

סדר ברית מילה

Service for Brit Milah



Introduction

Welcome to the ceremony of Brit Milah. The ceremony that you are about to witness has its roots in the Torah; we are commanded to circumcise our sons at the age of eight days, and have done so since our forefather Abraham circumcised his son Isaac. It is a central part of the Jewish religion, symbolizing the bond between God and the Jewish people. The ceremony consists of prayers consecrating what is otherwise just a surgical procedure, and elevating it to a religious act. The baby is also given a Hebrew name, thus formally introducing him to the community.

Please feel free to ask questions before and after the ceremony.

Please refrain from taking photographs during the part of the ceremony when the circumcision is performed.

Definitions

Bris/Brit Milah: Literally, “covenant of circumcision.” The term refers to the ceremony in which the circumcision is performed. “Bris” is the Yiddish equivalent.

Kvatter/kvatterin (male/female): Sometimes wrongly translated as “godparents,” the kvatter and/or kvatterin are the individuals who are honored with the responsibility of carrying the baby into the room for Brit Milah.

Mohel/mohelet (male/female): This is the person authorized to perform the Brit Milah. Once primarily taught by apprenticeship, most Conservative and Reform mohalim (plural) are physicians trained in the ritual aspects of Brit Milah.

Sandek: This is the person on whose lap the Brit Milah is performed. It is a position of honor, as the sandek is seen as a Jewish role model for the baby.

Welcoming the Baby

As the child is brought into the room, all rise

Congregation:

בָּרוּךְ הַבָּא !

Baruch haba

Blessed is the one who comes.

Cantor/Mohelet:

בָּרוּךְ הַבָּא הַנִּימּוּל לְשִׁמוּנָהּ!

Blessed is the one who comes to be circumcised on the eighth day.

Chair of Elijah

Mohelet:

זֶה הַכִּסֵּא שֶׁל אֱלִיהוּ הַנְּבִיא זְכוּר לְטוֹב.

This is the chair of Elijah the Prophet, of blessed memory. Elijah is present at each Brit Milah, to witness the performance of this mitzvah, and to guide the hand of the mohel.

לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָתִי יְיָ: שִׁבְרָתִי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ יְיָ, וּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ עֲשִׂיתִי: אֱלִיהוּ מְלֹאךְ
הַבְּרִית, הִנֵּה שְׁלָךְ לְפָנֶיךָ, עֹמֵד עַל יְמִינִי וְסִמְכָנִי. שִׁבְרָתִי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ יְיָ.
שֵׁשׁ אֲנֹכִי עַל אֲמֶרְתְּךָ, כְּמוֹצֵא שְׁלָל רַב: שְׁלוֹם רַב לְאַהֲבֵי תוֹרָתְךָ, וְאִין
לְמוֹ מְכֻשׁוֹל אֲשֶׁרִי תִבְחַר וּתִקְרַב יְשִׁכֵן חֲצֵרְךָ,

This is the throne of Elijah the Prophet, who is remembered for good. For Your salvation do I long, Adonai, and I perform Your commandments. Elijah, angel of the Covenant, I stand ready to perform this mitzvah; stand by my right side and assist me. I hoped for your salvation, Adonai. I rejoice in your word, as one who finds abundant wealth. Abundant peace have those who love your Torah, and there is no stumbling for them. Happy is the one whom You choose and draw near to dwell in Your courts--

Mohelet or Congregation:

נִשְׂבְּעָה בְּטוֹב בֵּיתְךָ קֹדֶשׁ הַיְכָלְךָ:

Nis 'b' ah b' tuv beitecha, kadosh hechalecha.

--may we be satisfied by the goodness of Your house, Your holy shrine.

Readings

I. A New Son of Israel

You are a parents' dream realized, their hope fulfilled. You are the latest chapter in the unfolding lives of your father and mother.

You are a bridge over which we who welcome you can gaze from this day into future days, from our generation into yours. You are the newest link in the endless chain of our peoples' history.

If you hold your hand before your eyes, you can hide the tallest mountain. If we get caught up in what we do in our everyday lives, we can forget that miracles fill the world. You remind us of the many wonders that happen all around us.

A new son of Israel has come, and with him comes a great promise. In his soul is the potential to bring greatness to our world. He brings blessings into our lives, as he reminds us that the world is not yet complete. We each share in the task of perfecting this world.

II. Living Judaism

Judaism begins at home. It begins in homes where Judaism lives in the atmosphere and is integrated into the normal pattern of daily life.

It begins in homes where words of the Jewish tradition are part of the everyday vocabulary, where Jewish books are displayed and read, where Jewish songs are enjoyed.

It begins in homes where the children see and participate in symbols and rituals that link them to a people with a colorful and rich culture.

It begins in homes where Jewish ritual objects are visible: Shabbat candlesticks, and *chanukiyot*, *mezuzot* and *havdallah* sets.

It begins in homes where into the deepest layers of a child's developing personality are woven strands of love for the Jewish tradition and devotion to the Jewish people.

Judaism begins in the home. A truly Jewish home therefore, is not only a place where Jews live, but a place where Judaism is lived.

The founders of our people wisely assigned to parents the task of transmitting the ideals of *Torah*, *chuppah* and *ma'asim tovim*-study, family and the performance of good deeds- for it is in the home that the foundations of the future are set.

Children are not only *banim*, the “sons” of the past; they are also *bonim*, the “builders” of tomorrow.

III. On Children

Your children are not your children
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you
They belong not to you.
You can give them your love but not your thoughts
For they have their own thoughts.
You can house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
But seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are
sent forth.

Parents delegate the performance of the Brit Milah

Our God and God of all generations, we are proud and humbled to be partners in Your work of creation. May we be blessed with patience, wisdom and understanding as we nurture our son. May we be supported by a community that reinforces the values of our Jewish homes and helps us to raise him to be strong in his beliefs and caring in his interactions. May we be privileged to see him grow into manhood and create his own loving family.
We stand in the presence of this community, ready and willing to

observe the commandment of Brit Milah, which we accept with awe and observe with sincerity.

הִנְנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזוּמָן לְקַיֵּם מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה שְׂצֻנּוֹ הַבּוֹרָא יִתְבָּרַךְ לְמוֹל אֶת בְּנִי
כְּכַתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה: וּבֶן-שְׁמוֹנֵת יָמִים יְמוֹל לָכֶם כָּל-זָכָר לְדוֹרֹתֵיכֶם:

*Hin'ni muchan um'zuman le-kayem mitzvat asei shetzivanu
haborei yitbarach lamul et b'ni, kakatuv baTorah: uven shmonat
yamim yimol lachem kol zachar l'doroteichem.*

I am ready to perform the positive commandment enjoined by the Creator, Blessed be God, to circumcise my son, as it is written in the Torah: “Every male among you, throughout your generations, shall be circumcised when he is eight days old” (Genesis 17:12). I acknowledge that the responsibility to do so belongs to me. I hereby authorize you to perform the Brit Milah on my behalf.

Performance of the Brit Milah

Mohelet:

I willingly perform this commandment of Brit Milah, of bringing this child into the covenant.

Before the Circumcision:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל
הַמִּילָה.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe who has made us holy with Your commandments and commanded us concerning circumcision.

Before Circumcision for Conversion

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְמוֹל
אֶת-הַגֵּרִים.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe who has made us holy with Your commandments and commanded us concerning circumcision of converts.

The Brit Milah is performed

Parents (as soon as Brit Milah is done):

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו
במצותיו וצונו להכניסו בביתו של אברהם אבינו

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher
kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hachniso biv'rito shel Avraham
avinu.*

Praised are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe who sanctifies us with Your commandments and commands us to bring our son into the covenant of our father, Abraham.

Congregation:

כשם שנקנס לברית, כן יכנס לתורה ולחפה ולמעשים טובים.

*K'shem shenichnas labrit, ken yikanes l'Torah, ul'chuppah
ul'ma'asim tovim.*

Just as he has entered the covenant, so may he enter the worlds of Torah, loving companionship and good deeds.

Bringing the Baby into the Covenant and Naming

Rabbi/Mohelet:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.

Praised are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדש ידיו מבטן, וחק בשארן
שם, וצאצאי חתם באות ברית קדש.

על כן בשכר זאת, אל חי חלקנו צורנו צוה להציל ידידות שארנו
משחת, למען בריתו אשר שם בבשרנו. ברוך אתה יי, כורת הברית.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, קַיִם אֶת הַיְלָד הַזֶּה לְאֲבִיו וְלְאִמּוֹ, וְיִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ
בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל

יִשְׁמַח הָאָב בְּיוֹצֵא חֲלָצוֹ וְתִגַּל אִמּוֹ בְּפָרִי בְטָנָהּ, כְּכַתוּב: יִשְׁמַח אָבִיךָ
וְאִמֶּךָ. וְתִגַּל יוֹלְדֶתְךָ: וְנֹאמַר: וְאָעִבֵר עֲלֶיךָ וְאָרָאךָ מִתְבוֹסֶסֶת בְּדַמֶּיךָ,
וְנֹאמַר לְךָ בְּדַמֶּיךָ חַיִּי, וְנֹאמַר לְךָ בְּדַמֶּיךָ חַיִּי: וְנֹאמַר: זָכַר לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ,
דְּבָר צְוָה לְאֱלֹהֵי דוֹר: אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת אֶת אֲבָרְהָם וְשָׁבִיעָתוֹ לְיִשְׁחָק: וַיַּעֲמִידֶהָ
לְיַעֲקֹב לְחֹק, לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִית עוֹלָם: וְנֹאמַר: וַיִּמַּל אֲבָרְהָם אֶת יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ
בֶּן שְׁמוֹנֵת יָמִים, כְּאֲשֶׁר צָוָה אֱלֹהִים: הוֹדוּ לַיְיָ כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם
חֲסִידוֹ: הִקְהֵל עוֹנָה: הוֹדוּ לַיְיָ כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִידוֹ:
זֶה הַקָּטָן גְּדוֹל יְהִי, כְּשֵׁם
שְׁנַכְנַס לְבְרִיתוֹ, כֵּן יַכְנִס לְתוֹרָה וְלַחֲפָה וְלִמְעָשִׂים טוֹבִים. אָמֵן.

Our God and God of our Ancestors, sustain this child, and let him
be known in the House of Israel as

(corresponding to the English name

_____).

May his parents _____ and _____
be privileged to raise him to adulthood, and see in the fruit of their
labors a person respected and beloved by those around him. Just as
his parents have brought him into the Covenant, so may he choose
to continue to be a strong link in the chain of the Jewish people.
Just as he has been entered into the Covenant, so may he look
forward to a long and healthy life of Jewish learning and doing, of
loving relationships, and of good deeds. Amen.

Prayer of Healing

Rabbi/Mohelet:

מי שִׁבְרָךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, הוּא
יְבָרְךָ אֶת הַיֶּלֶד רַךְ הַנִּימּוֹל _____
וְיִשְׁלַח לוֹ [וְלְאִמּוֹ _____] רְפוּאָה
שְׁלֵמָה, בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁנֵיכֶנֶס לְבְרִית. וְכַשֵּׁם שְׁנֵיכֶנֶס לְבְרִית כֵּן יִכְנֵס לְתוֹרָה,
וְלַחֲפָה, וְלִמְעֻשִׁים טוֹבִים. וְנֹאמֵר: אָמֵן.

May the One who blessed our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
and our mothers, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, bless this
tender infant _____
who has been circumcised and send him (and his mother
_____) a complete recovery, having
been entered into the covenant. Just as he has entered the covenant
of Brit Milah, so may he enter into Torah, chuppah and ma'asim
tovim--a life of study, loving companionship and good deeds, and
let us say, Amen.

Parents explain origin of the baby's name

Grandparents' Prayer

Our God and God of All Generations, we are grateful for new
beginnings, for the bond of new life that links one generation to
another. Thankful for the blessings of family, for the love and care
that bring meaning and happiness to our lives, we rejoice with
our daughter and son in the birth of _____, our grandson.
May they grow together as a family in health and in strength, in
harmony, wisdom and love, their home filled with Torah and acts
of kindness. And may we be able to share in the joy of seeing this
child grow into adulthood. May he be a blessing to his family, his
people and all humanity. *Amen.*

Blessing the Child

Parents/Rabbi/Mohelet:

יְשַׂמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה

Y'simcha Elohim k'Ephriam v'chi M'nasheh
May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe

יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ:

Y'varech'cha Adonai v'yish'm'recha
May God bless you and keep you.

יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחַנֶּךָ:

Ya'eir Adonai panav eilecha vichuneka.
May God's countenance shine upon you and be gracious to you.

יֵשָׂא יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם:

Yisa Adonai panav eilecha v'yaseim'l'cha shalom.
May God's spirit turn to you and grant you peace.

A Blessing

May your eyes sparkle with the light of Torah,
and your ears hear the music of its words.
May the space between each letter of the scrolls
bring warmth and comfort to your soul.
May the syllables draw holiness from your heart,
and may the holiness be gentle and soothing
to you and all God's creatures.
May your study be passionate,
and meanings bear more meanings
until Life itself arrays itself to you
as a dazzling feast.
And may your conversation,
even of the commonplace,
be a blessing to all who listen to your words
and see the Torah glowing on your face.

Shehecheyanu

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהַגִּיעַנוּ לַיָּמֵן הַזֶּה.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam,
shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu v'higi'anu laz'man hazeh.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe,
Who has kept us alive, sustained us and enabled us to reach this
season.

Siman Tov

סִימָן טוֹב וּמִזָּל טוֹב
יְהִי לָנוּ וּלְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

*Siman tov umazal tov umazal tov usiman tov, (repeat x 2)
y'hei lanu*

y'hei lanu, y'hei lanu u ul'chol Yisrael.

Auspicious signs and good luck to you and to all Israel!

Hamotzi

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, hamotzi lechem
min ha'aretz.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe,
Who brings forth bread from the earth.

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