

Brit Milah

January 5, 2003



ברית מילה
ב' בשבט תשס"ג

Avi Tzvi Scheinberg

Thank you for joining us on this special occasion. Just one week ago today, we experienced one of the longest, exhausting, yet exhilarating days of our lives. We welcomed Avi into our family – learning how to care for him and experience new adventures with him. Today our family is ushered into a ceremony with a 3500 year history – entering into a *brit* (covenant) with G-d as a member of the Jewish community in the same way our ancestor Abraham did.

The *brit milah* is more than a simple circumcision – although circumcision is the part that nobody ever forgets! It's a Jewish life-cycle event. Our son will also have his name officially presented to the community in which he will continue to grow and celebrate his identity and traditions.

A *brit milah* is officiated by a *mohel*. Avi's *mohel* is Rabbi Michael Henesch, who will explain each portion of the ceremony as it happens. What follows are some of our thoughts we have on Avi's *brit milah*.

Again, Thank you for sharing this *simcha* with us!

Eight days: In most cases, the *brit milah* takes place on day #8 of the baby boy's life. Considering that we weren't certain what day our child would be born, (nor did we know if it would be a boy or a girl!) it doesn't give much time to send out invitations, book plane tickets, etc. We are fortunate that we have *so* many friends and family members who are sharing the celebration with us today on such short notice – especially Rick and Betsy Schuster, Avi's maternal grandparents, who are here from Boca Raton, Florida. A special thanks goes to Hal and Elissa Scheinberg, Avi's paternal grandparents, who made many of the arrangements and are hosting this *simcha* today.

What we found interesting is that the *mitzvah* (commandment) of *brit milah* is so important that it can be done on the Sabbath, Rosh HaShanah, and even Yom Kippur! (without all of the food, of course.) It shows how important it is for Avi to become a part of the community *now*.

Male, Jewish celebrities who share the same birthday as Avi (and who may have had a *brit milah* on January 5):

Kevin Weisman: plays Marshall, the lovable gadget-freak on ABC-TV's "Alias." Born December 29, 1970.
Jay Fiedler: Starting quarterback for the Miami Dolphins, Jewish Sports Hall of Fame inductee. Born December 29, 1971.

Explaining the name:

In the Ashkenazic (Eastern European) Jewish tradition, it is customary to name a newborn after a relative who is no longer living. We honor the memory of Avi's great-grandfathers, Al and Herb, with the names we selected for our son:

A. Victor Dash, D.D.S.

אברהם אביגדור בן אלישע ורבקה

From his great-grandfather Al (*Avraham Avigdor*), Avi inherits a spirit of great kindness and generosity and an infectious sense of fun. His family meant everything to him, and he would be delighted to see it represented so excellently by Kyra, Mike and Avi.

— *Betsy Schuster, Avi's maternal grandmother*

Prof. Herbert Frankel

צבי בן יהודה ורבקה

Herbert Frankel, *Tzvi ben Yehuda v'Rivka*, valued modesty, honesty, and integrity. He was also conscientious, patient, gentle, and generous – with both time and money. Although he spent most of his career teaching math and electrical engineering, he was also passionate about a variety of other subjects, including: art, music (especially opera), poetry, geography, history, chess, bridge, and puns. He enjoyed gaining knowledge and transformed complex ideas into simpler concepts he could share with others. He was devoted to his family, and he would have enjoyed meeting you, Avi.

— *Elissa Scheinberg, Avi's paternal grandmother*

Literal translations for each name:

Avi - אבי - “My father.” This is not limited to the traditional meaning of the word, but rather to someone who is a mentor or a guide. Jewish liturgy sometimes refers to G-d with this word. We hope that Avi will be a good father, and a good mentor and guide to others.

Tzvi - צבי - “Deer / gazelle.” As Avi grows up, we wish him the same beauty, poise, grace and speed that a deer has.

We acknowledge members of Avi's immediate family who are with us today in person and in spirit:

Kyra Schuster and Mike Scheinberg, Alexandria, VA (parents)
Betsy and Rick Schuster, Boca Raton, FL (grandparents)
Elissa and Hal Scheinberg, Rockville, MD (grandparents)
Naomi Kalish and Rob Scheinberg, Hoboken, NJ (aunt/uncle)
Sally Dash, Boca Raton, FL (great-grandmother)
Malvina Frankel, Bethesda, MD (great-grandmother)
Dr. Louis Scheinberg, Stamford, CT (great-grandfather)