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A POLISH RABBI'S CIRCUMCISION MANUAL

by

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Circumcision, the removal of the foreskin, is one of the oldest and most widely performed operations known to man. As the operation has been found to have been carried out from ancient times in such disparate places as Africa, America, and Australia, there has been much debate over its origins, but the hot climate of all locations in which it is found practised in antiquity is a common feature. From this general characteristic it would seem to follow that practical considerations led primitive peoples subject to illnesses associated with the decay of the foreskin to remove it.¹ Another general feature of circumcision is its connection with puberty and initiation into the adult or married state significant of a fertility rite.²

The practice of administering circumcision on the eighth day after birth among Jews raises it above the sphere of such initiation ceremonies and gives it the religious and symbolic nature³ claimed for it in the Hebrew scriptures and later apocryphal and rabbinical writings.⁴ It is the sign of the special covenant relationship enacted between God and Abraham, in which God set his seal on Abraham and his descendants as his chosen people for all time. (Gen. 17:10–14). Without this token of national dedication and purification, the Passover meal, commemorating Israel's deliverance from bondage in Egypt, could not be taken (Exod. 12:48), nor alliance with a Jewish family entered into (Gen. 34:14–16). During the period of Israel's exile in Babylon in the fourth century BC, Sabbath observance and circumcision took on an even greater significance as a means of retaining Jewish identity,⁵ and these observances continued in importance as Israel found herself ruled by foreigners both in the land of Israel itself and elsewhere.⁶

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¹ So suggests J. Preuss, *Biblisch-talmudische Medizin: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Heilkunde und der Kultur überhaupt*, 3rd ed., Berlin, S. Karger, 1923, p. 279. Philo, writing in defence of circumcision, claimed it prevented a severe and almost incurable malady of the foreskin, promoted the cleanliness of the whole body and fertility of offspring. See *De specialibus legibus*, 1:4–7 (Philo, trans. F. H. Colson, vol. 7, London, William Heinemann; Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1937, pp. 103 ff.).

² See R. Andree 'Die Beschneidung', *Arch. Anthropol.*, 1881, 13: 53–78; and A. E. Jensen, *Beschneidung und Reifezeremonien bei Naturvölkern*, Stuttgart, Strecker & Schröder, 1913.

³ The Arabic terms *ṭuhur* and *ṭathir*, "purification", applied to circumcision in Arabia, also indicate the later religious aspect. See J. Wellhausen, *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, vol. 3, Berlin, Georg Reimer, 1887, pp. 154 ff.

⁴ See Gen. 17:10–14; 21:4; Lev. 12:3.

⁵ See J. Bright, *A history of Israel*, 2nd ed., London, S.C.M. Press, 1972, p. 349.

⁶ See R. de Vaux, *Les institutions de l'Ancien Testament*, vol. 1, Paris, Du Cerf, 1958, pp. 81 ff.

Bodily mutilation was regarded as abhorrent by the Greeks and forbidden by the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–163 BC). This infringement of religious liberty made the Jews all the more determined to observe the sign of the Abrahamic covenant.⁷ There were, however, those who tried to appear as Greeks by “epispasm”, i.e. obliteration of the *hutam berit* “seal of the covenant”, “by making themselves foreskins”.⁸ To prevent this abuse the *peri’ah*, laying bare the glans, was instituted sometime following the Bar Kokba rebellion (AD 132–5), and was from then on an essential part of circumcision.⁹ Today, circumcision is still performed on all male children in both Orthodox and Reform Judaism on the eighth day after birth in fulfilment of God’s covenant with Abraham. In Orthodox Judaism, circumcision is performed by an official designated for the purpose known as a *mohel*, while Reform Jews allow the rite to be performed by a doctor.

The Library of the Wellcome Institute contains a Hebrew manuscript relating to circumcision composed by the distinguished seventeenth-century Polish rabbi, David ben Aryeh of Lida. It is transcribed in the square script with Massoretic vocalization; the annotations and title page are written in the rabbinic script and the manuscript includes twelve finely executed miniatures.¹⁰ The name of the transcriber, Dov Bahel Mordecai Katz, in cursive Hebrew script appears on the recto of the second preliminary flyleaf together with the date in Hebrew, 5447, with the name of a former owner, B. Lichtenstein. The name of the city, Amsterdam, also appears on this leaf in Roman script with the same date in Arabic numerals, 1687.

Of the copyist we know nothing except, judging from the standard of this manuscript, he was a skilled calligrapher and, if the miniatures can be attributed to him, a master of this form of illustration. The author of the work was born c. 1650 in the city of Lvov,¹¹ and took his name from the town of Lida in Byelorussia where he held his first appointment as rabbi in 1671 before taking up this position in various other towns including Zwolen, Ostrog, Mainz, and finally Amsterdam.¹²

It was during his period of office in Mainz that he wrote his treatise on circumcision *Sod Adonai*, ‘The secret of God’, which also included a commentary *Sharbi’ ha-Zahab*, ‘The golden sceptre’, which is not included in the Wellcome manuscript.

In the summer of 1680, David ben Aryeh was appointed rabbi of the Ashkenazi community in Amsterdam,¹³ but soon after his arrival he was accused of literary

⁷ 1 Macc. 1:48, 60. It is recorded in 2 Macc. 6:10 that two women who had circumcised their children in defiance of the law were led round the city with their infants bound to their breasts.

⁸ See 1 Macc. 1:11–15 and Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, trans. T. Lodge, London, 1640, 12:6:1. Cf. St. Paul’s opinion, 1 Cor. 7:18 ff.

⁹ In the course of the persecutions preceding the Judaean revolt against Rome, many Jews were forced to obliterate the physical sign of circumcision but on liberation were again circumcised. See H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, 2nd ed., vol. 4, Leipzig, Oskar Leiner, 1866, pp. 169, 185. Cf. Talmud, *Yebamoth*, 72a.

¹⁰ Hebrew MS. A 4. See N. Allan, ‘Catalogue of Hebrew Manuscripts in the Wellcome Institute, London’, *J. Semitic Stud.*, 1982, 27: 193–220.

¹¹ Now in the western Ukraine but formerly in south-east Poland.

¹² See H. J. Michael, *Or ha-Hayyim*, Frankfurt, J. Kauffmann, 1891, pp. 318 ff.

¹³ *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, first ed., New York, Funk & Wagnall, gives three different dates for David ben Aryeh’s appointment as rabbi of the Ashkenazi congregation in Amsterdam: viz., vol. 1 (1901), p. 540, 1680; vol. 4 (1903), p. 461, 1682; in vol. 8 (1904), p. 390, the dates of his rabbinate in Mainz are given as

plagiarism in connection with his work *Migdal Dawid*, a commentary on the Book of Ruth. This resulted in his return to Lvov. However, the Portuguese community which had assisted with the establishment of the Ashkenazi congregation¹⁴ supported him until he fell under suspicion of leanings toward Shabbethai Zebi,¹⁵ who posed as a false Messiah and caused some temporary unrest among Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam around 1666.¹⁶ However, reconciliation took place in 1692 when David ben Aryeh returned to his congregation and was appointed rabbi for three years.¹⁷ At the end of this period his contract was not renewed and he left Amsterdam and settled in Lvov, where he died in 1696.¹⁸ It is interesting to note that during his rabbinate in Amsterdam, David came in contact with the contentious Johann Andreas Eisenmenger (1654–1704), the author of the work *Entdecktes Judenthum*, a book of lasting influence and popularity among the detractors of Talmudic literature. This book was apparently written following an encounter with three Christian converts to Judaism in Amsterdam and an otherwise unknown attack by David ben Aryeh against Christianity around 1681.¹⁹

The Wellcome manuscript comprises eighteen folios bound in vellum and measuring 14 × 9.5 cm with text and miniatures transcribed within rules. At the head of the title-page (plate 1), King David is depicted seated on a throne and playing a harp. Two angels are shown, one on the king's right, the other on his left, both in flight and each blowing a trumpet. The whole scene is set in the heavens above the clouds. Beneath the enthroned king, at the head of the central compartment, the first verse of Psalm 145 is written in Rabbinic script, below which the title of the manuscript is transcribed in bold square script. In the compartment to the left David is shown with his sling before Goliath beneath which, in the printed Amsterdam edition of 1680, is quoted, in Hebrew, David's response to Goliath's taunt (1 Sam. 17:45). In the compartment to the right, David, with the head of Goliath impaled on the point of his sword, is being greeted by women singing and dancing under which in the printed edition the text of 1

1679–83; but H. J. Michael, *op. cit.*, note 12 above, gives the date as late in the year 5440, i.e. the summer of 1680, which appears to be correct. So also *Bikkurim*, I, 1864, p. xxxvi.

¹⁴ The first Ashkenazi community does not appear to have been organized until 1635, but it quickly grew due to a large extent to immigration from Poland. They were helped by the Sephardic community although the two communities remained socially separate. See S. W. Baron, *A social and religious history of the Jews*, 2nd rev. ed., vol. 15, New York, Columbia University Press, 1973, pp. 35 ff.

¹⁵ Cf. *Keneseth Yisrael*, I, 1886, p. 240.

¹⁶ H. Graetz, *op. cit.*, note 9 above, first ed., vol. 10, Leipzig, Oskar Leiner, 1868, pp. 205–58, especially pp. 226 ff., 257.

¹⁷ David ben Aryeh presented his case to the *Wa'ad Arba' Arazot*, "Council of the Four Lands", on his return to Poland in a pamphlet entitled *Be'er Esek*, 'Well of contention', in 1684. The Polish rabbinate vindicated him and demanded his reinstatement. See N. Sokolov, *Sefer ha-Yovel*, Warsaw, Shuldberg, 1904, pp. 461–6; also H. J. Michael, *op. cit.*, note 12 above.

¹⁸ There is some debate about the exact date of his death. According to the *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, *op. cit.*, note 13 above, vol. 4, p. 461, the date on his tombstone is 5450/1690, but S. Buber, *Anshe-Shem*, Cracow, The Author, 1895, p. 56, questions this date giving evidence of his endorsement of his work as late as 5452/1692, and considers other dates, 5455/1695 and 5458/1698. *Bikkurim*, *op. cit.*, note 13 above, p. xxxvi, gives 5448/1688, which may be a misprint for 5458/1698. For David ben Aryeh's other works see J. Zedner, *Catalogue of the Hebrew books in the Library of the British Museum*, London, British Museum, 1867, pp. 197 ff.; A. E. Cowley, *A concise catalogue of the Hebrew printed books in the Bodleian Library*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971, p. 151; and H. J. Michael, *op. cit.*, note 12 above.

¹⁹ J. A. Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judenthum*, Königsberg, 1711, vol. 1, p. 834.

Sam. 21:12 (E. V. v. 11), in Hebrew, appears. Below these to both left and right, in the printed version only, are two further illustrations. These show, to the left, David and Jonathan, beneath which is printed, in Hebrew, 1 Sam. 20:42; to the right, Abigail presenting David with gifts to pacify his anger with verse 29 of 1 Sam. 25 printed in Hebrew beneath. These scenes representing different incidents in David's life may have been chosen by the printer, David ben Abraham Castro Tartas, to illustrate his own name with scenes from the life of King David on the title-page.²⁰ Across the foot of the manuscript title-page, Abraham is shown entertaining the three angels with Sarah listening behind the door (Gen. 18:1–8). This illustration is absent from the printed title-page. The three visitors fulfil the duty of visiting the sick, according to tradition, on the third day after Abraham had circumcised himself when the pain of the wound was at its climax.²¹

The title-page in transliteration reads as follows:

tehillah le-dawid aromimeka elohay ha-melek. sefer sod h[a-'adonay]. asher ħiber ha-rab ha-gadol ner yisra'el / ish ħay rab pe'ali[m] mikkabze'el. kebed / m[orenu] ha(sic)-[rabbenu] we(sic)-r[ab] r[abbi] dawid n[aṭreh] r[ahamana] u- [farqeh] asher hibriz torah / be-kamm[ah] we-kamm[ah] qehillo[t] qedoshot bi-medina[t] / polin we-liṭa we-'attah hu a[b] b[et] d[in] we-[resh] me[tibta] / be-harbazat torato bi-medina[t] ashkenaz / bi-q[ehillah] q[edoshah] magenza wa-'agape[ha] ba-galil ha-'elyon / u-ba-galil ha-tahton we-'att[ah] nitqabel le-['ab] b[et] d[in] / u-le[resh] me[tibta] poh q[ehillah] q[edoshah] amsterdam.

The translation:

A psalm of David, I will extol thee my God O king. The book of the secret of God which the great teacher, a lamp of Israel, a man active, great indeed, a compiler has written. Our distinguished teacher, David, may God preserve him, who has taught in many of the communities in the states of Poland and Lithuania, and is now chief of the court and head of the academy through his teaching in the country of Germany in the community of Mainz and its provinces in the upper and lower region;²² and he has now been accepted as chief of the court and head of the academy here by the community of Amsterdam.

The text begins on f.2^r as follows:

tanu / rabbanan be-perek qama di-qeddushin ha-'ab hayyib la-mul et / beno di-ketib wa-yamol abraham et yizhaq beno.

²⁰ David de Castro Tartas, a Spanish aristocrat, learnt his skills from Manasseh ben Israel, who set up his press in Amsterdam in 1626 and is known to have persuaded Cromwell to readmit Jews to England during his visit in 1655. See A. M. Hyamson, *The Sephardim of England*, London, Methuen, 1951, p. 13. He and his brother Jacob printed in Amsterdam between 1663 and 1695 a number of rabbinical writings including prayer books and other religious and liturgical works in Hebrew, Spanish, and Portuguese. See B. Friedberg, *History of Hebrew typography in Europe*, Antwerp, 1937, pp. 31-3.

²¹ See L. Ginzberg, *The legends of the Jews*, vol. 1, Philadelphia, Jewish Publications Society of America, 1947, p. 240. According to *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer . . .*, trans. and annot. G. Friedlander, New York, Benjamin Blom, 1971, p. 204, (chapter xxix), the circumcised experience excessive pain the third day following the operation. Cf. Gen. 34:25.

²² I.e. the *Oberstift* and its capital Aschaffenburg, and the *Unterstift* which included Mainz and the Rheingau.

The translation:

our masters have taught in the first chapter of Kiddushin that the father is obliged to circumcise his son as it is written "and Abraham circumcised Isaac his son".

The author began with the injunction that every male child should be circumcised in accordance with the ancient covenant between God and Abraham (Gen. 17:10). As Abraham circumcised Isaac his son (Gen. 21:4), so it is the duty of the child's father to see that his sons bear the mark of this covenant, which distinguishes Israel as God's chosen people. The importance of the command is emphasized by the procedure to be followed in the event of the father's failure to discharge his duty. In this instance the *Bet Din*, the court which regulated the affairs of the Jewish community, was obliged to see that circumcision was carried out, but in the event of neither father or *Bet Din* being available, then self-circumcision was obligatory.²³ It appears that the mother of the child was generally exempt from any obligation, for it is argued that Scripture clearly states the masculine gender in this regard.²⁴ Abraham sits at the gates of Gehenna to protect the circumcised from descending into it,²⁵ but those who disregard the holy covenant by marrying the daughters of the uncircumcised or producing children by them are excluded from their inheritance in the world to come (f.2^{r-v}).

Circumcision is performed on the eighth day (Lev. 12:3) in accordance with divine law during the hours of daylight,²⁶ as near dawn as possible: its performance ensured an everlasting foundation for the righteous (Prov. 10:25b). Phylacteries and fringes, although attached to the person as reminders of God's covenant with Israel, do not have the permanence of the sign of circumcision made in the flesh. David ben Aryeh demonstrated this point, on f.3^{r-v}, by referring to an incident recorded in the Talmud²⁷ which tells how, when David entered the bath and realized his nakedness, he exclaimed "Woe is me that I stand naked without any precepts about me!". But when he recalled the sign of circumcision in his flesh his mind was set at ease, and on emerging from the bath he sang a hymn of praise which bears the superscription '*al ha-sheminit*, literally, "on the eighth",²⁸ a stringed instrument, taken here to mean the eighth day, i.e. the day of circumcision.²⁹ However, because circumcision was not observed during Israel's sojourn in Egypt, the people were '*erom we-'erya*, "naked and bare", terms used in Ezek. 16 to describe Israel polluted in her wickedness.³⁰

²³ According to Talmud, *Menahoth*, 42a, there was a rabbinical argument whether a Cuthean, i.e. one of the peoples settled in Samaria by the Assyrian king following the exile of the ten tribes in 721 BC, or a Gentile should carry out circumcisions in a town where there was no Jewish physician. One rabbi decided the Cuthean should perform the operation, the other the Gentile.

²⁴ Cf. Talmud, *Kiddushin*, 29a.

²⁵ *Midrash Rabbah*: Genesis (trans. H. Freedman, vol. 1, London, Soncino Press, 1939, pp. 409 ff.), ch. xlviii: 8. Cf. Ezek. 32:24.

²⁶ See Talmud, *Pesahim*, 4a.

²⁷ Talmud, *Menahoth*, 43b.

²⁸ Cf. Ps. 6:1; 12:1.

²⁹ Talmud, *Menahoth*, 436.

³⁰ Ezek. 16:7, 22, 39. According to *Pirkê Rabbi Eliezer*, op. cit., note 21 above, ch. xxix, Pharaoh prevented the Hebrew slaves from performing circumcision but when Passover time came and brought

Males partaking of the Passover meal are obliged to be circumcised, and God is to be praised for separating his people and stamping them with the seal of circumcision—“We are his people and the sheep of his pasture”, (Ps. 100:3).

The chair of Elijah is now prepared (f.4^r), Elijah being described as the “messenger of the covenant”, *mal'ak berit* (cf. Mal. 3:1). By tradition he is seated on a richly ornamented chair (*kisse shel eliyahu*) to the right of the *sandek*. When the chair of Elijah is ready, so ensuring his presence,³¹ the words *zehu kisse shel eliyahu*, “this is the chair of Elijah”, are said as indicated in the rubric of the manuscript. The place in which the circumcision is to take place is lit with candles and a verse from scripture recited “For the commandment is a lamp and the law is light” (Prov. 6:23). The custom of covering the foreskin after circumcision with earth is alluded to³² with a reference to Samael, the angel of death, who rode on the serpent in the course of the fall of Adam,³³ or, in another tradition, was himself the serpent whose form he merely assumed.³⁴ In the Genesis narrative the serpent is condemned to eat dust (Gen. 3:14) and so the earth here, but by cutting off the foreskin the evil which Samael³⁵ represents is eliminated.

The two most important participants in the rite of circumcision, apart from the child himself, are the *sandek* and the *mohel*. The author, in a short passage on f.5^r, referred to the honoured position of the *sandek*, whose function is to hold the child on his knees during the circumcision ceremony (plate 2). This is followed, on ff.5^r-6^v, by the prayer of the *mohel* in which he thanks God for various blessings including the blessing of being the means of setting the seal of God’s covenant, which is marked in his flesh, on others. The *mohel* then invokes Elijah to come and witness the fulfilment of the covenant and prays for the physical strength of the child to endure the operation, and the healing of his wound as Hezekiah, King of Judah (2 Kgs. 20:1–7) and various others to whom he refers from Scripture were healed. He then prays that Israel should never be ordered by Gentile nations to set aside this covenant. The child is now brought in, usually by the wife of the *sandek*, although this is not mentioned in this manuscript, and those present repeat “*baruk ha-ba*”, “Blessed is he that cometh [in the name of the Lord]”, Ps. 118:26 (f.7^r). The manuscript records the father’s response and prayer and those present then invoke blessing on the child and Elijah’s protection. Following this, on f.7^v, the child is received by the *mohel* and placed on the

deliverance, the children of Israel underwent circumcision and mingled the blood of the Paschal Lamb with that of the Abrahamic covenant—so the words “in thy blood live”, Ezek. 16:6.

³¹ During Ahab’s reign (c. 875–853 BC) over the northern kingdom of Israel, his queen, Jezebel, attempted to establish worship of the Canaanite Baal and abolish circumcision. Elijah retired to a cave in prayer which was answered by the divine ordinance that circumcision should in future take place only in his presence. See 1 Kgs. 19:9 ff. and *Pirkê Rabbi Eliezer*, op. cit. note 21 above, pp. 213 ff., chapter xxix.

³² Rabbinical tradition records that the Israelites had not been fully circumcised, i.e. the corona was not fully uncovered, when they arrived in the promised land, and so God commanded Joshua to circumcise the people a second time. The foreskins and the blood were then piled up and covered with dust of the wilderness. The words of Balaam “who can count the dust of Jacob” (Num. 23:10) are interpreted to refer to this incident. See *Pirkê Rabbi Eliezer*, *ibid*.

³³ *Ibid.*, chapters xiii and xiv (especially p. 92).

³⁴ Cf. A. P. Bender, ‘Belief, rites and customs of the Jews connected with death, burial and mourning’, *Jewish q. Rev.*, 1893, 6: 317–47, especially p. 328.

³⁵ Mention of Samael as the angel of death first occurs in Targum Jonathan on Gen. 3:6. From the Amoraic period the name Samael was equated with Satan in Judaism.



Plate 1. Hebrew Ms. A4, title-page. Wellcome Institute Library, London.

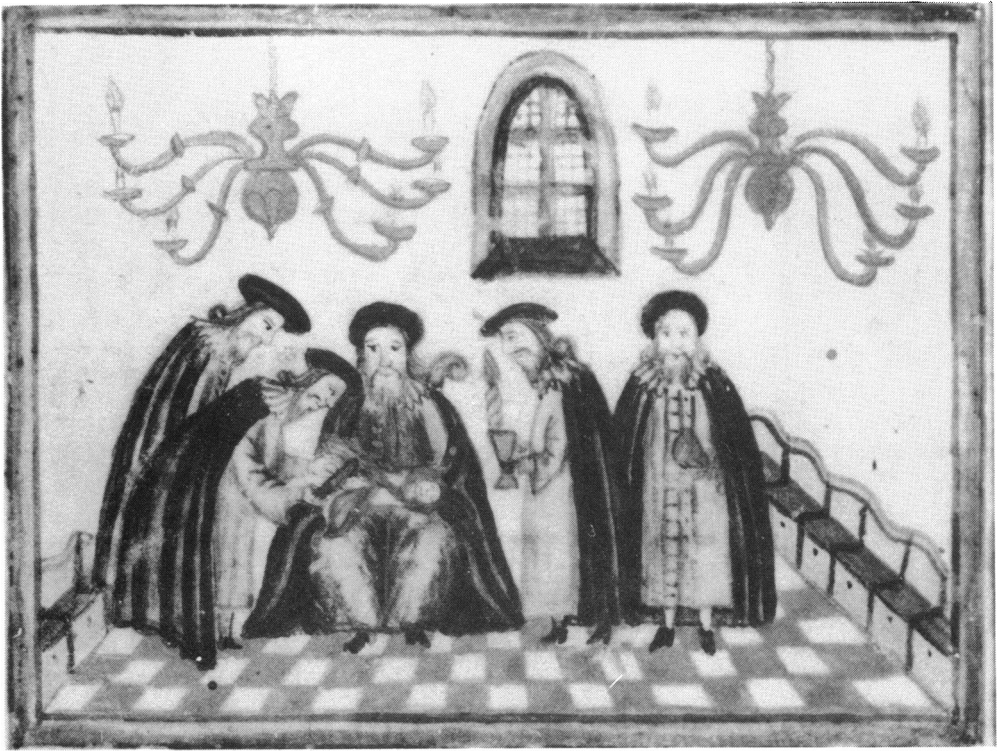


Plate 2. Hebrew Ms. A4, f. 8r. Wellcome Institute Library, London.



Plate 3. Hebrew Ms. A4, f. 11v. Wellcome Institute Library, London.

chair of Elijah. The words of God's command to Abraham which precede the institution of circumcision follow³⁶ and the *mohel* expresses his readiness to perform his duty. He then repeats some verses from the Psalms³⁷ and places the child on the lap of the *sandek* (f.8^r).

David ben Aryeh displayed his knowledge of Cabala, on ff.8 ff., by reducing two forms of the divine name and equating them with the numerical value of the Hebrew word *milah* "circumcision",³⁸ and, again referring to Samael, the symbol of the forces of evil, by a favourite mystical device of inverting letters and so equating evil with the Hebrew word for the thing cut off, i.e. the foreskin. In this way the forces of evil are destroyed. Following the first part of the operation, *milah*, the excision of the foreskin, the *mohel* gives thanks to God and then proceeds to the second part of the operation, described on f.9^{r-v}. This is the laying bare of the glans, *peri'ah*, which, it is stated, must be carried out with haste, as explained in the commentary *Sharbiḡ ha-Zahab*. The final part of the operation, *meziḡah*, the sucking of the blood from the wound by the *mohel*, now follows in an account which also explains the procedure's Cabalistic significance of drawing out evil from the child. Reference is made to the custom of the *mohel* taking wine in his mouth and mixing it with the blood drawn from the wound which is then expelled into a receptacle.³⁹ It is then stated, on f.10^r, that the name Elijah is repeated 130 times to expel the evil represented by Samael. The 131st repetition represents Samael himself, who is accompanied by 130 chiefs.⁴⁰ By means of a different division of the Hebrew letters representing Elijah the prophet, the sacred tetragrammaton is then uttered, giving the child added protection from evil.

The *mohel* now recites two benedictions followed in the liturgy by a prayer, preserved from Geonic times, by Abraham ben Nathan, Tanyah, and Abudrahim,⁴¹ which refers to the naming of the child and includes passages from Scripture.⁴² On f.11^r, alternative benedictions are given, to be used when the *mohel* himself is the father of the child or when the child is orphaned of either father or mother; and at the foot of this folio a rubric directs that the *sandek* drink some wine at a particular point during the preceding benediction, and gives wine to any boys present as well as a drop to the infant.⁴³ While this takes place the *mohel* returns the child to his mother

³⁶ I.e., "Walk before me and be thou perfect", Gen. 17:1.

³⁷ Ps. 119:162, 165, 166.

³⁸ The calculations are in fact approximate. The numerical value of the Hebrew letters comprising the sacred tetragrammaton, together with those comprising the word *adonai*, "Lord", add up to 91; the sum of the Hebrew letters in *ha-milah*, "the circumcision", is 90. Various other calculations in this passage are only accurate to one digit.

³⁹ During the latter part of the nineteenth century, and the early years of the twentieth, cases of syphilis, tuberculosis, and diphtheria occurring in infants were attributed to the traditional practice of *meziḡah* and this brought about more hygienic methods of carrying out this part of the operation.

⁴⁰ See Eisenmenger, op. cit., note 19 above, vol. 1, p. 841.

⁴¹ Abraham ben Nathan, born in the second half of the twelfth century, possibly in Lunel, settled in Toledo in 1204 where he distinguished himself by his erudition and wrote *ha-Manhig*, 'The guide', a rabbinical work which gives instructive details of special synagogue usage personally observed by the author in northern France and several other areas of western Europe including England. Cf. E. Renan, *Les Rabbins français du commencement du quatorzième siècle*, Histoire littéraire de la France, vol. 27, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1877, p. 521.

⁴² Gen. 21:4; Ezek. 16:6; Ps. 105:8-10; 118:1; Prov. 23:25.

⁴³ This takes place when the words *be-damayik ḡayi*, "in thy blood live", Ezek. 16:6, are said in the liturgy. See note 30.

(plate 3). Then follows the grace which, although not indicated in this manuscript, takes place after the meal which follows circumcision.⁴⁴ The liturgy ends with a prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem. Prayers are offered for the parents of the child, the child's protection and blessing, the long and devout life of children in whom the future resides, and finally a blessing for all present. More blessings are invoked according to the Polish rite (f.17^{r-v}), and a variant or abridged prayer completes the liturgy.

The text ends on f.17^v as follows:

migdol yeshu'ot malko we-'oseh hesed li-meshiḥo / le-dawid u-le-zar'o 'ad 'olam. 'oseh shalom bi-meromaw / hu ya'aseh shalom 'alenu we-'al kol yisra'el we-'imru / amen. t[am] w[e-nishlam] s[hebah] l[a-'el] b[ore] '[olam].

The translation:

He is a tower of salvation to his king; and shows loving kindness to his anointed, to David and to his seed for ever.⁴⁵ He who maketh peace in his high places, may he make peace for us all and for all Israel, and say ye, Amen.

Finished and completed, praised be the Lord, Creator of the Universe!

⁴⁴ Further prayers and precepts according to both the Polish variant rite and the Ashkenazi follow on ff.12^{r-14}.

⁴⁵ Cf. Ps. 18:51 (E.V. v.50) and 2 Sam. 22:51, which form the basis of this prayer.