

A bris seudah is a custom to demonstrate the simcha that Jews feel when we observe bris mila

מילכים במילכה

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9 Fleishig Or Milchig

It is a well-established practice that when someone celebrates a *bris mila*, they make a *seudah* in honor of the occasion. The common custom in *Eretz Yisroel* is that the meal served in honor of a *bris* is *fleishig*, whereas, in the United States, the meal served is often *milchig*. Must a *bris* be *fleishig*? The first question is whether the *bris* meal is required *התורה* or *מודרבנן* or whether it is simply a common practice.

"Someone who brought his son to a *bris mila* is required to make a celebration and a party for the occasion" (*Pirkei Drabbi Eliezer, Perek 29; Midrash Tehillim Perek 112*). The basis quoted by these *midrashim* is that Avraham made a large party *ביום הנמל את יצחק*, "on the day of the *higameil* of Yitzchok," assuming that the word *higameil* refers to the day of his *bris*. *Tosafos* (שבת) quotes a *midrash* that this is derived by taking the four letters of the word *הגמל* and dividing them into *הג*, which is the *gematria* of eight, and *מל*, meaning that Avraham made a his big celebration on the eighth day after Yitzchak's birth, which was the day of *mila*.

Another *passuk* frequently quoted as a source for a celebration on the day of the *bris* is in *Tehillim* (119:162), *שש אנכי על אמרתך כמוצא שלל*, "I rejoice about your utterances as he who finds a huge treasure," where the word *אמרתך* is interpreted to mean the *mitzvah* of *bris mila*, thus rendering the *passuk*: I rejoice when I have the opportunity of *bris mila*- through a festive *seuda*.

In this context, the *Maharshal* states that the *seudah* itself is a *simchas mitzvah*, on the same level as a wedding or *sheva brachos*, and it is therefore a big *mitzvah* to participate in it (*Yam shel Shalom, Bava Kama 7:37*).

Up until now, we have noted several *midrashim* as sources for the practice of a festive celebration in honor of a *bris mila*, and we noted a discrepancy whether this meal is required or only customary. The wording of the *Shulchan Aruch* is "נדרגין", which implies that the *seudah* is required because of Jewish practice (*Yoreh Deah 265:12*).

The early authorities discuss whether it is preferred to have a *fleishig* meal at a *bris*. The *Shlah Hakodesh* quotes a dispute that he had with his *rebbe*, the *Maharash*, who contended

that a *bris* should be a *fleishig* meal, whereas the *Shlah* himself, at least prior to his *rebbe* voicing a disputing opinion, held that a *milchig* meal is fine (*Mesechta Shabbos, Ner Mitzvah #7*, quoted by Elya Zuta 249:2). The opinion of the *Maharash* is viewed as the primary *halachic* opinion by the *Machatzis Hashekel* (*Orach Chayim 249:6*). On the other hand, the *Chasam Sofer* notes that the accepted practice in his day was to serve a dairy meal (*Shu"t Chasam Sofer Orach Chayim #69*), and this practice is similarly quoted approvingly by others (*Shaarei Teshuvah 551:33*, quoting *Shu"t Or Olam #9*).

In this context, the *Chochmos Odum* states that having a *bris seudah* is a custom to demonstrate the *simcha* that Jews feel when we observe *bris mila*. To quote him, "Someone who could make a *seudah*, and pinches pennies to serve only coffee, schnapps and sweets, is not doing the right thing (149:24). In other words, if someone cannot afford an expensive meal, it is perfectly acceptable that he serve a snack, rather than a full meal. But someone who can afford to serve a nice meal should make a proper celebration.

At the same time, we must be careful that the expenses associated with a *bris* not become so lavish that it embarrasses someone who is unable to make such a nice *bris*. In many communities, over the ages, when this became a problem, *takanos* were established, limiting how many people could be invited to a *bris seudah* and what was served.



הרה"ג ר' ברוך מרדכי אורחי שליט"א בברכות חברית

ויקרא שמו בישראל ————— What's in a Name?

ירמיהו - ירזזמאל, ירזזמיל - Yerachmiel

It was asked to ירמיהו, in all the places in *Tanach* it mentions the name as ירמיהו (ex: ירמיהו). However, today we refer to that name as ירמיהו. His reply: There are two names and even though in the *Pesukim* there is no such mention of ירמיהו there is such a name (See שו"ת מהר"ם מרוזנברג ס' תקי"ז והובא בבי"ש עיי"ש)

דינה - Dinah

There are some who refrain from using the name as it is a reminder of דין. However התורה is of the opinion that there is no קפידא and many have used the name (מורן שליט"א has a daughter with the name!) One time someone asked what should he name his new daughter? To which *Reb Chaim* replied- A name from the *parsha*. The father was הוי"ש to call her *Dinah* as it was the story with her and *Shechem*? *Reb*

Chaim said- זה בסדר גמור - (מספרים ויקרא שמו בישראל ואוצר שמות היים)

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In our continued effort to raise awareness about the mitzvah of bris mila, we will raise questions and comments to promote discussions that pertain to the inyan of mila. Please feel free to discuss them with your LOR, or your LOM (Local Orthodox Mohel).

- 1 Can one use a different *Mohel* for different children?
- 2 What is the *segulah* to *daven* at a *bris*?
- 3 Is one required to make a *Seuda* on the day of the *bris*?
- 4 One forgot to do *Metzitza*. What should be done?
- 5 Why must one bury the *orlah* after the *bris mila*?
- 6 Does the mother of the child need to be present at the *bris*?
- 7 Which is preferable a) a *bris* early on in the day with less people, b) a *bris* later in the day with more people?
- 8 If one has irreligious relatives who will attend a *bris* on *Shabbos*, should the *bris* be postponed?

Send

Please submit any questions or comments you have, so they can be printed in future volumes of *Millim Bmila*, to Your1mohel@gmail.com.

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מעשה שהיה כך היה – Bris in Monte Carlo

A story told over by Rabbi/Mohel Dr. Leslie Solomon

It had been a harsh, snow-swept few days, followed by a sudden plunge in temperature, and by now even the wintry icicles had icicles. The roads were treacherous but the schoolchildren were ecstatic.

Less happy was a grandfather, who had been given the task of organizing a *bris* for his grandson in Monte Carlo. I was asked to be the *mohel*, and was due to be traveling on Thursday morning for the *bris* later in the day.

But looking at the December sky on Wednesday, I was beginning to doubt whether the airports would be running any scheduled flights. Every cloud, even an ominous gray snow cloud, has a silver lining, and missing this *bris* wouldn't be terrible for me, as I had a *bris* scheduled for Friday at 12 noon back in London. But missing the *bris* wasn't on the grandfather's agenda.

On Wednesday afternoon, I got a phone call: "I need your passport details. Be ready tomorrow morning at seven. A car will come and pick you up."

At 07:00, the black Audi arrived, and the chauffeur offered to take my bag.

"This way, sir."

I sat in the backseat, and felt a bit awkward being called "sir."

"It's okay," I said, "you can call me James."

"Very well, Mr. James. There has been a change of plan. You will not be taking the scheduled flight. Alternative arrangements have been made."

It all sounded very mysterious and exciting. As we approached the airport, we took a turn away from the main terminal and instead headed toward the private jets. At the terminal, which was really just a lounge, I met up with the rest of the party, which included Rabbi Shlomo Farhi, who had known the family for many years.

The grandfather was the last to arrive, and was relieved to see that we were all there. We put our bags through a small x-ray machine, and were led by the pilot to the nine-seater plane. The stewardess sat in the cabin with us, and was fascinated by the whole *bris* thing.

"So, you're the doctor," she said. "I can't imagine what it would be like to be the mother of the baby at this moment. She must be so anxious."

"You mean anxious about her baby, or about the airplane?"

The stewardess laughed. "Oh, no, the airplane is quite safe. I do trips like this every day, and we would only take off if it was safe to do so. Safety first. I was more worried that she would be anxious about her baby going through the *bris* operation."

"There is no real need for the mother to feel anxious about the *bris*," I explained. "A *mohel* does this procedure every day, and will only proceed if it's perfectly safe to do so."

She wasn't satisfied. "But there are always risks."

"Oh, yes," I said, "everything has risks, even flying. But if the baby is healthy, has a good weight and is clear of jaundice, then I would be happy to proceed."

It was a clear day over France. We landed in a cold yet sunny Nice, and within five minutes we were in the car driving along the Cote d'Azur to Monaco.

Monte Carlo is built on a slope leading down to the Mediterranean Sea, and is a city where all the residents

had been invited to live by the king and his cohorts. There are no steps to

the sea; in Monte Carlo, escalators on the street take you to the next level. The casinos, hotels, and cafes are frequented by the rich and famous — and on that Thursday, by us. We were guests, intrigued by the allure of this place, humored by the thick veil of wealth that we imagined might even betray a deep sense of insecurity.

The *bris* itself was a luxury affair. The foyer of the Hotel de Paris was resplendent in enormous bouquets of pink roses, the string quintet was divine, the *kosher* cuisine exquisite. There were *rabbis* from all the neighboring cities — this was an important event, and I felt privileged to be there, but also concerned about how we were going to get back to England. This concern



turned into real worry when the other two *rabbis* from our traveling party and I were summoned to a side room by the grandfather, who looked like he didn't have such good news.

"The travel agent called," he told us. "Because the original tickets were bought as a round-trip flight, missing the first part of the journey means that the return part of the ticket is canceled. I tried to rebook the same tickets, but the flight is now full, and the chartered plane has gone back to England, which leaves us with only two options: a return journey via Toulouse or via Frankfurt. Which one would you prefer?"

For some reason, the *rabbis* turned to me. I'm a *mohel*, not a travel agent, but on this occasion, I had a very strong sense that we ought to take German efficiency over French *je ne sais quoi*. Frankfurt, for me, was the obvious choice. The others agreed. That night, I felt a calmness that comes from knowing that all would end up the way *Hashem* wanted it to end up — which was fine by me, and also hopefully fine by my wife.

That night I also got a call from the Friday *bris* family, asking me if we could postpone the *bris* by a couple of hours till 2 p.m.

"Sure," I said, and smiled. Things were beginning to take shape.

We got to the Nice airport on Friday morning and checked the departures board. Our flight to Frankfurt was on time, but the original intended return flight to London had been canceled! What had sounded like bad news yesterday was today a big blessing. We were grateful to leave France behind on the first leg of our return journey.

The stopover in Frankfurt was brief and frenetic, but as we took our seats toward the back of the plane, I looked up to the sky and asked for one last miracle. It was now 12 noon on Friday, and I was feeling nervous. I still had a *bris* to perform at 2 p.m. in London.

As I was making my calculations, the pilot made an announcement. "Due to the weather in London, air traffic control has pushed us back. We hope to have a slot in about one hour, but it may be sooner."

One hour! My heart sank. This was in fact a disaster — I wouldn't get back in time for the *bris*. My focus quickly shifted; it was now all about *Shabbos*. I had to tell the parents of the other *bris* and give them time to make alternative arrangements. Most importantly, I had

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to speak to my wife, who was no doubt closely checking my movements online.

I called her and relayed the message from the pilot.

She immediately said, "You have to call the other parents and tell them what's happening." She was right, of course.

"Let's give it another few minutes," I said. "After all, why worry them unnecessarily? We may get an earlier slot."

They didn't even know that I was abroad! And as the next few seconds ticked away and the remaining embers of hope for a perfect outcome were spluttering to their inevitable death, the pilot chirped up.

"Good news, we've got a slot now, seat belts on. Let's go."

Good news. Amazing news. This was a miracle.

Could we really make it back to England in time? One *rabbi* had to be back for the *bar mitzva* of a boy he had taught over the last year to read his *Torah* portion. The other *rabbi* was trying to get back to his young family. Their prayers had certainly helped lift us back into the sky.

It's only a short flight from Frankfurt to Heathrow, but enough time to try and take stock of the past 36 hours.

I wondered what *Hashem* thought of the *bris*. Did we use the splendor of Monte Carlo to connect to Him, or for our own pleasure? Were we more Greek or more Jewish? I thought of the fine line between these two world views, and how we often struggle to keep onto our side of the divide.

My thoughts were interrupted by a bump as the plane hit the runway. We hadn't even circled around Heathrow — I guess there must have been lots of canceled inbound flights. I said goodbye to the two *rabbis*; we had certainly shared more than a simple *bris* together.

At 2:05 p.m. I arrived at the Friday *bris*, where I was greeted enthusiastically.

"Good to see you. Glad you could make it with all the snow. It must have been quite a drive."

I smiled. "Yes, you have no idea, but it is good to be here. Very good."

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