

## סדר ברית מילה

■ A ברית מילה conducted in the privacy of the family home constitutes all the required ritual necessary for welcoming a newborn baby boy into the covenant of Abraham. Nevertheless, the parents should be encouraged to come to the synagogue with the baby, receive an עליה and thus introduce him to the greater community.

The rabbi or מוהל may want to offer some introductory comments about the ברית מילה ceremony. The following parental prayers may be used as private meditations or public introductions to the ceremony.

■ Where a non-Jewish child is to undergo ברית מילה, please see page A-28.

### PRAYERS BY THE PARENTS

#### 1.

Blessed with the gift of new life, privileged to participate in the miracle of creation, we rejoice with gratitude to God for the special gift of our son. With family and friends we celebrate his entry into the Jewish community. Through *Brit Milah*, our covenant with God, we link his destiny to that of our people Israel, here and throughout the world, now and throughout history.

## 2.

We have been blessed with the gift of new life. We have shared love and pain and joy in bringing our son into this world and have been privileged to participate in the marvel and beauty of creation. Through our loving example, we hope to teach our son to become a caring and loving person with a sense of his own worth and respect for that of others. We dedicate ourselves to providing a home filled with the values and joys of Torah and we hope that our son will grow to cherish and emulate these ideals.

## 3.

Help us raise a son, O God, who will be strong enough to know when he is weak, and brave enough to face himself when afraid. Give him the ability to appreciate joy and the strength to weather life's challenges. Teach him compassion for those in need. Grant him the insight to know himself and the wisdom to know You. Help us feel Your Presence as we begin this new journey through life.

## 4.

Help us raise a son, O God, whose heart will be clear, whose goals will be meaningful; one who will learn to laugh, yet never forget how to cry; one who will reach into the future, yet never lose touch with the past. Grant him the gifts of health, happiness, and wisdom. Then we, his parents, will be privileged to say, "We have been truly blessed and enriched."

## 5.

Adonai, we give thanks to You for the gift of our son, today entering into the *brit*, the covenant of Abraham. Grant our child a life of health and wisdom, a life of happiness and moral strength. Teach us to raise our son with care, affection, and understanding. May he grow at peace with himself and become a blessing for the world. May his heart be filled with appreciation for all Your creations. May he abound with love and knowledge of the Torah. Lead him on the paths of righteousness, truth, humility, and understanding. We give thanks to You, Adonai, Source of all life.

## 6.

After months at anchor  
submerged in half light and muted sounds  
after months alone with your secrets  
you opened your mother's womb  
and burst into a room  
of bright lights and stark silence  
torn from your mooring  
with your first cry  
you became one with all life.

Today you are joined by a cutting  
to a people who would repair the universe.  
Will you now take up your task  
of salvaging the secrets of *rahum v'hanun*,  
lost in the passage from womb to World.

*[Sue Ellis, "Shir L'Hannan,"  
from the Jewish Family Book]*

## 7.

May it be your will, Adonai our God, and God of our ancestors, that just as this newborn child is pleasing to You now, so may he always be welcome in Your presence.

May he have the gift of good health, and so be able to do Your bidding. May he always be God-fearing. May neither his intention nor his desire be diverted from the study of Your Torah or from doing Your commandments.

Provide him with a livelihood from Your kind and generous, open and bountiful hand. Grant our child the blessings of a full life, well-lived; spare him from sufferings, both large and small. May his acts be those that better this world.

May he live to see his sons and daughters happily married, dedicated to the Torah and commandments. May You make his desires match Your desires.

At this unique moment of beginnings, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to You, my Rock and my Redeemer.

*[Adapted from an anonymous 1786 monograph of a mother's prayer prior to Brit Milah]*

### 8. *Prayer when the son is firstborn*

Our God and God of our ancestors, our Rock and our Redeemer, with gratitude for the gift of life we pray that our firstborn grow to accept joyfully his share in the tradition of our people. Bless him, Adonai, with health and full years, with happiness and moral strength. Bless us with understanding and wisdom, so that we may truly share in the creation of a life guided by Torah. May our firstborn son find favor before You, Adonai, and in the sight of all people. And let us say: Amen.

#### PRAYER BY THE GRANDPARENTS

Our God and God of all generations, we are grateful for new beginnings, for the bond of life that links one generation to the other. We are thankful for the blessings of family which bring meaning and happiness to our lives, and we rejoice with our children at the birth of their child, our grandson. May we all grow together as a family in health and in strength, in harmony and in love.

## THE CEREMONY

We rejoice with gratitude for the privilege of bringing this child into our ancestral covenant. We pray that God will grant this newborn son in the House of Israel the blessings of health, fulfillment and peace. We pray that he will find beauty in his heritage which will strengthen and sustain him throughout life.

*[As the child is brought into the room,  
all rise and say:]*

## בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא

Blessed be the child who comes to enter the covenant.

*[The parents of the child say:]*

הִנְנִי מוּכָן וּמְזֻמָּן לְקִיּוֹם מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה שְׂצוּנֹנִי  
הַבּוֹרֵא יִתְבָּרֵךְ לְמוֹל אֶת־בְּנִי, כְּכַתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה:  
וּבֶן־שְׁמֹנֶת יָמִים יְמוּל לָכֶם כָּל־זָכָר לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם.

I am ready to fulfill the *mitzvah* of having my son circumcised, as the praiseworthy Creator has commanded us in the Torah: “Throughout your generations, every male among you shall be circumcised when he is eight days old.”

[The rabbi or מוהל continues:]

At every מילה ברית, we invoke the presence of the prophet Elijah, recalling his commitment to Your covenant, even during difficult times. We rekindle our faith that Elijah will come to announce the advent of the Messiah, and we reaffirm our belief that every human being has the potential to bring redemption to the world.

[The child is placed upon a special seat.

The מוהל continues:]

זֶה הַכֵּסֵא שֶׁל אֵלִיהוּ זְכוֹר לְטוֹב. לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קִוִּיתִי יְהוּה, שִׁבְרֹתִי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ יְהוּה, וּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ עָשִׂיתִי. שִׁבְרֹתִי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ יְהוּה. שֶׁשׁ אָנֹכִי עַל אִמְרָתְךָ כְּמוֹצֵא שָׁלָל רָב. שְׁלוֹם רַב לְאַהֲבֵי תוֹרָתְךָ, וְאִין לָמוּ מְכֻשׁוֹל. אֲשֶׁרִי תִבְחַר וּתִקְרַב יִשְׁכּוֹן חֲצֵרֶיךָ.

This is the seat of *Eliyahu Hanavi*, Elijah the prophet, of blessed memory.

I wait for Your deliverance, Adonai. I hope for Your deliverance and I fulfill Your *mitzvot*. I hope for Your deliverance, Adonai. I rejoice over Your promise as one who finds great treasure. Great peace have they who love Your Torah; nothing makes them stumble. Happy is the one You choose to bring near, who will enjoy the goodness of Your house and the sanctity of Your temple. [Genesis 49:18; Psalm 119:116, 162, 165; Psalm 65:5a]

[The מוהל asks those present to repeat the following words:]

נְשַׁבְעָה בְּטוֹב בֵּיתְךָ, קְרוֹשׁ הַיְכָלְךָ.

May we be filled with the blessings of Your house, Your holy Temple. [Psalms 65:5b]

[The סנדק is given the child to hold, either upon his knees or on a table.]

[Before performing the circumcision, the מוהל asks the parents:]

Do you authorize me to perform this בְּרִית מִילָה on your behalf, or do you wish to perform it yourself?

[The parents respond:]

We authorize you to perform this בְּרִית מִילָה on our behalf.

[The מוהל then recites:]

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר  
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל הַמִּילָה.

Praised are You, Adonai our God, who rules the universe, whose *mitzvot* add holiness to our lives and who gave us the *mitzvah* of circumcision.

[After the circumcision, the parents  
(or the סנדק, in the parents' absence), recite:]

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר  
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַכְנִיסוֹ בְּבְרִיתוֹ שֶׁל  
אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ.

Praised are You, Adonai our God, who rules the universe, whose *mitzvot* add holiness to our lives and who gave us the *mitzvah* to bring this child into the covenant of Abraham, our father.

[The מוהל asks those present to repeat the following words:]

כְּשֶׁם שָׁנַכְנַס לְבְרִית, בֵּן יִכְנַס לְתוֹרָה וּלְחַפָּה  
וּלְמַעֲשֵׂים טוֹבִים.

As he has entered the covenant, so may he enter the blessings of Torah, *huppah*, and a life of *ma'asim tovim*, good deeds.

## הברכות שלאחר המילה

*[The rabbi raises a cup of wine and continues:]*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא  
פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר  
קִדַּשׁ יְדִיד מִבֶּטֶן, וְחַק בְּשָׂארוֹ שָׁם וְצִאֲצָאִיו  
חָתַם בְּאוֹת בְּרִית קֹדֶשׁ. עַל בֵּן בְּשִׁכְרֵךְ זֹאת, אֵל חַי  
חִלְקֵנוּ צוּרֵנוּ, צִוֵּה לְהַצִּיל יְדִידוֹת שְׂאֲרֵנוּ  
מִשַּׁחַת, לְמַעַן בְּרִיתוֹ אֲשֶׁר שָׁם בְּבִשְׂרָנוּ. בְּרוּךְ  
אַתָּה יְהוָה, בּוֹרֵת הַבְּרִית.

Praised are You, Adonai our God, who rules the universe, creating the fruit of the vine.

Praised are You, Adonai our God, who rules the universe, who sanctified our beloved patriarchs from the womb, who brings law and flesh together, sealing our offspring with the sign of the holy covenant. Therefore, living God, our Rock and our Portion, command good health for this child by virtue of Your covenant, so integral to our lives. Praised are You, Adonai, who establishes the covenant.

## קריאת שם

■ Please note that where only the mother is Jewish, only the mother's name is used for \_\_\_\_\_ בן. Add בגן עדן if the parent is deceased.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, קִיַּם אֶת־הַיְלֵד הַזֶּה  
 לְאָבִיו וְלְאִמּוֹ, וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל \_\_\_\_\_  
 בֶּן \_\_\_\_\_ . יִשְׁמַח הָאָב (בְּגֵן עֵדֶן) בְּיוֹצֵא  
 חֲלָצִיו וְתִגַּל אִמּוֹ (בְּגֵן עֵדֶן) בְּפָרִי בִטְנָה, כַּכְּתוּב:  
 יִשְׂמַח אָבִיךָ וְאִמְךָ וְתִגַּל יוֹלְדֶתְךָ. וְנֹאמֵר: וְאֶעֱבֹר  
 עָלֶיךָ וְאֶרְאֶךָ מִתְּבוּסָסֶת בְּדַמְיֶךָ, וְאָמַר לְךָ  
 בְּדַמְיֶךָ חַיִּי, וְאָמַר לְךָ בְּדַמְיֶךָ חַיִּי. וְנֹאמֵר: זָכַר  
 לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ, דָּבָר צְוָה לְאֶלֶף דּוֹר. אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת  
 אֶת־אֲבֹרָהֶם וְשִׁבּוּעָתוֹ לְיִשְׁחָק. וַיַּעֲמִידָהּ לְיַעֲקֹב  
 לְחֶק, לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִית עוֹלָם. וְנֹאמֵר: וַיִּמַּל  
 אֲבֹרָהֶם אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ בֶּן־שְׁמוֹנֶת יָמִים כַּאֲשֶׁר  
 צְוָה אֱלֹהִים.

[The rabbi asks those present to repeat the following words:]

הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ.

זֶה הַקְּטָן \_\_\_\_\_ גָּדוֹל יִהְיֶה. כָּשֵׁם שְׁנַכְנַס  
 לְבָרִית, בֶּן יִכְנַס לְתוֹרָה וּלְחֻפָּה וּלְמַעֲשִׂים  
 טוֹבִים, אָמֵן.

Our God and God of our ancestors, sustain this child. Let him be known among the people Israel as \_\_\_\_\_, son of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. May his mother be blessed with regained strength and may both parents find joy in their child. With love and with wisdom may they be privileged to teach him the meaning of the covenant which he has entered today, and may they inspire him to seek the truth and the ways of peace. Through their example, may his heart be open to the Torah and its ways. May this child, (first name only), grow into greatness as a blessing to his family, to the Jewish people, and to all humanity. As he has entered the covenant, so may he attain the blessings of Torah, *huppah*, and *ma'asim tovim*, good deeds. And let us say: Amen.

*[The parents may drink of the wine,  
which is also given to the סנדק.]*

■ *Verses related to the child's Hebrew name or names may be recited here, after a brief explanation of their significance. See page N-57.*

לְמַנְצַחַם עַל־הַגְּתִית מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד. יְהוָה אֲדַנְיָנוּ,  
 מִה־אֲדִיר שְׁמֶךָ בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר־תָּנָה הוֹדֶךָ  
 עַל־הַשָּׁמַיִם. מִפִּי עוֹלָלִים וַיִּנְקִים יִסְדֶּתָ עוֹז,  
 לְמַעַן צוֹרְרֶיךָ, לְהַשְׁבִּית אוֹיֵב וּמִתְנַקֵּם. כִּי־אֲרָאָה  
 שְׁמִיךָ, מַעֲשֵׂה אֲצַבְעֶתְיךָ, יֶרַח וְכוֹכָבִים אֲשֶׁר  
 כּוֹנְנִתָּה. מִה־אָנוּשׁ כִּי־תִזְכְּרֵנוּ, וּבֶן־אָדָם כִּי  
 תִפְקְדֵנוּ. וְתַחֲסֶרְהוּ מֵעַט מֵאֱלֹהִים, וְכָבוֹד וְהָדָר  
 תַעֲטֶרְהוּ. תַמְשִׁילְהוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדֶיךָ, כֹּל שֶׁתָּה  
 תַחַת־רַגְלֵיו. צַנָּה וְאֲלָפִים כָּלֵם, וְגַם בְּהֵמוֹת  
 שָׂדֵי. צִפּוֹר שָׁמַיִם וְדֹגֵי הַיָּם, עֵבֶר אֲרָחוֹת יָמִים.  
 יְהוָה אֲדַנְיָנוּ, מִה־אֲדִיר שְׁמֶךָ בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ.

*For the leader; on the gittit.  
A Psalm of David—*

יְהוָה אֲדַבְּרֵנוּ

How majestic is Your name  
throughout the earth,  
You who have covered the heavens  
with Your splendor.

From the mouths of infants and sucklings,  
To the ruin of enemy forces,  
Your strength is apparent.

When I behold Your Heavens,  
the work of Your fingers,  
The moon and stars that You set in place:  
What are we that You have been mindful of us?  
Mere mortals, yet You take note,  
And have made us little less than divine,  
Adorning us with glory and majesty.  
You have made us masters  
over Your handiwork,  
Laying the world at our feet,  
Sheep and oxen, all of them,  
And wild beasts, too,  
The birds of the heavens, the fish of the ocean,  
Whatever travels the paths of the seas.

יְהוָה אֲדַבְּרֵנוּ

How majestic is Your name  
throughout the earth!

*[Psalm 8]*

יְבָרֶכֶךָ יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמְרֶכָּהּ,  
 יָאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחַנְךָ,  
 יֵשֶׁא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.

May Adonai bless you and protect you.

May Adonai show you favor  
 and be gracious to you.

May Adonai show you kindness  
 and grant you peace.

[Numbers 6:24–26]

[Before the meal, or before **ברכת המזון**,  
 the parents may say:]

As part of the *Brit Milah* ceremony, we expressed the hope that our son, \_\_\_\_\_, would someday embrace Torah, establish a Jewish home, and illumine his life with *ma'asim tovim*, good deeds. In that spirit, we will be making a donation, in our son's name, to (a *tzedakah* program which combats hunger) so that those who are truly hungry can also take part in this *se'udat mitzvah*.

## ברית מילה לשם גירות

Where a non-Jewish child is to undergo ברית מילה, the ceremony is different. A סנדק may be appointed and parental prayers read, but the only ברכות recited are those found on page J-9. After טבילה במקוה כשר, a naming may take place, but its form is that of the מי שברך for the Newly Converted as found on page J-37. Following the מילה, the rabbi might want to include a prayer for both the mother and child, such as the one found on page A-5. Some words of congratulations to the parents and extended family would be in order. The rabbi might also want to touch on the blessing this child represents as well as the challenges and privileges of raising him as a Jew. The extent to which the rabbi will explain the particulars of a ברית מילה לשם גירות depends on the circumstances and wishes of the parents. Nevertheless, it is important to keep the event precisely what it ought to be: a שמחה.