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"תקופת התנאים"
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Halachos compiled by HaRav Chaim Bleier – Translated from the Hebrew edition by R' Zerachya Shicker

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Krias HaTorah

Birth of a Child

Parshas Chayei Sarah 5783

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Brachah on the Birth of a Child

1. The brachah of HaTov v'HaMeitiv is said on the birth of a son, and Shehecheyanu for a daughter. Many people are unaware of this and end up not making these brachos at the time of birth. Thus, we saw a need to cite these halachos so that people know them and everyone can make the appropriate brachos at the time of their simchah, may it be b'karov by all of Klal Yisroel. May the zechus of learning these halachos be a cause of brachah and siyata d'Shmaya that people should actually make these brachos, Amen.

Birth of a Son

2. One makes the brachah of Shehecheyanu upon hearing news that is only good for him; if it is good for others too, he makes HaTov v'HaMeitiv (ש"י"ע או"ה סי רכ"ב סי"א). Thus, if one's wife gives birth to a boy, he says HaTov v'HaMeitiv (ש"י"ע או"ה סי רכ"ג). גמל ברכות דף נ"ט ע"ב, ש"י"ע או"ה סי רכ"ג (סי"א): Hashem was good to him, for a person wants a son, and He was also good to the wife, for she also wants a son. This is true even if they already have several sons (מ"ב סי"ג).
3. **Just hearing the news.** This brachah is said even upon just hearing the news, e.g., if a father is in another city and hears that his wife gave birth to a boy (מ"ב סי"א). If one made the brachah upon hearing the news and then came home within thirty days, he does not say Shehecheyanu upon seeing his son for the first time since HaTov v'HaMeitiv is a more inclusive brachah and because one should not make a brachah in a situation of safeik (שעה"צ רכ"ה סי"ה).
4. **Wife also makes brachah.** The woman who gave birth also makes the brachah herself (ש"י"ע שם) after she has washed her hands and is clean and fit to make a brachah.
5. **Already has several sons.** If one has several sons but no daughters and he wants to have a daughter, but he has another son, it is unclear whether he can say HaTov v'HaMeitiv upon merely hearing of the birth of his son (זכר ד"ה זכר). In practice, he can say the brachah (ביאה"ל סי רכ"ג ד"ה זכר). However, everyone agrees he should say Shehecheyanu upon seeing his son since he certainly experiences joy then (הגרי"ח קנייבסקי).
6. **Until when can the brachah be said?** L'chatchilah, the brachah should be said as soon as one hears the news or sees his son, before the newness wears off and the joy subsides (מ"ב סי רכ"ג). But even if one did not say the brachah right when he heard, he can still say it since the joy remains (מ"ב סי"ג). Some say that as long as it is within three days, one can say the brachah with Hashem's Name if he still feels joy (מור וקציעה סי רכ"ד ד"ה אבל אם).
7. Some say one can say the brachah as long as he is involved in the matter and has not diverted his focus from the news (אי"א בוטשאטש). Others hold he can say it as long as the impact of the joy is still in his heart (כפה"ח סי"ה). Others hold he can even say it until the bris if the joy is still in his heart (הגרי"ח קרליץ). Yet others hold he can say it as long as he is still informing others about the birth of his son (תשו"ב ח"ב סי קל"ב).

Birth of a Daughter

8. **Shehecheyanu.** HaTov v'HaMeitiv is not said on the birth of a daughter since the joy is mainly for one. However, both parents say Shehecheyanu upon seeing her for the first time (מ"ב סי"ג) – this is no worse than seeing a friend for the first time in thirty days (ע"י). Even though nowadays people do not usually say Shehecheyanu upon seeing a friend (ערוה"ש סי"ד, ערוה"ש סי"ג) – especially now that we more frequently see or speak to each other by phone etc. (הליכות שלמה תפלה פכ"ג סי"ב) – everyone agrees one feels joy upon seeing his daughter for the first time.

9. **Just hearing the news.** Unlike when a son is born (above, 3), Shehecheyanu is said only upon seeing a new daughter for the first time, not upon just hearing of her birth. When it comes to news, the birth of a daughter is not like the birth of a son, and one only says a brachah upon seeing her (ש"י"ע הרב ח"א סדר ברכת הנהנין סי"ב). Thus, if one returns from abroad and sees a daughter for the first time, he can still make a brachah (מ"ב סי"ב רכ"ה סי"ה).
10. **Already has many daughters.** However, even if a man already has several daughters and does not have such a desire for another one, he still says Shehecheyanu upon seeing a new daughter for the first time (הגרי"ח קרליץ, הגרי"ח קנייבסקי, לפאר ולברך עמ' קכ"ו). One certainly does not say Baruch Dayan Emes upon hearing about the birth of a daughter even if he is upset; that brachah is for something that one had and was taken from him, not something that was never given to him (ביאה"ל סי רכ"ב סי"ב ד"ה דיין).
11. **After many years.** Even if a couple has a daughter after being childless for many years, they should only say Shehecheyanu, not HaTov v'HaMeitiv. Chazal did not institute HaTov v'HaMeitiv for the birth of a daughter under any circumstances, even if it took many years (הגרי"ח קרליץ, הגרי"ח קנייבסקי, לברך ולפאר עמ' קכ"ז).
12. **Wife also says the brachah.** The wife also says the brachah upon seeing her daughter for the first time (הליכות שלמה שם דבר הלכה אות). (הגרי"ח קנייבסקי שם י"ד, הגרי"ח קנייבסקי שם י"ד).

Birth of Twins

13. **Two boys.** If one has twin sons, l'chatchilah he should say HaTov v'HaMeitiv when he hears about the first one and then again when he hears about the second one, as each one is a good piece of news. If he did not say the brachah before both were born, he says one brachah for both (מ"ב סי רכ"ב סי"ב ושער הציפון סי"ג, מ"ר ב"ש"ת שבת). (הקהתי ח"ד סי ע"ב סי"ה).
14. **Two girls.** All of this applies to the brachah of Shehecheyanu on the birth of twin daughters.
15. **A boy and a girl.** If one has a boy and a girl, he says HaTov v'HaMeitiv on the boy and Shehecheyanu on the girl even if they were both born before he said a single brachah, as HaTov v'HaMeitiv does not apply to the birth of a daughter (הגרי"ח קנייבסקי).

Birth of Grandchildren

16. **HaTov v'HaMeitiv.** Some poskim hold one says HaTov v'HaMeitiv if he is overjoyed at the birth of a grandson (ש"י"ע קצוה"ש). However, many hold it is not said since we do not find explicitly that Chazal instituted a brachah on the birth of a grandson (ע"פ שו"ת הרשב"א ח"ד סי ע"ז, מג"א ריש סי רכ"ה). In practice, it is proper to minimize the saying of these brachos where they are not specifically called for (ביאה"ל ריש סי רכ"ג).
17. **Shehecheyanu.** The poskim also discuss whether one can say Shehecheyanu upon seeing a grandchild for the first time. Some say one should not say it since Chazal only said to say it on the birth of a daughter (הגרי"ח קרליץ, הגרי"ח קנייבסקי שם י"ד, הגרי"ח קנייבסקי שם י"ד).
18. However, others hold that although it is unclear whether HaTov v'HaMeitiv may be said, Shehecheyanu may certainly be said upon seeing a grandchild for the first time. In line with the Mishnah Berurah's reasoning to say Shehecheyanu on the birth of a daughter (above, 8), this is no worse than seeing a friend for the first time in thirty days. Especially when seeing a grandchild causes tremendous joy, e.g., the first child born to one's son or daughter, one can say the brachah; we do not say "safeik brachos l'hakeil" (ע"פ הבי"ח או"ה סי כ"ט אות ב'). Thus, there is valid basis for one to be meikel to say the brachah when he experiences great joy.

