

Circumcision

In three months, if everything goes to plan I am going to be a father. I am very excited and a little scared, Not least of my worries is what if I have a boy, and the eighth day comes? Can I bring myself to circumcise my son, can I cause him so much pain just to initiate him into a culture he didn't freely choose? The answer is, I can, in fact I feel I must. I fully anticipate that my family and I are going to be immersed in Jewish life for the rest of my life, and if I don't circumcise my son, I am doing my son a disservice, since it will set him apart and he would have to contend with feelings of being an outsider, with long-term pain, instead of short-term pain which will fade. So, therefore, I will reluctantly circumcise my son, privately, since it shouldn't be a celebration (no one should be happy when a baby is in pain), and ask for his forgiveness at the bris itself, and afterwards when he is old enough to understand. The following a poem I wrote for the occasion brings tears to my eyes.

On The Eighth Day

On the Eighth day
God stood over him
One hand drawing him close
And in the other hand a knife

And if he asks, Abba,
Why do you cry,
And why are you cutting me
No one answers
And I must suffer

ביום השמיני

וְיְהִי בְיוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי
נִיָּצַב עָלָיו אֱלֹהִים
שְׂמָאלִי תַחַת רֹאשׁוֹ
וּבְיָמֵי הַסָּכִין

יְכִי יִשְׂאֵל, אָבָא,
מִדּוּעַ אַתָּה בּוֹכֶה
וְלָמָּה אַתָּה חוֹתֵךְ
אֵין לִי תְשׁוּבָה
עַל זֹאת אֶתְעַנֶּה