

סדר ברית מיילה

SERVICE FOR BRIT MILAH

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the ceremony of Brit Milah. What 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 (Genesis 17:10–12). It is a central part of Judaism, 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

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

Kvatter (male)/**kvatterin** (female): the individual(s) who is/are honored with bringing the baby into the room for Brit Milah.

Mohel (male)/**mohelet** (female): 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 (male)/**sandeket** (female): the person on whose lap the Brit Milah takes place. A role of great honor.

WELCOMING THE BABY

As the child is brought into the room we rise.

Congregation

בָּרוּךְ הַבָּא!
Baruch HaBa!

Baruch HaBa!

Blessed is the one who comes.

Rabbi/Mohel(et)

בָּרוּךְ הַבָּא הַנִּימּוֹל לְשִׁמוּנָה!

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

CHAIR OF ELIJAH

זֶה הַפֶּסֶא שֶׁל אֱלִיהוּ הַנְּבִיא זְכוּר לְטוֹב.
לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוֹיִתִי יי, שְׁבִרְתִּי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ יי, וּמְצוֹתֶיךָ עֲשִׂיתִי.
אֱלִיהוּ מְלֵאךְ הַבְּרִית, הִנֵּה שֶׁלְּךָ לְפָנַי, עֲמוּד עַל יְמִינִי
וְסִמְכֵנִי. שְׁבִרְתִּי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ יי, שֶׁשׁ אָנֹכִי עַל אִמְרָתְךָ
כְּמוֹצֵא שָׁלֵל רַב. שְׁלוֹם רַב לְאַהֲבֵי תּוֹרָתְךָ וְאִין לְמוֹ
מְכָשׁוֹל. אֲשֶׁרִי תִבְחַר וּתִקְרַב יִשְׁכֹּן חֲצִרְךָ.

Mohel(et) and/or Congregation

נְשַׁבְּעָה בְּטוֹב בֵּיתְךָ, קָדֵשׁ הַיְכָלְךָ.

Nisb'a b'tuv beitecha, kadosh hechalecha.

This is the chair of Elijah the Prophet, of blessed memory. Just as we welcome Elijah at our Passover Seders, we welcome him to each Brit Milah, to witness the performance of this mitzvah and to guide the hand of the mohel. This is because Elijah was passionate about the performance of this mitzvah. Also, it is said that in the time of the Messiah, it is Elijah who will turn the hearts of the parents to the children and the hearts of the children to the parents.

INTRODUCTORY READINGS

(choose one)

I. A New Son of Israel

You are a parent's dream realized, a hope fulfilled. You are the latest chapter in the unfolding lives of your family.

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

II. 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.

III. Living Judaism

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

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

It begins in homes where children see symbols and participate in 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 *Havdalah* sets.

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

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

PARENT(S) DELEGATE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE BRIT MILAH

Our God and God of our ancestors, I am proud and humbled to be a partner in Your work of creation. May I be blessed with patience, wisdom and understanding as I nurture my son. May I be supported by a community that reinforces the values of my Jewish home and helps me to raise him to be strong in his beliefs and caring in his interactions. May I be privileged to see him grow into adulthood and create his own loving family. I stand in the presence of this community, ready and willing to observe the commandment of Brit Milah, which I accept with awe and observe with sincerity.

(Hebrew Optional)

הִנְנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזַמֵּן לְקַיֵּם מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה שְׂצֻנּוֹ הַבּוֹרָא יִתְבָּרֵךְ
לְמוֹל אֶת בְּנִי, כְּכַתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה: וּבֶן־שְׁמֹנַת יָמִים יְמוֹל לָכֶם
כָּל־זָכָר לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם.

*Hineni muchan umezuman le-kayem mitzvat aseï 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." I acknowledge that the responsibility to do so belongs to me. I hereby authorize you to perform this Brit Milah on my behalf.

Mohel(et)

I willingly perform this commandment of Brit Milah, of bringing your son into the Covenant.

PERFORMANCE OF THE BRIT MILAH

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצֻנּוֹ עַל הַמִּילָה.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe,
Who sanctifies us with your commandments, and
commands us concerning circumcision.

[Alternative blessing for a Bris for conversion:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצֻנּוֹ לְמוֹל אֶת הַגֵּרִים.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe,
Who sanctifies us with your commandments, and
commands us concerning circumcision of converts.]

The Brit Milah is performed

Parents (as soon as the Brit Milah is done)

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

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher ki'dshanu b'mitzvotav
v'tzivanu l'hachniso biv'rito shel Avraham Avinu.*

Blessed 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 שזכנס לברית, כן יכנס לתורה ולחפה ולמעשים
טובים.

K'shem shenichnas labrit, kein 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.

NAMING BLESSING

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.
ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדש ידיו מבטן
וחוק בשארו שם וצאצאיו חתם באות ברית קדש, על כן
בשכר זאת אל חי חלקנו צורנו, צוה להציל ידידות
שארגו משחת למען בריתו אשר שם בבשרנו.
ברוך אתה יי כורת הברית.

אַלְהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ,

קַיִם אֶת הַיְלָד הַזֶּה לְאָבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ וְיִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ
בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל _____ בְּנוֹ _____ . יִשְׁמַח הָאָב בְּיוֹצֵא
חֲלָצוֹ וְתִגַּל אִמּוֹ בְּפָרִי בְטָנָהּ, כַּפְתּוֹב: "יִשְׁמַח
אָבִיךָ וְאִמְךָ וְתִגַּל יוֹלְדֶךָ".

קַיִם אֶת הַיְלָד הַזֶּה לְאִמּוֹ, וְיִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
_____ בְּנוֹ _____ . תִּשְׁמַח אִמּוֹ בְּפָרִי בְטָנָהּ,
כַּפְתּוֹב: יִשְׁמַח אָבִיךָ וְאִמְךָ, וְתִגַּל יוֹלְדֶךָ.

קַיִם אֶת הַיְלָד הַזֶּה לְאָבִיו, וְיִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
_____ בְּנוֹ _____ . יִשְׁמַח הָאָב בְּיוֹצֵא חֲלָצוֹ
כַּפְתּוֹב: יִשְׁמַח אָבִיךָ וְאִמְךָ, וְתִגַּל יוֹלְדֶךָ.

קַיִם אֶת הַיְלָד הַזֶּה לְאִמּוֹתָיו, וְיִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
_____ בְּנוֹ _____ . תִּגַּלְנָה אִמּוֹתָיו בְּיְלָד הַזֶּה,
כַּפְתּוֹב: יִשְׁמַח אָבִיךָ וְאִמְךָ, וְתִגַּל יוֹלְדֶךָ.

קַיִם אֶת הַיְלָד הַזֶּה לְאָבוֹתָיו, וְיִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
_____ בְּנוֹ _____ . יִשְׁמַחוּ אָבוֹתָיו בְּיְלָד הַזֶּה,
כַּפְתּוֹב: יִשְׁמַח אָבִיךָ וְאִמְךָ, וְתִגַּל יוֹלְדֶךָ.

קַיִם אֶת הַיְלָד הַזֶּה לְאָבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ, וְיִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ
בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל _____ בְּנוֹ _____ . יִשְׁמַח הָאָב וְתִגַּל
אִמּוֹ בְּיְלָד הַזֶּה, כַּפְתּוֹב: יִשְׁמַח אָבִיךָ וְאִמְךָ, וְתִגַּל
יוֹלְדֶךָ.

וְנֹאמַר: "וְאֵעֲבוֹר עָלֶיךָ וְאֶרְאֶךָ מִתְבוֹסְסֵת בְּדַמֶּיךָ וְאֶמַר לְךָ בְּדַמֶּיךָ חַיִּי וְאֶמַר לְךָ בְּדַמֶּיךָ חַיִּי". וְנֹאמַר: "זָכַר לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ דָּבָר צְוָה לְאֶלֶף דּוֹר, אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת אֶת אַבְרָהָם וְשִׁבּוּעָתוֹ לְיִשְׁחָק, וַיַּעֲמִידֶהָ לְיַעֲקֹב לְחֶק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִית עוֹלָם". וְנֹאמַר: "וַיִּמַּל אַבְרָהָם אֶת יֶצְחָק בְּנוֹ בֶן שְׁמוֹנֶת יָמִים כַּאֲשֶׁר צְוָה אֱלֹהִים". הוֹדוּ לֵי כִי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ .

Congregation repeats

הוֹדוּ לֵי כִי-טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ.

Hodu l'Adonai ki tov, ki l'olam chasdo.

זֶה הַקָּטָן גָּדוֹל יְהִיָּה, כְּשֵׁם שְׁנֹכְנָס _____
 לְבְרִיתוֹ, כִּי יִכְנָס לְתוֹרָה וּלְחֶפֶה וּלְמַעֲשֵׂים טוֹבִים, אָמוּן.

Blessed are you, Adonai, Ruler of the Universe, who brings forth the fruit of the vine.

Blessed are you, Adonai, Ruler of the Universe, who has sanctified this beloved child and has placed the sign of the covenant on his flesh.

May his parent(s) _____ be privileged to raise him to adulthood and see in the fruit of her/his/their labors a person respected and beloved by those around him.

Just as he has been brought into the Covenant, so may he choose to be a strong link in the chain of the Jewish people. Just as he has entered 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.

We are seated.

PRAYER OF HEALING

מי שִׁבְרָךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אַבְרָהָם, יִצְחָק, וְיַעֲקֹב, שָׂרָה, רַבֵּקָה,
רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, הוּא יְבָרֶךְ אֶת הַיָּלֵד הַרֵךְ הַנּוֹמֵל,

[_____ וְלֵאמוֹ _____]

וְיִשְׁלַח לוֹ רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה, בְּעֵבוֹר שְׁנֵיכֵנֶס לְבָרִית, וּכְשֵׁם
שְׁנֵיכֵנֶס לְבָרִית כֵּן יִכְנֵס לְתוֹרָה וְלַחֲפָה וְלִמְעֻשִׁים טוֹבִים,
וְנֹאמַר 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, his having been entered into the covenant.

Just as he has entered the covenant, 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 the origin of the baby's names.

GRANDPARENTS' BLESSINGS

(Choose one)

I. Grandparent's 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 in the birth of _____, our grandson. May his family grow together in health and 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 humankind. Amen.

II. Grandparent's Blessing

How strong are the bonds of affection between parent and child! When I look at you, the parent of this baby, it seems like yesterday that I held you as you hold your son. In you I see my legacy, my gift to the world. There is no greater joy or responsibility than to influence the next generation. Parenting is an adventure like no other, and I wish you the courage to be firm and the patience to be gentle.

It is said that when a grandchild is born, so is a grandparent. I accept the privilege and responsibility of this role. I will love and guide this child. I will listen to him and believe in his dreams. May I have the physical and mental stamina to help you raise this child to be a loving and successful human being.

BLESSING THE CHILD

(Reading II or III may also be added)

I. Priestly Blessing

יְשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה:

Y'simcha Elohim k'Ephraim v'chiMenashe

May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe.

יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ:

Y'varechecha Adonai v'yishmerecha

May God bless you and keep you.

יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיְחַנֶּנֶךָ:

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'yasem l'cha shalom

May God's spirit turn to you and grant you peace.

II. A Blessing from the Talmud

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.

III. Family/Community Blessing

We dedicate this child to Torah and to a life-long commitment to study and learning.

We pray, _____, that your life will be one of never-ending passion for Judaism. May you stand in love and in awe of the Creator of the universe. We hope that you will be enthralled with the study of our sacred texts and will joyfully celebrate our festivals and traditions.

We dedicate this child to *Chuppah* and to a life of love and integrity.

We pray, _____, that your life will be enriched with the open giving and receiving of love. We hope that you will find your *Beshert*, your soulmate, and build your own family.

We dedicate this child to *Ma-asim tovim*, to acts of loving kindness.

We hope your life, _____, will be filled with a never-ending concern for family and community, justice and equality. We hope you will give of your time, energy, and passion for *Tikkun Olam*, the repairing of this world, both near and far.

CONCLUDING BLESSINGS

Shechecheyanu

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ
וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַּן הַזֶּה.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, shechecheyanu, vikiy/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 וּמַזָּל טוֹב
וּמַזָּל טוֹב וְסִימָן טוֹב
יְהֵא לָנוּ וּלְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Siman tov u-mazal tov, u-mazal tov v'siman tov (3x)

Y'hei lanu

Y'hei lanu, y'hei lanu ul'chol Yisrael (4x)

Auspicious signs and congratulations 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.

This page intentionally blank

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"A New Son of Israel" and "Grandparents' Prayer" (the latter with slight modifications) are from *The New Jewish Baby Book: Names, Ceremonies & Customs – A Guide for Today's Families* © 1994 Anita Diamant. Permission to use them was granted by Jewish Lights Publishing, www.jewishlights.com.

"The Family/Community Blessing" (with modifications) is by Nadia Maccabee-Ryaboy and Oleg Ryaboy, based on a reading from RitualWell (<https://ritualwell.org/ritual/naming-ceremony-adopted-child>)

The author of "Living Judaism" is unknown.

"On Children" is from *The Prophet* by Khalil Gibran.

"A Blessing" is by Danny Siegel, based on Brachot 17a and Eruvin 54a. Permission to use this was granted by Danny Siegel.

The cover photograph, "Sunrise from Jebel Musa" is by Todd Bolen. Permission to use this was granted by www.bibleplaces.com.

Many thanks to:

Baruch Sienna for layout and typesetting.

Rabbi Esther Adler, Rabbi Morris Allen, Rabbi Amy Eilberg, Rabbi Tamar Grimm, Rachel Hertel, Rabbi Harold Kravitz, Rabbi Yosi Gordon, Naomi Klionsky, Nir Sonnenberg, and Dr. Nadia Maccabee-Ryaboy for feedback and proofreading.

And, of course, with gratitude to the One Who made this and all else possible.