



***Pidyon Ha-Ben***

***A Ceremony of Redemption & Celebration for  
YIGDAL SHALEV JERUSALEM JEREMIAH PAULL  
RAPHAEL***

***Sunday February 11, 1990  
Tu B'Shevat  
New Year of the Trees***

***Simcha & Geela Rayzel Raphael  
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## **סדר פדיון הבן**

**A ceremony of redemption and celebration for**

**YIGDAL SHALEV JERUSALEM JEREMIAH PAUL  
RAPHAEL**

**יגדל שלו בן שמחה וגילה רייזל**

**Sunday February 11, 1990**

**טו בשבט**

**The New Year of the Trees**

**One tradition holds that at the birth of a boy, a cypress tree is planted, and at the birth of a girl, a cedar tree is planted. At the time of the children's marriage, branches from each tree are cut and carved for poles for the huppah."**

**ישימך אלהים כאפרים וכמנשה**



# CEREMONY OF פדיון הבן PIDYON HA-BEN FOR YIGDAL SHALEV RAPHAEL

**SONG: YIGDAL** (SHEFA & LIZ)

## WELCOMING THE CHILD:

**ALL:** We are gathered here today as family, friends and community to welcome and bless a child.

### PARENTS

Please welcome our firstborn son, born January 9, 1990 who shall be known in the community of Israel as Yigdal Shalev Jerusalem Jeremiah Paull Raphael.

### DAVID:

**יגדל** - from Gen. 48:19, meaning "he shall be exalted". This name is offered as a blessing from his parents that he shall grow strong & be exalted!

### MARGOT

**שלווה** - meaning "tranquility". Named in memory of Geela Rayzel's maternal grandmother, Sylvia Slova Robinson. To those who have gotten to know this little boy, shalev, tranquility is definitely one of his qualities.

### MIRIAM:

**JERUSALEM**- the place of his conception last spring. In his lifetime may he come to know the majestic sights and sounds of the ancient and modern Holy City.

**A.J.: JEREMIAH**- Named in memory of Simcha's paternal grandmother, Jenny Palefsky. May he be blessed with the wisdom of the Prophet Jeremiah who was a leader of his people in times of social and political transition.

### SIMCHA:

**PAUL**- Maintaining the legacy of the Paull family name now that Geela Rayzel and I have adopted Raphael (**רפאל**) as our blended family name.

### ZAYDE HAROLD:

I represent my parents and my grandparents and the direct lineage of all the ancestors that preceeded your birth. I bless you....

### MOMMY NAT:

I represent all the women who have ever given birth, having the knowledge of life growing inside. I bless you...

### BUBBY ROSE:

I represent the community of women, who used to sing and dance through the birthing, guarding the baby until its naming. I bless you...

**ZAYDE MITCH:**

I represent the traditional wisdom of the elders handed down from community to community. I bless you...

**PARENTS:**

Yigdal Shalev, we are your parents who prayed for your conception, anxiously awaited your arrival, and now that you have graced us with your presence we eagerly accept responsibility for nurturing and caring for you. We have written a Co-Parenting Document which tells you about our promise to you as parents.

**SHEFA:**

Welcome this child: Capricorn Sun Sign - mountain goat, with leadership qualities, material, practical, determined to reach your goals. Cancer Moon and Ascendent - water sign baby boy, emotional, sensitive, flowing, changing with the moon.

**HERBIE:**

Welcome this child: poet, philosopher, artist, scholar, unsculpted bundle of joy!

**ALL:** Yigdal Shalev, we who once stood side-by-side with you at the base of Mount Sinai, we welcome you into our community of Israel.

**SONG: "WELCOME TO THE WORLD"**

by Geela Rayzel

We've been waiting these months for you  
We're glad you're here  
By the gift of your birthing  
A miracle is clear;  
You'll wind the road that lays before you  
with your ups and downs  
Blazing trails of growth and learning  
There's wisdom to be found.

**Chorus:** Welcome to the world little stranger...Welcome to the world  
Waken to the life before you ...Welcome to the whirl.

Your mother, father, aunts and uncles  
Grandparents, cousins, too  
Have all been waiting, anticipating  
That first glimpse of you  
On your shoulder rests a legacy  
Handed down through time  
Welcome to our Jewish family  
Little spark of Divine.

(Chorus)

Forge your way among our people  
With the mantle of your name  
Carving out your destiny  
There's life out there to tame.  
Wear the mark upon your body  
Carry it deep within your soul  
Connecting you throughout our history  
This sign makes you whole.

(Chorus) (cont'd)



Be a blessing, be a mensch  
 Be a feminist in your heart  
 Be a partner of social justice  
 Always do your part  
 Be a prophet, be a friend  
 Be sweet and good and kind  
 Be blessed with health and laughter  
 Knowing you are Divine.

(Chorus)

## REDEMPTION - PIDYON HA-BEN:

### SIMCHA:

Yigdal, the time has come for us to fulfill the mitzva of Pidyon Ha-Ben, the redemption of the firstborn son. Do you know that in ancient times, the firstborn son of every Israelite family had special responsibilities and a very special status? From the day of his birth, every boy-child was consecrated to the vocation of assisting the priests, the Kohanim, in the conduct of sacrificial worship.

### GEELA RAYZEL:

Later, in the wilderness of the Sinai desert, the Israelites built a Tabernacle, and the vocation of the firstborn was transferred to the Levites. The Torah - which your Emah is learning in rabbinical school - decreed that every father release his firstborn son from the duties of the priesthood by redeeming him from a Kohen. And even to this day, we continue to recall this ancient practice of the redeeming of the firstborn, as a recollection of the Exodus from Egypt.

### SIMCHA:

Today, when we are rapidly approaching the dawning of a new century, and creating a new era of Jewish life, we no longer uphold the tenets of priestly Judaism. In symbolically enacting this ancient ritual of redemption, on this day, we want to acknowledge with deep respect the mystery and the miracle of the creation of human life, & focus our hearts & minds on the gratitude we feel having been blessed with the birth of a firstborn son. With this in mind, we are now prepared to participate in the mitzva of the symbolic redeeming of a firstborn son.

### PARENTS:

Holy One of Being, God of Our Ancient Fathers and Mothers, Source of All Blessing: we are grateful for this blessing of a son born to us, and with grateful hearts we participate in this mitzva of Pidyon Ha-ben.

### SIMCHA:

זה בני בכורי הוא פטר רכם לאמו והקב"ה צוה לפדותו

This is my son, the first born of his mother, the one who keeps us occupied day and night with the never-ending joys of feeding, burping, changing. The Holy Blessed One commanded to redeem him, as it is written in the Torah: "Make holy before me every firstborn of Israel; he is Mine.(Ex. 13:20) And elsewhere it is written: "When he is one month old you shall redeem him for five sh'kalim".

### GEELA RAYZEL:

Actually, I think one month after giving birth to a baby someone has to redeem his mother with a night of childcare so his father and I can go out for dinner & a movie.

**NORMAN:**

מאי בעית טפי, לטן לי בנך בכורך שהוא פטר רמם לאמו  
או בעית לפדותו בעד חמש סלעים כדמחיבת מדאורייתא?

What would you prefer? To give me your firstborn son, or to redeem him for five sh'kalim, as you are obligated to do according to the Torah?

**SIMCHA:**

That's not a hard choice to make. I certainly want to redeem my son. In order to fulfill my obligation according to Torah, I am ready to offer to you the equivalent of five sh'kalim, - coins from Israel, Canada and the United States, representing the various homes of our son and his parents.

**NORMAN:**

I am prepared to accept these five sh'kalim and declare your son redeemed...

**NOGA:**

But Abba, what does it mean that you are redeeming Yigdal? Redeemed from what? What does redemption mean in the 1990s!

**FRIEND:**

May this child be redeemed from fear, pestilence, sword, famine, and sorrow.

**FRIEND:**

May this child be redeemed from living in a world plagued with war and hatred.

**OTHERS:**

**Your thoughts on what kind of redeemed world  
we want to create for the next generation....**

**NORMAN:**

Now that we understand what it means to be redeemed in our times, I ask you, his parents, to make your pledge to ensure his redemption.

**PARENTS:**

As our pledge to guarantee Yigdal's redemption, we offer you these five sh'kalim.  
And we offer five Tzedakah donations to organizations working for:  
saving the planet...

Jewish spiritual renewal...

improving the quality of life in Israel

the elimination of nuclear weapons

& the empowerment of women & men

**SIMCHA:**

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וציונו על פדיון הבן.

**GEELA RAYZEL:**

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם שהחנינו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.



## **BLESSING THE CHILD:**

### **NORMAN:**

זה תחת זה, זה חלוף זה מחול על זה. ויפנס זה הבן לחיים, לתורה וליראת  
שמים. יהי רצון שפננס שנכנס לפדיון פן יפנס לתורה ולחופה ולמעשים טובים  
May he be granted a full life, lived in devotion to Torah and reverence for G-d. As  
this child has attained redemption, so may it be G-d's will that he attain the  
blessings of Torah, marriage and a life of good deeds. And may he be blessed with....

### **ZALMAN: Priestly Blessings**

### **SONG:**

May the Blessings of God Rest upon You  
May God's Peace Abide with God  
May God's Presence Illuminate Your Heart  
Now and Forever More

### **BOBBI MEIRA:**

The power of blessing comes from the deep.

### **WOMEN'S VOICES:**

Fruit of the Womb  
The Power Within  
Power of the Eternal Feminine  
Source of Life, Fertility and Passion  
Ancient Deep Wellspring  
Goddess of Birthing and Mothering  
Flowing with Compassion  
Labor of Love  
Sending forth life bursting into the world.

### **LEAH TIFERET:**

May he grow, learn, talk, eat, cry, laugh, love

### **Yael:**

May he sing, dance, swim, climb, taste, feel

### **FRIEND:**

May he smell, see, hear, daven, play, and experience life

### **FRIEND**

May he delight his parents as he yawns, burps and messes

### **OTHERS:**

**We ask for your Blessings for Yigdal**

# BIRCOT SHADAYIM - A NURSING SONG

by Geela Rayzel

Bircot Shadayim, Bircot Shamayim  
Bircot tchom rovetzet tachat  
Bircot horecha, bircot v'rachaame  
Yivarechecha ad olam.

Hu yeheyeh l'am, gam hu yigdal, yigdal,  
Tivarechecha b'or el shadai  
Nashir tachat kanfey Shechinah  
NaGeela v'nismicha bo.

Blessings of heaven, blessings of the deep  
Love that flows above and beneath;  
Blessings of womb, blessings of the breast  
May you be graced always with the best.

He'll be exalted, in the love, in the light.  
May you be blessed in the light of G-d.  
We'll come rejoicing in the light, in the light  
Singing under wings of **Shechinah**.

## **SIMCHA:**

Yigdal, we have been blessed with your presence in this exciting time of history. The Berlin Wall is being removed on this very day; as of this week, South Africa is moving towards freedom; the Soviet Union is about to institute a multi-party system, the world is changing and you are a child of this age.

**FRED:** A child who will be alive for the turn of the millennium

**CHAIM:** A son who rides the wave of the feminist revolution

**FRIEND:** A child who will help transform & restore the ecological balance of the earth

**ELANA:** A child born to the Jewish people, born at a time when the State of Israel again exists, when the ingathering of the exiles is still occurring.

**ZALMAN:** A child born at the time of the shattering of the old paradigm and the creation of the new.

**ADINA:** A child born when Hebrew again flourishes as a spoken language.

**FRIEND:** A child born into the great Diaspora of North American Jewry, with its burgeoning Jewish renewal.

**JULIETTE:** A soul from beyond

**FRIEND:** Traveling through lifetimes

**PARENTS:** Landing on our doorstep



**RUTH:**       Needing to learn more lessons this time around

**PARENTS:**   You have chosen us!

**ALL:**         May you make him welcome!

**FRIEND:**     Teach him what he needs to know!

**GRANDPARENTS:**

Learn from him all that he will teach you!

**JULIETTE:**   Remind him of the knowledge of the entire Torah taught within the womb!

**FRIEND:**     The angels have ushered him in!

**PARENTS:**   They have already announced your soulmate!

**ALL:**         May you be lead to the huppah with joyous singing and dancing!

**FRIEND:**     We learn from the Talmud:

**SUE F:**       Plant a cypress tree when a boy-child is born!

**FRIEND:**     Plant a cedar for a girl!

**DEBRA G:**    The boughs of these trees will be cut to hold the huppah

**GRANDPARENTS:**

Let these trees be symbols of the generations  
Reminders of the family tree of ancestors that preceeded you  
Seeds of future branches to come

**ALL:**         Let trees be planted this Tu B'shvat  
so that future generations may breathe clean.  
Let the trees be Trees of Life  
That sustain the life force of this holy planet

**MARGOT:**    Born at a time when men and women orbit in outer space.

**A.J.:**        When MacDonald's hits Moscow and may yet hit China.

**MIRIAM:**    When women are not yet free to sing or pray at the Kotel with a Torah.

**DAVID:**     When cheap, biodegradable diapers haven't yet been invented.

**MITCH:**     Born when the New Age is rapidly approaching Middle Age, we pray that in  
your life time:

**FRIEND:**     You can use your frequent flyer coupons for a ticket to Saturn

**FRIEND:**     All food will be organic and dietetic

**FRIEND:** Teenagers will have low car insurance rates

**FRIEND:** College tuition will be free.

**FRIEND:** They will play Beatles music in elder hostels

**FRIEND:** The national debt will be paid off

**FRIEND:** There will be peace in the Middle East

**FRIEND:** There will be continuous dancing in the streets of Yerushalayim

**PARENTS:**

Yigdal Shalev, we bring you into the world at a time of hope, may all our hopes dreams and visions be realized and may you be a blessing for us, your people, and the planet, and together with strength let us say:

**ALL:** Amen! Selah!

עוד ישמע בערי יהודה ובחוצות ירושלים  
 קול יגדל וקול שמחה  
 וקול שלו וקול גילה

Od yishama b'arey Yehuda, U'vekhutzot Yerushalayim  
 Kol Yigdal v'kol Simcha  
 Kol Shalev v'kol Geela

We dedicate this ceremony to:  
 All the generations of the Robinson & Paull families -  
 Past, Present and Future

Written by:  
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