

The last time we spoke to you like this was at your brit millah. We welcomed you to the family and to our Jewish community, we gave you a Hebrew name, and we shared our hopes and dreams for you as we wrapped you in a tallit. At this new milestone in your life we are again welcoming you into the family and the Jewish community in your new role as a young adult. Now we have the pleasure of watching you wrap yourself in a tallit that you have created. One that expresses your unique interpretation of your Parasha. Last time the tallit was something that we were putting upon you; this time, it is something you are pulling around yourself. It is of your own making, something that has come from within you. And we couldn't be prouder.

Our hopes and dreams for you are pretty much the same as what we wished for when we first spoke to you. And we are so proud of you because you have in so many ways given us all that we dreamed of. But obviously, we aren't done with you yet! It would be simple to say that all that we want for you is for you to be happy. But we want more for you. Much more. We want – and expect – that you will do good things. Be helpful, empathetic, caring, thoughtful of others, a good friend, respectful, treat people fairly (yes, we said fair!), considerate, and appreciative. In a word, be a mensch. And we (and many others) think that you are just that. Our hope is that you will continue to be so. And through all these traits, and through being kind to others, you will end up being happy.

Try new things, certainly make mistakes, learn from those mistakes, try again, or try something else. As you act, in the back of your mind consider what you and others whom you respect and whom respect you will think of your actions now and in the future. If it is the type of embarrassment that generates laughter, that's good. If it is the type of embarrassment that generates shame, then reconsider what you are about to do.

Abba wrote a poem that he read at your Bris about your name. In the Talmud it says that we each have three names. The one we are given, the one we choose for ourselves and the one we earn. The name we gave you is both new and original to you, as well as a link to the past. For our names are part of your name. Eitan Shai ben Devorah Channah u'Gershon Shmuel. Likewise, the tallit you are sharing today is both new and original to you, as well as a link to the past. A few of the many names you have earned and we hope to continue to earn are "Great Friend," "Wonderful Brother," and "Dugma." (And, of course, Chaitan Veinshteen.)

Our final hope for you brings us once again back to your brit millah (your snipping), where we brought you into the covenant of our people under the tallit of Abba's Zeda. It was under that same tallit that your momy and abba, and uncles, aunts and cousins were married. We hope that you will someday (a long time from now) get married. And that you will do so under a chuppah. Whether it is under this tallit or that tallit is not important to us. But we do want for you to find, or create, a tallit that is an integral part of your life, and for Judaism to always be a part of who you are. You may express your Judaism in your own unique way, just as your tallit expresses your creativity and artistry in your own individual way. We expect that it will be different from our way, and from your friends' ways, but what is important to us is that you find your way to be Jewish and to love being Jewish.

We love you and are so proud of who you are and who you are yet to become.