's liver has been doing this function for him but after birth he must rely on his own body. In a newborn, however, the liver is somewhat immature and often unready to function properly in processing the excess amount of bilirubin. This is not a

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disease since it is only a matter of time and maturity until the liver will begin to function as it should. When bilirubin is not processed properly it is deposited in the tissues of the body and the skin takes on a yellowish tint- a

condition known as jaundice. It is normal for a baby's bilirubin level to be a bit high sometime after birth. Most newborns have some vellowing of the skin, a high level of bilirubin makes a baby's skin and white of the eyes look yellow. It is often most noticeable when the baby is 2 to 4 days old, with the bilirubin peaking at around 3 days of age. Most of the time, it does not cause problems and goes away within 2 weeks. In an infant, jaundice is usually physiological, meaning that it is a normal occurrence in the body. (Physiologic jaundice generally

lasts less than seven days. The condition affects over half of babies in the first week of life). While in an adult jaundice is usually symptomatic of a pathological condition which must be dealt with medically.

The bilirubin level [or count] indicates how much of this substance is in the blood and will subsequently be deposited in the tissues. If the level is high it is an indication that the child's liver may not yet be functioning adequately. Cases of jaundice vary and it is the doctor's romation to the *Mohel*, who, in consultation with the doctor and a competent *Rav*, will make the decision together as to when the child may have a *bris*.

{ADAPTED FROM RABBI PAYSACH J. KROHN'S BOOK ON BRIS Milah-ARTSCROLL}

I have thoroughly reviewed the above material and find it to be accurate and informative.

Stuart Shimon Deutsch, M.D. FAAP (Israeli licensed pediatric specialist and U.S. Board certified pediatrician since 1987 practicing now in Lakewood and during the summer in South Fallsburg.)

#### **Thank YOU!**

B'H, we received amazing positive feedback. Iy'h we will continue to try to publish this booklet on a monthly basis.

If you have questions, comments or topics related to bris milah that YOU want to learn about and if you would like to recieve the booklet through email, please call/email-

R' Azi Deutsch Your1mohel@gmail. com 052-765-9459



מרן רה"י ר' אהרן לייב שטיינמן זצומ'ל בסנדמאות בברית

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הרה"ג ר' יעקב הלל שליט"א ראש מוסדות אהבת שלום.

(מתוך קונטרס עטרת שלום שנמצא בסוף ספר מכשירי מילה ע"י הגאון הגדול אליהו שמאע זלה"ה-הוצאת אהבת שלום)

כתב האר"י ז"ל "בשער הגלגולים"

(הקדמה כ"ג דף כ"י ע"ב) וו"ל: ונמצא 🍪 וגם למדנו מוב כי כאשר נולד האדם וקוראים לו אביו ואמו שם אחד העולה בדעתם, אינו באקראי ובהזדמן, כי אם הקב"ה משים בפיהם השם ההוא המוכרת אל הנשמה ההיא, כמו שאמר הכתוב אשר שם שמות בארץ, כפי מקום האבר שבאדם העליון אשר ממנו חוצב, והשם הזה נרשם למעלה בכסא הכבוד כנודע ולכד אמרו רז"ל שמא גרים. גם זהו מעם ר' יומא (מס' יומא ורבי החד בן הושע בן פ"ג) דהוו בדקי בשמא עכ"ל.

> נמצינו למדים שראוי לאב ואם של התינוק דוקא לקבוע שמו. ויעשו כפי שעולה בדעתם בהסכמה לפי הסיבות שראו לנכון בקביעת השם, (עיין לקמן) ובזה יהיו במוחים שכן הוא שם הילד כפי הוראת שורש

נשמתו ותיקונו. גם לומדים מזה שהשם מורה על תיקוז הנשמה ההיא ומקום אחיזתה בשורש העליון. וכן כתב הרי״ח מוב ז"ל בספר "בן יהוידע" (על מסכת תענית די"א ע"א בדף כ"ז ע"ד מהספר ד"ה ואומרים) וז"ל: ידוע כי אותיות השם של האדם הם צינורות השפע שלו. כמ"ש הרב "ערבי נחל" על פסוק נפש חיה הוא שמו וכו', גם מזכירים השם שלו כדי לכלול גם את הנפש שהשם של האדם מורה על הנפש ג"כ כנודע עכ"ל. וכ"כ הרח"ו ז"ל בספר "עץ הדעת מוב" ח"ב (דף צ"א ע"א) משם הזוהר הקדוש בפרשת לד לד (דף ס' ע"א) על הפסוק נח נח וז"ל: כל צדיק וצדיק יש לו שני שמות וכו׳ להורות כי שורש נשמתו היא למעלה בכסא הכבוד ומשם ממשכת שפע לממה אל נשמתו התחתונה עכ"ל. וכ"כ בספר "לקומי אמרים תניא" לרבנו זלמז ז"ל וז"ל: בכל הנבראים שבעולם השמות שנקראים בהם בלשון הקודש הן הן אותיות הדיבור המשתלשלות ממדרגה למדרגה מעשרה מאמרות שבתורה [שהם שורש כל הנבראים כולם] ע"י חילופים ותמורות האותיות ברל"א

שערים עד שמגיעות ומתלבשות באותו נברא

להחיותו וכו' עכ"ל. מכאן סמך למנהג ישראל קדושים שקובעים ומפרסמים השם של הנולד דוקא לאחר הברית, שנכרת הערלה שהיא בחינת הקליפה ומתגלה אז הנשמה של הילד ומתפשמת בגופו, ונקרא אז ישראל וכמ״ש הרב חסד לאברהם אזולאי (מ"ב עין הקורא נהר נ"ב) וז"ל: ולזה כל עוד שיש לו אחיזה לערלה והמומאה באדם, אי אפשר שיחול עליו נשמה, ולזה אי אפשר שיקרא בשם ישראל, ולזה נהגו שלא יקרא לו שם רק אחר המילה, שמאחר שכבר נסתלקו הערלה והמומאה, אז וראי תחול עליו סוד הנשמה ר"ל נשמה של הנפש, ובזה נקרא בשם אדם ישראל שמעון ראובן וכיוצא. א״כ נתבאר

ועיין בספר "כסא אליהו הנביא" להריא"ז מרגליות ז"ל שהביאו וסיים וז"ל: ועל פי זה יבואר מה שאומרים יקרא שמו בישראל ודו״ק עכ״ל. הרי להדיא גם מזה שהשם מורה על הנשמה, וגם למדנו מוב מעם ודעת למה מפרסמים וקובעים השם שהחליפו עליו אב ואם דוקא לאחר המילה שאז זוכה לנשמה,

שנקרא ישראל ע"י מצות מילה.

ונשמתו ושמו באים כאחד. גם יש ללמוד מכל הנ"ל שלא לשנות השם העיקרי שבו נקרא בעת המילה לשם כינוי או שם חיבוב, (עיין בס' "מעמי המנהגים" עמ' תקנ"ה בשם ספר "נזיר ה") וכן מי שנקרא בכמה שמות, כולם הם שמו, ובכולם צריך לקוראו תמיד שלא לשנות או לקצר בדבר שהוא נוגע לעיקר הוראת

> שורש נשמתו. וכן שמענו מפי מקובלי אמת שהיו נזהרים בזה מאוד, ונהגו מחמת זה לא להרבות בשמות שקשה ומרחא מילתא להשתמש בכולם כאחד תמיד דמשרבו במלו. ועיין בשו"ת "נודע ביהודא" (מ"ת או"ח ם קי"ג) שבימים הקדמונים לא היה נקרא אדם בשני שמות בשעת לידה אם לא שנתוסף לו ע"י חולי ע"כ. וכן אלו שרוצים לעשות זכר לשני בני אדם כאחד לקרוא הילד בשני שמות

מעם ודעת למה

השם שהחלימו

מפרסמים וקובעים

עליו אב ואם דוקא

לאחר המילה

למעשה אין זכר לא לשם זה ולא לשם זה, אלא השם הכפול הוא שם אחר שלישי. וכן זכורני שראיתי משם מרן החזון איש דהכי ס"ל. ומכאן גם כמה חמור ענין שינוי השם אפילו לחולה וכדומה, כי ממש מחליף נשמת האדם בהחלפת השם, ואפשר שעוקרים בזה חיותו ומזלו ב"מ. וזכורני שכתבו בשם הגאון ר' יוסף חיים זוננפעלד זלה"ה שהיה נרתע ונמנע מלהסכים בקלות לשום שינוי השם. ובזמננו בעוה״ר רבו קלי הדעת המשנים ומחליפים שמות כמעם ללא כל מעם, ואין לעשות אפילו לצורך חולה בשום אופן רק לאחר הסכמה ופסק מגדולי ההוראה. וגם השינוי עצמו יעשה בסדר הנכון עפ"י יודעי דבר, ודי בהערה זו למי שיש מוח בקדקדו.

וכן הביאו האחרונים מספר "רחמי האב" משם ספר

במ״ח (בראשית) וז״ל״ שמעתי מפי אדמו״ר .נזר ישראל. רבנו יחיאל מיכל זצוק"ל (מזלאמשוב) שאמר לי בפירוש שחלילה לשנות שם החולה אם לא [ע"י] אדם שכל מעשיו כמעמ ברוח הקודש, כי שם הנקרא לאדם בהוולדו ודאי רובו ככולו מזדמן מאת ה' יתברך, באשר הוא שמו למעלה, והוא חיותו של אדם כל ימיו, ואפשר שבשינוי השם עוקרים חיותו עכ"ל. וכ"כ ג"ע החיד"א ז"ל "בעבודת הקודש" בקונמרם "סנסן ליאיר" וז"ל: שינוי השם ע"י חכם וירא שמים ובכוונה גדולה להמשיך לו נפש חדשה מקדושה, ויתאמץ מאד בכוונת ויעבור וי"ג מדות לעורר הרחמים וכו' עי"ש ועיין סדר שינוי השם בסידורו של מרן הרש"ש ז"ל סידור "נהר שלום" ונדפם בספר "אמת ליעקב" ניניו בקונמרם "שפת אמת" עי"ש. ועיין בספר "סגולות ישראל" (מע׳ ש' אות צ"ב) דאם משנים שם נכון להוסיף שם על השם הראשון ולא לעקור השם העיקרי עי"ש.

ועיין בספר "הדר זקנים" לבעלי התוספות על הפסוק ותקרא שמו אונן וז"ל: כך היה מנהגם, היה קורא [האב] שם לבנו ראשון, והשני מניח לאשתו

לקרוא שם, כמו שמצינו לגבי ער ובזמננו בעוה"ר ויקרא, כתוב רבו קלי הדעת ולגבי אונן ותקרא כתיב המשנים ומחליפים [ומ"ש שמו, שמות כמעט ללא בבן השלישיו שמו ותקרא כל מעם •• שלה [רמשמע שנקרא

אמו] לפי שהיה יהודה בכזיב בלידתה אותו, כזיב שם מקום עכ"ל. ויש נוהגים על פי זה להקדים זכות האב להאם, ויש נוהגים להיפך שזכות קביעת שם הראשון להאם, ועיין בן א"ח (ש"ב פר' שופטים א' ו' ז"ך) מה שפקפק בזה ועי׳ מעמי המנהגים.

ומ"בו כבר כתבנו לדייק בס"ד מלשון מרן האר"י ז"ל שצריך שיקבע השם בהשתתפות הסכמת האב והאם יחדיו ואפשר שגם זה נקרא הסכמה ביחד וק"ל.

What's the Halacha?

The following question was asked to Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach Zatzal:

🗛 family had a beautiful baby boy. They wanted to call their brand new baby by the *bris*, the name יהונתן after a beloved grandfather who had recently passed away. A real tzaddik of a man. However, a day before the bris their next-door neighb bor lost their child in a terrible terrible accident רה"ל whose name was also. יהוגתן. The parents didn't know what to do- In light of the recent events, should they continue with the plan to call their son by the name of their beloved grandfather?

Stay tuned for the next issue to find out the answer...

#### Answer from last months issue- What's The Halacha?

A goy is invited to partake in a bris and he is considered "A righteous among the nations- ". הסיד אומות העולם" They are asking if they are allowed to give him a Kibbud by the bris? Does it matter which Kibbud? Why would it matter? Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg Z"l Answered:

### Milah Mysteries\_

#### נולד מהול

One of the cases that the *Shulchan Aruch* (מ"ה מ"שלא מע"ה) says that are not performed on *Shabbos* is גולד מהול. The *Sefer* מילה שלימה discusses the rarity of a child being born completely. מהול t seems that in last few generations this has not occurred. In the *sefer* "בימינו לא שמענו כלל שיהי נולד מהול לגמרי, יועל he writes (רסג ד) אות שלום "די בעה"י נימולו לאלפים ולא היה שום א' נולד מהול ממש."

The אבני נזה ארב אות ז' אבני נזה (ישו"ה יי"ד שלד אות ז') writes that he asked many mohalim and it never happened to them. However, in the sefer it says that in the year הנ"ג (1735) מנ"ה (1713) that it did happen and the rabbanim were maskim to do only a hatafas dam and make a beracha like the minhag of the city Ferrara, Italy.

The author of מילה שלימה says that he spoke to the מוהל המומחה מוהל

and only once in all his years of being a *mohel* about thirty years ago he had such a case. (See the above mentioned *sefer* in note 106 for what he heard from *Rav Yisroel Belsky Z"L* about the topic.) Nevertheless, in *Chazal* there is a list of individuals who were born מהול The list is as follows- אדם הראשון, נה, שם, יעקב, יוסף, משה, שמואל, דוד, ירמיה, זרובבל, איוב. However, if you look further into the material it is not so simple.

Here are some clues: בראשית רבה, פד, ו; דברים רבה, יא, ו; תנחומא נה ;אבודר"ג ב',ה'; מדרש שוחר מוב תהלים מ

### A Nice Vort for a Bris

וn the *Nusach* that we say in the *berachas* by a *bris* is "ההקבן גדול יהיה", this *beracha* to the child seems a bit strange. It is almost stating the obvious, the natural course of development is that the child who is now small will grow to be big. If so, what is the meaning of this *beracha* to the child? If it was referring to a certain area that the child should become great in then it should specify *Lmashal*, "in Engle Laurent area that that many parents have for their children

36 זה הקמןבתורה יהיהגדול בתורה 99

(See Mishna Ber-ער מ"ד ס"ק י" מ"ד ס" וו"ל "ותמיד תהיה שורה בפיהם שגורה בפיהם להתפלל על בניהם שיהיו לומדי תורה וצדיקים ובעלי

מידות מובות."

Another question, is that this tefilla can be said all the while the child remains a יקבו if so why is it so imperative to give the child a bracha now after he has a had a bris?

The passuk says in Bereishis (ימ") יְּשָׁנְי הַאָּאוֹר הַאָּאוֹר הַאָּמִין לְּטִמְשֵׁלֶּת הַוּוֹם וְאָת־הַשְּאוֹר הַאָּמוֹן לְטִמְשֵׁלֶת הַוֹּר יִּאָת הַבּוֹכבים:

הַּיִּרְל לְּטְמְשֵׁלֶת הַוֹּרֹם וְאָת־הַשְּאוֹר הַאָּמוֹן לְטִמְשֵׁלֶת הַבּוֹכבים:

"Hashem made the two great lights, the greater light to dominate the day and the lesser light to dominate the night, and the stars."

Rashi quotes the הׁוֹיל that originally the sun and moon were created equal. However, the moon came to הוויל with the complaint that two kings cannot share one crown. ה then commanded the moon to minimize itself, and then there was a profound difference between the sun and the moon.

The sun is not only much larger than the moon but, additionally, it generates its own light. The moon is only a reflection of the light of the sun. Maybe we can suggest that through this pasuk we may gain understanding into the bracha given at every Jewish child's Bris. We say at a Bris Milah, "זה הקמן" [this young child] "גדול" " [will mature into greatness]. There is an explaination that Katan [child] represents one who is concerned only about himself and his own needs, whereas Gadol [greatness] represents one who is concerned about his fellow man and the needs of others. We express our hope and prayer that this helpless and dependent infant who can think only of his own needs will one day grow up and mature into one who is able to be concerned with and will help provide for the needs of others.

Kvatter

The origin of the word *Kvatter* is unclear. Here are two possible sources that have been proposed:

(ערוך השולחן יו״ד ס׳רסה: לה)

B) The word *Kvatter* is actually a combination of two words, one in Hebrew and one in Yiddish: בנוד [kavod], honor and מיר [tir], door. This is a reference to one who is given the honor at the door, from where he brings the child into the room where the bris will be taking place. (מובא באהל רהל)

However, maybe we can suggest another beautiful insight into this bracha, in this pa-

ishis provides us with the Torah's definition of the words "Gadol" and "Katan". The sun is called Gadol [great] be-

suk in Bere-

Greatness
represents one who
is concerned about
his fellow man and
the needs of others

cause it generates its own light. The moon is called *Katan* [minor] because it does not generate its own light. It only reflects the light of the sun. We express the prayer specifically at a *Bris Milah* that "this *katan* will develop into a *Gadol.*" Every child starts out and for a large portion of a his life remains a *Katan*, a reflection of the parents. A child is influenced and guided by his parents. He reflects the light generated by those who brought him into the world and those who raise him. The *bracha* is that the child should grow from being a *Katan* and take this light and generate there with his own power and illumination.

זה הק**מן גדול יהיה** וכשם שנכנם לברית כן יכנס לתורה וחופה ומעשים מובים

## What's in a Name?

# ויקרא שמו בישראל\_

#### יביון בייון ∃ - Ben Tzion

says it's מרן שר התורה שלימ"א says it's מדן שר התורה שלימ"א. The name is brought in the Beis Shmuel, and the Tiv Gittin (שוב says it's a שם כשר. The name is brought in the Beis Shmuel, and the Tiv Gittin (אות ב"א), says that we found many good people named Ben Tzion (However, "Tzion" alone is not common). See Gemara Kiddushin- (עא:), even though in that gemara they are referred to as צדיקים called by that name.

#### דת ציון - Bat Tzion

The Chida writes (שם הגדולים מע' גדולים מע' ב', קונ' אחרון אות א) that he saw that a קרוש wrote in his כת"י in the name of the ירושלמי in the name of the ב"ע wrote wrote in his בן ציון and he will live מי"ש.

מרן שר התורה שלים"א was asked according to this does this apply to a girls as well, to call the next daughter בת ציון? His answer- יש נוהגים כן.

(In the sefer עמ" שמ"ז הסמייפלר עמ" asys that a child was born with a severe defect that the doctors feared that there is a very small chance that she will survive. The Stiepler Z"L suggested to call her Bat Tzion as a segulah for her to live.

There is also a story with the Chazon Ish that he suggested the name Bat Tzion to someone whose child was born in Eretz Yisroel to remind the father to come back from Chutz Laaretz- I PERSONALLY AUTHENTICATED THIS STORY!}

{אוצר שמות חיים}

# Parents Ask & Your Mohel Answers

I have realized about myself that I really can't stand the sight of blood. Once ? fainted by a simple blood test (BTW, this goes for needles as well). This causes me to be so nervous about my sons upcoming bris. I always hear the mohel asking the father of the baby to stand right next to him ("בי הבי הבל לוד") P71D7"). It is understood that there will be blood. What should I do-must I look or can I keep my eyes closed the entire time that the bris is happening or maybe face the other way?

E.S.(Extremely Squeamish), Panim Meirot

#### Your Mohel answers,

First of all, let me reassure you that you are not the first one to ask such a question. It is fairly common not to be able to stand the sight of blood (Researchers estimate that between 3 and 4 percent of the population experience extreme fear of seeing blood, or getting tests and shots where blood may be involved called Hemophobia) especially your own child's. That being said, the ideas that you suggested are perfect. You do not have to witness the actual bris being taken place. You must appoint the mohel as your shliach to do the masseh milah and you must make the Bracha of להכניםו ו בבריתו של אברהם אבינו. a mohel, that whatever makes you more comfortable and makes the simcha a more calm one is what you should do. We want the simcha to be enjoyed by everyone baby, mother AND father.

> Your Mohel. R'Azi Deutsch

To submit questions or concerns to your mohel Email: your1mohel@gmail.com

# מעשה שהיה כך A Bris in Stalinist היה Russia

It was Stalinist Russia. The sudden banging on the door made the occupants blood run cold. The knocking was getting louder. They were about to sneak out the back exit when the older of the two suggested that the younger one stay behind. It was better to wait a few minutes before opening the door.

The banging continued even more vigorously. "Who's there?" the youngster called out, but the stranger refused to identify himself. The youth flung open the door. Standing there was a high-ranking officer of the KGB.

"Is this where the *Shochet* lives?" the officer demanded. "*Shochet*?" he replied. "There's no one here by the name

66 9 am begging you to come to my house tomorrow and bring the Mohel.

of Shochet." The officer gave him a penetrating look and said, "Then perhaps there's someone here who cuts children?" "No," he said in the most confident tone he could muster.

For a moment the stranger

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said nothing. Then he whispered in the boy's ear: "Don't deny it. I know that the man who cuts children lives here!" The youth was shocked, for the man had uttered these words in Yiddish!

"I am a Jew. Seven days ago my wife gave birth to a baby boy, and I want very much for him to be entered into the covenant of *Abraham*. My wife is very much opposed to the idea. Tomorrow at exactly nine in the morning she will be leaving the house. I am begging

you to come to my house tomorrow and bring the *Mohel*. The baby will be in one of the front rooms."

The officer told the astounded youngster his address and hurried away. "Remember," he

said pleadingly, "Tomorrow is the eighth day of my son's life. I implore you to do me this favor."

Reb Eizik was the only Mohel in the entire city, and Yaakov, a boy with no living relatives in the world, had been taken in to live with the Mohel and accompanied him on his holy and very dangerous rounds.

The officer left. Was it a trap? Yaakov was convinced that it was a clever ruse cooked up to catch Reb Eizik red-handed. When Reb Eizik came home, Yaakov filled him in on everything. The Chassid thought for several minutes, the deep wrinkles that lined his forehead testifying to his inner conflict and turmoil. He had reached a decision: "Tomorrow morning we will go to the officer's house and give his son a bris of Avraham Avinu."

The following day, *Reb Eizik* and *Yaakov* arose at dawn and recited their prayers. Then they set out in the direction of the river. On the way, the *Chassid* explained that he was almost certain that this was, indeed, a trap. He therefore wished to immerse himself in a *mikvah* before they continued. "If this is to be our last day on earth, at least we will die in a state of ritual purity," he declared. The officer's house was located on one of the finest streets in the city, which only served to confirm their suspicions. The neighborhood was inhabited by the highest ranking members of the KGB and their families. But the two Jews stuck to their decision. *Reb Eizik* and

66 Inside the envelope was a letter from the baby's father, apologizing for his not being able to be present at his son's Bris and asking that they give the baby a Jewish name.

Yaakov secreted themselves in a hiding place across from the officer's house. Seconds later they saw a woman dressed in the latest fashion exit the building and proceed down the block. Together they strode across the street.

Reb Eizik knocked on the massive door. An older woman opened the door and motioned for them to enter. In the corner of the room was a beautiful crib, inside which a tiny baby was sleeping peacefully. They ran over and picked up the child, whereupon a small white envelope fell out.

Inside the envelope was a letter from the baby's father, apologizing for his not being able to be present at his son's *Bris* and asking that they give the baby a Jewish name. The rest of the letter was an emotional statement of his thanks and appreciation for the great *mitzvah* they were doing, without their even knowing who he was.

Reb Eizik quickly and deftly performed the bris, while Yaakov acted as Sandek. They were about to leave when the woman who had opened the door suddenly appeared and motioned for them to stay put. Yaakov was terrified. Seconds later, however, the woman brought out a brand-new frying pan, and handed them a dozen eggs! A veritable fortune! She invited them to make themselves omelets. The young boy was so mal-

nourished, so starved, that the eggs went down with no effort at all.

After they finished eating and were about to leave, the woman presented them with a huge sack of bread, another gift from the Russian officer. Such a quantity of bread was something the average citizen could only dream of, but how could they walk down the street carrying the bag. Surely, they would attract the

attention of the ever-watchful police. The woman suddenly understood why the two Jews hesitated to accept the priceless gift. She opened a drawer, ripped off a wad of coupons from a booklet and handed them over.

Many months later *Yaakov* was walking down the street when the same Russian officer stopped him. "I must thank you again, from the bottom of my heart. I have one more request to make of you. Whenever you make a *Bris*, you should tell my story. Let everyone know that even in Soviet Russia, there are still Jews who have a warm spot in their hearts for Judaism."

This request led to a tradition in Yaakov's family. When he is honored with being the Sandek, in commemoration of the role he played in that Bris so very long ago, he relates the story of the Russian officer, from beginning to end, with great enthusiasm and fervor at the bris.



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