

**Blessings for the Vaccine**  
**Compiled by Rabbi Sarah Bassin**

[With reference to rabbis quoted in the Sun Sentinel](#)

**1. Talmudic Blessing on Bloodletting**

Berachot 60a (Babylonian Talmud) has many blessings recited on all sorts of occasions. This page is the source of the "asher yatzar" blessing that one says after you go to the bathroom. Just before that, and after the blessing you say when leaving the bathhouse (!), there is a blessing to say before bloodletting (!!!) Bloodletting, barbaric as it sounds, was a common medical procedure dating back to the Greeks and continuing well into the 19th century. We now know that this is not a helpful thing to do, but at the time it was intended to heal people. I studied this page earlier this year as part of the Daf Yomi cycle - it was late February, before the pandemic really blew up, and so I was not thinking about vaccines, but at the time it occurred to me that this would be an appropriate blessing to say before surgery, or receiving chemotherapy.

May it be Your will, O Lord my God,  
that this enterprise be for healing and that You should heal me.  
As You are a faithful God of healing and Your healing is truth...  
Blessed are You, Who heals unconditionally. - David Andorsky

**2. Birkat Hagomel**

I'll be inviting each member of my synagogue to [bench gomel](#) on the Shabbat after they receive the vaccine. Gomel is a prayer said by Jews who've come through a harrowing threat to life, like giving birth, a major illness or a car crash. It's received by the congregation and responded to by the full community, each person asking for more good to come to the one who has survived.  
-Rabbi Emily Cohen

To rule that one should recite HaGomel in our case would require one to adopt the position that HaGomel may or should be recited at any time when one is saved from danger, even if the person was not one of the four types explicitly mentioned by the Rabbis ([Berakhot 54a](#)), namely, a person who returns from a dangerous sea journey; returns from crossing the desert; recovers from an illness; and who is released from prison. Shulchan Arukh (OH 219:9) sides with this more expansive approach and does not limit the brakha to these cases specifically...The reason that I do not explore here the possibility of reciting HaGomel, as compelling as that possibility may be, is that I generally adopt the more conservative approach that limits HaGomel to the four cases listed in the Talmud, although there is good reason, both halakhically and religiously, to not adopt such a limiting approach. -Rabbi Dov Linzer

*Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, ha-gomel l'chayavim tovot she-g'malani kol tov.*

Blessed are You, Lord our God, ruler of the world, who rewards the undeserving with goodness, and who has rewarded me with goodness.

After the recitation of this blessing, the congregation responds:

*Mi she-g'malcha kol tov, hu yi-g'malcha kol tov selah.*

May he who rewarded you with all goodness reward you with all goodness for ever.

### 3. Hatov v'hameitiv vs. Shehecheyanu

Regarding heavy rains, if a person owns a field by himself, he recites shehecheyanu to thank God; if he owns a field with partners, he recites haTov v'haMeitiv (that God is good and does good). (Babylonian Talmud Berachot 10a)

Jewish tradition encourages the parents of a newborn to express their joy over the birth of their child by means of blessings to God. Nevertheless, since Jewish law attaches great weight to blessings that are recited with God's name, it establishes the appropriate times for saying these blessings in order to prevent repetition or superfluous recitation. The blessing of Hatov V'hameitiv is unique in that it marks occasions that are considered to bring pleasure to the entire community, and not only an individual. It was customary to recite the blessing of Hatov V'hameitiv only for the birth of a son. The blessing of Shehekheyanu was recited upon the birth of a daughter, a blessing that marked a new and joyous occasion for the individual. Nowadays that women's social status has changed and the birth of a daughter has also become a communal celebration, one can recite either one of these two blessings. There are even some who consider it a religious imperative to recite the blessing of Hatov V'hameitiv upon the birth of a daughter. Both blessings are meant to be recited at the time that the happy news is received, namely the time of birth. Even if you did not, however, recite either of them at the time, you can recite one of them during the ceremony. (ritualwell.org)

Nevertheless, I still would prefer HaTov. I believe that this case, unlike so many others in classic literature, is one in which the person receiving the benefit feels genuine joy not just for herself, but for all of society. This is reinforced by the fact that the receiving of the vaccine happens in settings where many people are receiving it together and where there is a system set up to administer the vaccine. One feels in such settings that the joy she is receiving is shared by others, and the joy that others are receiving is shared by her. HaTov would be – in my opinion – the preferred blessing to be recited. -Rabbi Dov Linzer

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַטוֹב וְהַמְיֻטִּיב

*Barukh atah adonay eloheynu melekh ha-olam, ha-tov v'hameytiv.*

Blessed are You, oh Lord, our God, King of the universe, who is good and bestows good.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה

*Barukh atah adonay eloheynu melekh ha-olam shehekheyanu vi-kimanu vi-higiyanu la-z'man ha-zeh.*

Blessed are You, oh Lord, our God, King of the universe, who has allowed us to live, has preserved us, and has enabled us to reach this season.

### 4. Joseph's Blessings after the Pit

I would say three, actually: the shehecheyanu blessing, thanking God who brought us to this day; "She'asah li nes bamakom hazeh," who has done a miracles for me in this place; and "Shenatan michochmato l'basar v'adam," who has given of His wisdom to flesh and blood. In a recent "[daily connection](#)" video, I cited the biblical Joseph saying the second of these blessings when he returns to the pit he was thrown into, and I suggest we should say the same. -Rabbi David Wolpe

## **5. New Blessings**

With gratitude and thanksgiving to the Healer of repairable hearts and restorer of brokenness, appreciation and thanks for inspiring the medical teams and scientists granting them wisdom, knowledge and expertise to prepare this vaccine for all of us. May it be your will that with my vaccination I will be granted the ability to heal and keep safe humankind and be granted the privilege to fulfill the mitzvah of one who saves a life. Blessed are you, Healer of all who are sick. -Rabbi Karen Reiss Medwed

Ribbono shel olam, Ruler of all that is, I reach out to You before I take my child\* to receive a vaccination. You are the author of all creation, from the largest beast to the tiniest virus. You have invested human beings with the intellect and skill to devise ways to defeat the diseases that plagued us in former days, and to seek out preventions and cures for those diseases that still trouble us. You have commanded us to care for our bodies and those of our children, and so I bring this child for a vaccination. Protect this little one from fear and pain. Help me to convey confidence and calm to my child. Give skill and kindness to the person administering the medicine, and make it effective for the purpose intended. Protect us from all harm, dear God! Protect us from viruses and bacteria, and from the evils of ignorance, fear, and bad counsel. Draw us under the comforting wings of Your Presence, and at the end of this procedure, we will give thanks for all that we have received. Grant us health and peace of mind, not only to us, but to all who worry about health and how to find it. Blessed are You, Adonai our God, who created all things great and small, and who has invested human beings with skill and intelligence to preserve health in this world. Amen. -Rabbi Ruth Adar

\*This prayer can also be said by an adult going for a vaccination. Substitute "myself" for "my child," etc.