

## NAMING A CHILD

When last you stood under the chuppah  
Each of you lifted a cup of wine  
A symbol of joy and hope  
The rabbi raised an empty cup  
A symbol of what can yet be  
A symbol of promise not yet fulfilled  
Each of you poured your wine into that cup  
A merger of wines,  
A blending of two into one  
With that, a new syntax was born  
Not "I" and "me"  
But "we" and "us"

Today, out of that union  
A new vintage, a new scent, a new taste  
And a new syntax is pronounced:  
"Ours."  
Ours created out of love  
Ours to raise with wisdom, in patience, for purpose  
Born is he into a family  
Informed by four millennia of culture and faith and dreams  
In him are ages of patriarchs and matriarchs  
Poets and prophets and rabbis and philosophers

In him lies a deep history  
From Genesis to Exodus  
From revelation to redemption

He will watch you and catch from you  
Temperament, morality, responsibility, resilience.  
Soon he will begin to walk and you will fear lest he fall  
Yet stand at a distance so that he may stand on his two feet

He is yours, but not your duplicate  
He is created in God's image  
And in him lie talents unimagined  
Visions undreamt of

Let there be space in your togetherness  
An intimate distance born of love  
That does not overwhelm

He is yours  
And you have given him a name  
Attached to your own

But the sages say  
Each human being carries three names:  
One that parents give,

One that God blesses,  
And one that the child earns  
With mind, soul, spine and heart.

He is yours  
Unique, unreplicable, open to a wondrous future  
Bless him with Torah, *ahavah*, and *gemilut hassadim*  
Wisdom, love, and acts of goodness

■ **Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis**

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