



tidbits[✓] for childbirth

**Klal
Govoah**
In Memory of Rav Meir Zlotowitz zt"l

The Tidbits publication seeks to familiarize the reader with various halachos and minhagim along with common practices. Each individual should act based on their family mesorah and minhag along with guidance from their Rav. Please reach out with any input or inquiries you may have so we can further enhance this mission.

Childbirth

When a woman is close to her due date there is minhag for her husband to be honored with *hotza'ah v'hachnasa (pesichah)*, taking the Sefer Torah from the Aron, as a segulah for an easy childbirth.

Many questions arise regarding childbirth on Shabbos and Yom Tov. A full review of this matter is beyond the scope of this work. One should consult their Rav and be prepared regarding the many issues including when and how to contact medical professionals, preferred methods of transportation (Uber vs taxi service etc), who may accompany the mother, what may be brought along, returning home if necessary etc. As a general rule, childbirth is considered a matter of *pikuach nefesh* which overrides all Shabbos prohibitions. However, as it is a natural occurrence, if feasible, melachah should be performed by a non-Jew or using a shinui (indirect manner). Even if one is unsure if the circumstance before him is *pikuach nefesh*, this too overrides any and all Shabbos prohibitions. The mother is considered a *choleh sh'yeish bo sakanah* (ill person with life-threatening illness) following the birth which has ramifications, most notably, regarding melachah on Shabbos and fasting on Yom Kippur; a Rav should be consulted.

When the childbirth takes place around the time of shekiya through tzeis hakoachavim it is important to note the exact time of the birth to determine the date of the bris (as well as the pidyon haben, if applicable).

The grandparents should be informed of the good news immediately after the birth, especially if they are aware and nervous about the

childbirth. (Note, children should be cognizant of their parents' worry for their welfare. It is advisable to share good news such as when one is expecting a child, especially as first child, as soon as it is deemed appropriate.)

Many have the practice of the father reciting the berachah of *hatov v'hameitiv* upon the birth of a son. The berachah can be made even before actually seeing his son. Some say the mother does so as well. If the child is severely unwell (r"l), many do not recite the berachah. Some have the minhag of the father reciting *shehecheyanu* upon seeing his newly born daughter. Many have the custom of reciting *nishmas*.

In Eretz Yisroel and in some other communities there is a minhag for the new mother to recite the berachah of *gomel* in the presence of 10 men. Some say we substitute this by having the woman answer to *borchu* when her husband is either called to the Torah or serves as the *sheli-ach tzibbur*.

For the first seven days following childbirth it is considered spiritually dangerous for a new mother to venture outside alone and she must be accompanied by a *shomer*. If she hears a *davar sheb'kedushah (Borchu, kaddish or kedushah)* many say that this danger is no longer relevant and she no longer requires a *shomer*.

Upon the birth of a boy we wish the father *Tizke l'gadlo l'torah ul'chuppah ul'maasim tovim*, and that the bris should be held b'zmano. Upon the birth of a girl we wish the parents *Tizke l'gadlah l'torah ul'chuppah ul'maasim tovim* (some add the word *l'ben Torah*, blessing the parents that their daughter merit to marry a ben torah). Visiting a new mother fulfills the mitzvah of bikur cholim. The primary aspect of bikur cholim is to pray for the mother, thus one should say a tefillah for the mother.

Naming

The choice of a baby's name is the decision of the baby's parents. It is considered a matter of *ruach hakodesh*, thus one should approach the issue with proper regard. Quarreling over the

name is considered a spiritual danger for the child.

The common minhag amongst minhag ashkenaz is to name the first child after the wife's side of the family followed by the husband's side for the second child. The minhag by Sefardim is to give precedence to the father's side, and the name of the husband's father is usually given. While Sefardim name after living people Ashkenazim do not, therefore one should ensure that the name is not a given name (including a second name) of a living grandparent. One certainly fulfills the mitzvah of *kibud av v'eim* when giving a name meaningful to a parent. It is generally a significant source of *nechamah* for a widow to have a name given after her deceased spouse. When there is a recent passing in the family it is common for people to give precedence to that name.

We typically do not name after someone who had bad mazel which includes someone who died young, was killed or died childless. If the person was killed *al kiddush Hashem* this does not apply. Many advise that adding a name removes the concern. At the same time, Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l rules that even when adding a name it is still considered naming after the deceased person. Many will not name after someone who was not observant. Aside from giving names of ancestors, many name after tzaddikim/tzidkoniyyos. Alternatively, some choose a name from the parashah.

One should not give an unusual name which may discomfort the child when they grow older (Chazon Ish). Many advise that the parents should find the name to be pleasing.

The naming of a boy occurs at the bris. Even if the bris is delayed, the prevalent minhag is not to name the child until the

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bris. A girl is customarily named with a *mi she'beirach* at *kerias hatorah*. The minhag is that the father receives an *aliyah* at the time of the naming. Some do the naming at the first available *kerias hatorah* (Monday, Thursday, Rosh Chodesh etc.) while others wait specifically until Shabbos.

Even if the name has been determined, the name should not be used or discussed publicly before the formal *kerias shem*. As a matter of convenience, many poskim rule that one may still write the name on the birth certificate prior to the *kerias shem*, yet this should not serve as confirmation of the name.

Aliyah La'Torah

Following the birth of a son the father is considered a *chuyuv* to receive an *aliyah*. Common practice is to give an *aliyah* to one who will be naming their daughter as well. A *mi shebeirach la'cholah* for the mother is recited in both cases. In addition, it is stated that the first time the mother comes to shul the father receives an *aliyah* and has in mind that his recitation of *borchu* should serve as a public proclamation of thanks to Hashem, similar to *birchas hagomel*.

Forty days following the birth of a son or eighty days following the birth of a daughter, the father should receive an *aliyah*. This is in place of a *korban yoledes* which would be brought at this point.

Kiddush

There is a minhag to host a Kiddush on Shabbos upon the birth of a girl. This serves to formally thank Hashem for the blessing of a new child as well as to receive berachos from well-wishers. Others write that the naming of a child is what brings the neshamah into the child and is the reason for the celebration. When naming during the week, some serve refreshments and l'chaim in shul following the naming; many do so in place of a Kiddush on Shabbos.

For Tidbits on Shalom Zachor, Bris and Pidyon Haben please see the dedicated publications on these topics.

This space was left blank because...

*When you have
nothing to say,
say nothing.*

-Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz z"l

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