**פרשת שמות / Parashat Shmot**

Shabbat Tevet 23, 5770, January 9, 2010

32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d

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**Have You Circumcised Your Heart Today?**

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| **השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week’s Reading** |
| **תורה:****הפטרה:****הברית:****החדשה:** | Exodus 1:1-6:1Isaiah 27:6-28:13 29:22-23Acts 7:17-35 1 Corinthians 14:18-25 |

In this week’s reading, while Moshe was on his way to Mitzrayim (Egypt), HaShem met him and the Torah indicates that HaShem had come to kill him. Reading the context of the verse, in *4:23* HaShem had finished talking to Moshe and so the verses in *4:24-26* are understood to be between HaShem and Moshe. These three verses appear to cause a break in the storyline which makes one question “what is the purpose of this pericope?” These verses are interesting because (i) Zipporah appears to know what to do and (ii) why does Moshe not act in this instance? What is the meaning of Zipporah’s words that Moshe is a “bridegroom of blood to me?”

**4:24-26 **



**Shmot / Exodus 4:24-26**

4:24 Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that the Lord met him and sought to put him to death. 4:25 Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and threw it at Moses' feet, and she said, ‘You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me.’ 4:26 So He let him alone. At that time she said, ‘You are a bridegroom of blood’ because of the circumcision. (NASB)

 The difficulties with these verses are the result of the apparent disconnection between the storyline in the text to that of what was happening in these three verses, and especially the lack of a stated reason or explanation of the action of Zipporah. Also note the use of the word “v’taga” (תגע) from the root word נגע meaning “to touch,” Zipporah caused the foreskin to touch Moshe’ feet. The NASB translates this as to cast down at his feet. Why does Zipporah cut the foreskin of her son and touch the feet of Moshe? There may be a connection between the pervious text and that of Moshe’s son. *Shmot / Exodus 4:22 ‘Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, ‘Israel is My son, My firstborn. 4:23 ‘So I said to you, 'Let My son go that he may serve Me'; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn.’'‘* The circumcision of Moshe’s first born son within the context of the words HaShem telling Moshe to say to Pharaoh might provide insight into the reason why this happened. I believe that the meaning of the passage is found in the tremendous importance attached to circumcision and its role in the covenant that is made between G-d and His people.

Commentators have come up with various reasons why this was mentioned here in the Torah. Kaiser suggests that the feet are Moshe’s feet but the Hebrew text is unclear. John I. Durham suggests that the “he” in these verses is a reference to the first born son of Moshe. On the surface Moshe was guilty of not circumcising his own family prior to returning to Mitzrayim (Egypt). Moshe was the one to lead all of Yisrael from Egypt to the Promised Land, if he was to be the servant of the Lord, the first thing he needed to do was to be a faithful servant starting with his family. The neglect to circumcise his family was essentially a breach of covenant on his part. Within this context, Moshe needed to correct his “actions” and “heart” prior to returning to Mitzrayim and speaking to Pharaoh. So, is there a connection between “circumcision” and our “hearts?” Interestingly, the Scriptures do speak on “circumcision” and our “hearts.” Let’s look at the following verses to investigate this further.

***Vayikra / Leviticus 26:40-42***

*26:40 'If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me 26:41 I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, 26:42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land. (NASB)*

***Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:15-17***

*10:15 ‘Yet on your fathers did the Lord set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day. 10:16 ‘So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer. 10:17 ‘For the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. (NASB)*

***Devarim / Deuteronomy 30:5-6***

*30:5 ‘The Lord your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. 30:6 ‘Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. (NASB)*

***Yeremiyahu / Jeremiah 4:1-4***

*4:1 ‘If you will return, O Israel,’ declares the Lord, ‘Then you should return to Me. And if you will put away your detested things from My presence, And will not waver, 4:2 And you will swear, 'As the Lord lives,' In truth, in justice and in righteousness; Then the nations will bless themselves in Him, And in Him they will glory.’ 4:3 For thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem, ‘Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns. 4:4 ‘Circumcise yourselves to the Lord And remove the foreskins of your heart, Men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Or else My wrath will go forth like fire And burn with none to quench it, Because of the evil of your deeds.’ (NASB)*

Reading these verses from the Torah (*Vayikra / Leviticus* and *Devarim / Deuteronomy*) and from the Neviim (Prophets) *Yeremiyahu / Jeremiah*, it is interesting to note the importance of “circumcision” and our “hearts.” According to the Torah, without a circumcised heart we are unable to draw near to the Lord. In one text (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:15-17 and Yeremiyahu / Jeremiah 4:1-4*) we are to circumcise our hearts and turn from having a stiff neck, in other words, stop rebelling against G-d. *Devarim / Deuteronomy 30:5-6* indicates that HaShem will circumcise our hearts to love the Lord our G-d with all our heart and soul. The Scriptures indicate that the concept of “circumcising our hearts” is a dual cooperative phenomenon were (i) we need to actively be working to circumcise our hearts and (ii) G-d is helping us to circumcise our hearts if we truly desire to draw near to Him. This is different than what we think of circumcision today; today we usually think about the “cutting of the flesh” as was originally given to Avraham in *Bereshit / Genesis*.

In compliance with HaShem’s command, Avraham, though ninety nine years of age was circumcised on the same day with Ishmael who was thirteen years old (*Bereshit / Genesis 17:24-27*). The Torah indicates that everyone was circumcised, all the males (sons and fathers), slaves were circumcised and all foreigners must have their males circumcised before they could enjoy the privileges of Jewish citizenship (*Shmot / Exodus 12:48*). During the 40 years in the wilderness, the practice of circumcision had been neglected but was resumed by the command of Yehoshua (Joshua) before entering the Promised Land (see *Yehoshua / Joshua 5:2-9*). From this point forward the possession of the covenant through circumcision was prided with distinction among the Jewish people (see *Judges 14:3, 15:18, 1 Samuel 14:6, 17:26, 2 Samuel 1:20, and Ezekiel 31:18*). It was no surprise then that circumcision was a rite that was brought into the believing community and eventually taught to the non-Jewish believers as a requirement of their faith. It is interesting though that Shaul (Paul) taught that circumcision was not an ardent requirement for new believers (see *Acts 16:3, Galatians 6:12-15, and Colossians 3:11*). It may be that Shaul had understood that circumcision was a symbol of purity before HaShem and that it was more important to circumcise our hearts over against circumcising our flesh.

The word “circumcision” has various uses in the Tanach, we find the use of the word “circumcision” to refer to “uncircumcised lips (*Shmot / Exodus 6:12, 30*), ears (*Yeremiyahu / Jeremiah 6:10*), hearts (*Vayikra / Leviticus 26:41*), and in fact the fruit of the tree that was considered unclean is spoken of as uncircumcised (*Vayikra / Leviticus 19:23*). Circumcision was a sign of the covenant that sealed G-d’s promises to Avraham, which included the promise of redemption in his seed (see *Parashat Lekh Lekha*). Understanding the use of the word “circumcision” in the Scriptures we realize how important the circumcision of our hearts is for us today. The circumcision of the heart is a sign of purification of the heart which is the inward circumcision that is effected by the Spirit of G-d. This kind of circumcision is and forever will be a sign of G-d’s chosen people because it something we are required to do by walking in truth and righteousness.

The right of circumcision in the Torah was the foremost symbol of Yisrael’s relationship with HaShem and for us today it is absolutely necessary to circumcise our hearts before we are able to come into a new and meaningful relationship with the Lord. In the Scriptures all references are generally made to men, men of the city, etc. Notice something here; I believe this kind of circumcision (heart) is not restricted to men only but to all believers, both men and women, because it is an inward process and not a physical cutting of the flesh. Before Moshe could return to Mitzrayim (Egypt) he needed to circumcise his first born son and in doing so place his heart in right standing before the Lord. Circumcision is the surgical cutting away of the foreskin from the new born baby males. If you have not thought about this before, consider whether you have held an uncircumcised heart before the Lord. *Yeremiyahu / Jeremiah**4:4 ‘Circumcise yourselves to the Lord And remove the foreskins of your heart, Men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Or else My wrath will go forth like fire And burn with none to quench it, Because of the evil of your deeds.’ (NASB)* Note the parallels that are drawn between circumcision, foreskin of the heart, and evil deeds. If you continue in repetitive sin, or some kind of conscious / intentional action that stands contrary to the way we are supposed to live our lives you just may have an uncircumcised heart before G-d. As we have seen, HaShem speaks of the circumcision of the heart in the Hebrew Scriptures. This concept has deep meaning for us today just as it did when HaShem gave circumcision to Avraham. We can’t show the world that we have been circumcised in the flesh; however, we can show how G-d has touched our lives and our hearts. Through our words and our actions we can demonstrate that G-d has circumcised our hearts. Have you circumcised your heart today?

**Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!**

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**הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:**

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,

“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever