TORAH OHR · PARSHAS LECH LECHA · MAAMAR 6

בעצם היום הזה נימול אברהם וגו׳

On that very day Avraham was circumcised

There are two circumcisions of the heart: one we do ourselves through teshuvah and the Torah, and a greater one that G-d performs from above, drawn from the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, beyond reason and beyond the Torah itself. Avraham kept the whole Torah on his own but waited for circumcision because he sought the higher circumcision that only G-d can give.

DEDICATED IN HONOR OF

מוקדש לכבוד הגאון המקובל רבי לוי יצחק שניאורסאהן זצ״ל

Dedicated in honor of the Rebbe's father, Reb Levi Yitzchok

THE BIG IDEA

There are two circumcisions of the heart: one we do ourselves through teshuvah and the Torah, and a greater one that G-d performs from above, drawn from the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, beyond reason and beyond the Torah itself. Avraham kept the whole Torah on his own but waited for circumcision because he sought the higher circumcision that only G-d can give.

Each section: the Hebrew, then the translation, then a short explanation under a gold rule. Small numbers in the Hebrew are the notes at the end.

THE MAAMAR IN BRIEF

The maamar asks why Avraham, who kept the entire Torah before it was given, did not circumcise himself until commanded. It answers by explaining the nature of circumcision. The verse "Who will go up for us to heaven?" hides milah in its initial letters and Havayah in its final letters, so circumcision stands above the Name Havayah and above the Torah, which is "not in heaven" but brought down to earth. The Torah speaks of two circumcisions of the heart: "you shall circumcise," our own teshuvah and service, an arousal from below; and "Havayah will circumcise," the revelation from above that will come after the ingathering of the exiles, G-d's stored-away goodness. This higher circumcision is the "great circumcision" of the thirteen covenants: like a covenant between friends, it is above reason, drawn from the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, which transcend wisdom and the Torah. Avraham therefore kept all of the Torah below it himself and waited to receive this circumcision from above. Hence the Torah says "Avraham was circumcised," in the passive, and "in the essence of that day," the entirely good day of the time to come, revealed to him then.

OUTLINE

1 **The question and the key verse** ¶1

Why did Avraham, who kept the whole Torah, not circumcise himself earlier? "Who will go up for us to heaven" hides milah and Havayah.

2 **Two circumcisions, and the great one above the Torah** ¶2

Circumcision from below (teshuvah, Torah and mitzvos) and from above (G-d's revelation, from the Thirteen Attributes, above reason, Havayah and Torah); so Avraham waited for the higher one.

3 **"Was circumcised" in the essence of the day** ¶3

The passive verb and the phrase "in the essence of that day" show that Avraham received the circumcision from above, from the revelation of the day that is entirely good.

THE MAAMAR IN THE REBBE'S LIGHT

Found by AI reading every place in the Rebbe's works that cites this maamar, checked against each source; not yet reviewed by a person. Each explanation is under its paragraph.

The maamar asks why Avraham, who kept the whole Torah before it was given, did not circumcise himself until he was commanded, and answers that „רצה להגיע לאותה מילה גדולה שמלמעלה למטה" (he sought the "great circumcision" from above), „למעלה מבחי' שם הוי"ה ולמעלה מבחי' תורה" (beyond the Torah and the Name Havayah). The Rebbe takes up the same question and gives three answers, pointing the reader to this maamar for the Alter Rebbe's: „בפנימיות הענינים" (in the inner sense), one mitzvah of the Avos had to come by command, like the mitzvos after Sinai (Likkutei Sichos vol. 5, Vayera 5725); in the plain sense, wounding oneself is forbidden until a command overrides it (vol. 5, Shabbos Mikeitz 5728); and only the Creator can make a „ברית עולם" ("everlasting covenant") (vol. 25, Acharon shel Pesach 5741). He also unfolds the circumcision from above: what Avraham reached before it he could reach by his own power (Lech Lecha 5711); it brought him from Atzilus to a wholeness above it (12 Tammuz 5714); it stands above the letters of Havayah, though „צריך להיות תחלה השלימות דהשתלשלות" (the order of the worlds must first be complete) (Ashrei Tivchar 5716); and, being above the Torah's measure, it overrides Shabbos, and „דמילת אברהם היתה ביום הכפורים" (Avraham's own fell on Yom Kippur) (vol. 35).

KEY CONCEPTS

Circumcision from below מילה שמלמטה למעלה

"You shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart": a person's own teshuvah and service through Torah and mitzvos, an arousal from below.

Circumcision from above (the great circumcision) מילה גדולה שמלמעלה למטה

"Havayah will circumcise your heart": the arousal from above, revealing the "great goodness" He has stored away, which is above the Torah. It follows the circumcision from below: Avraham kept the whole Torah first, and afterward merited it.

Initial letters and final letters ר"ת מילה וס"ת הוי"ה

In "Mi ya'aleh lanu hashamaymah" the initials spell milah and the finals spell Havayah, showing the great circumcision from above to be above the Name Havayah and above the Torah.

Torah not in heaven לא בשמים היא

The Torah has been brought down to earth through the Name Havayah (contraction, expansion, drawing down), so its law is decided here below.

Thirteen Attributes of Mercy י"ג מדות הרחמים

Divine mercy above wisdom and the Torah, the source of forgiveness and of the great circumcision, alluded to in the "thirteen covenants."

Covenant כריתת ברית

A bond above reason, like two friends who commit to love each other even when reason would no longer produce that love.

The day that is entirely good יום שכולו טוב

The time to come, whose "essence" is the revelation of G-d's great goodness; it was revealed to Avraham at his circumcision.

SECTION 1 • ¶1

The question and the key verse

1 בעצם היום הזה[1] נימול אברהם[2] וגו׳. להבין הקושיא שנזכר בספרים מפני מה לא מל אברהם[3] אע״ע [את עצמו] קודם מאחר שקיים כל התורה כולה עד שלא ניתנה[4] ואפילו עירובי תבשילין.[5]

“On that very day Avraham was circumcised,” etc. [We need] to understand the question that is raised in the books: why did Avraham not circumcise himself earlier, since he kept the entire Torah before it was given, even eiruvei tavshilin?

> The maamar opens with the verse about Avraham’s circumcision at ninety-nine and raises a known question: Avraham kept the whole Torah before Sinai, down to the Rabbinic enactment of eiruvei tavshilin (which allows cooking on Yom Tov for Shabbos). Why, then, did he wait until he was commanded to circumcise himself?

ולהבין זה צ״ל תחלה ענין המילה דהנה כתיב לא בשמים היא[6] לאמר מי יעלה לנו השמימה ר״ת [ראשי תיבות] מילה[7] וס״ת [וסופי תיבות] הוי״ה.[8]

To understand this, we must first [explain] the matter of circumcision. For it is written, “It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up for us to heaven?’ (mi ya’aleh lanu hashamaymah)” — whose initial letters [spell] milah (circumcision) and whose final letters [spell] Havayah.

> Before answering, the Alter Rebbe explains what circumcision is. In the verse “Who will go up for us to heaven?” the first letters of the four Hebrew words spell milah, circumcision, and the last letters spell the Name Havayah; he will show that this places circumcision above the level of Havayah and of the Torah.

THE REBBE ON THIS PARAGRAPH • AI research, checked against each source; not yet reviewed by a person

A QUESTION THE REBBE RAISES

In a sicha of Shabbos Vayera 5725, asking why G-d waited until the third day after Avraham’s circumcision to visit him, the Rebbe explains that Avraham’s circumcision had to be done „בדוגמת המצות שלאחרי מ״ת” (in the way of the mitzvos after the Giving of the Torah), and in a note he takes up this paragraph’s question.

The mitzvos of the Avos were mainly spiritual and did not permeate the physical things they were done with; so that their deeds could connect with the mitzvos after Sinai, at least one of them had to be like those mitzvos, and that is milah. This, the Rebbe writes, is one of the reasons, „בפנימיות הענינים” (“in the inner dimension of the matters”), why „שאברהם לא מל אע״ע קודם שנצטווה” (Avraham did not circumcise himself until he was commanded), though he kept the whole Torah: „קיום מצוה זו הוצרכה להיות מצד ציווי הקב״ה” (this mitzvah had to come from G-d’s command). In marked notes he sends the reader to „ביאור אדהי״ז בתו״א ס״פ לך” (“the Alter Rebbe’s explanation in Torah Ohr, end of Lech Lecha”) and to the plain-sense explanation, and adds that the command then was „אבל לא ממש” (“not exactly”) like Sinai’s, not from „אנכי הוי׳ אלקיך” (“I am Havayah your G-d”).

The Alter Rebbe: מפני מה לא מל אברהם אע״ע קודם מאחר שקיים כל התורה כולה עד שלא ניתנה

The Rebbe: וזהו אחד הטעמים (בפנימיות הענינים) מה שאברהם לא מל אע״ע קודם שנצטווה . . כי קיום מצוה זו הוצרכה להיות מצד ציווי הקב״ה

Likkutei Sichos, vol. ה, p. 79–80 · ש"פ וירא תשכ"ה

A QUESTION THE REBBE RAISES

In a sicha printed for Vayetzei (from Shabbos Mikeitz 5728), asking how Yaakov could marry four sisters, all daughters of Lavan, if the Avos kept the whole Torah, the Rebbe sets out the plain-sense (עפ"י דרך הפשט) rule for the mitzvos the Avos took on themselves and applies it to Avraham's circumcision.

The Avos' keeping of mitzvos they were not commanded was, by the plain sense, a stringency (חומרא) and an added piety, and a stringency cannot override a command they were under. That, the Rebbe says, is, in the plain sense, why Avraham did not circumcise himself before he was commanded: wounding oneself is forbidden („ואך את דמכם לנפשותיכם אדרוש", "but your blood of your souls I will require", explained of „השופך דם עצמו", one who sheds his own blood), so until the command came he could not do it; once he was commanded, the explicit command overrode that prohibition. His note 26 sends the reader to our maamar for the reason „בפנימיות הענינים" ("in the inner dimension of the matters").

The Alter Rebbe: בעצם היום הזה נימול אברהם וגו׳. להבין הקושיא שנזכר בספרים מפני מה לא מל אברהם א"ע קודם

The Rebbe: איז מהאי טעמא האָט אברהם ניט געטאָרט זיך מל זיין כל זמן שלא נצטווה

Likkutei Sichos, vol. ה, p. 145–146 · ש"פ מקץ תשכ"ח

A QUESTION THE REBBE RAISES

In a sicha of Acharon shel Pesach 5741 on circumcision „לשמונה ימים" (on the eighth day), when the child can take no part in it (and Yitzchak's claim over Yishmael), the Rebbe explains what a covenant made by G-d is.

A covenant G-d makes through milah is „ברית עולם" ("an everlasting covenant"), with no room for change, and that, the Rebbe says, is one of the explanations why Avraham did not circumcise himself until G-d told him, though „קיים אברהם אבינו כל התורה כולה עד שלא ניתנה" (he kept the whole Torah): a creature, being subject to change (בעל שינוי), cannot by his own power make anything everlasting; that can be done only by „כח הבורא" (the power of the Creator) who commands it. His note 18 sends the reader to Be'etzem Hayom Hazeh in Torah Ohr and Torah Chaim for the explanation „ע"ד החסידות" ("in the manner of Chassidus").

The Alter Rebbe: מאחר שקיים כל התורה כולה עד שלא ניתנה ואפילו עירובי תבשילין

The Rebbe: ווייל אַ נבֿרא, זייענדיק אַ בעל שינוי, קען בכח עצמו ניט אויפטאָן אַן ענין עולם, אַ „ברית עולם"

Likkutei Sichos, vol. כה, p. 87–88 · אחרון של פסח תשמ"א

SECTION 2 • ¶2

Two circumcisions, and the great one above the Torah

2 והענין דהנה תחלה כתיב ומלתם את ערלת לבבכם[9] וכתיב ומל ה׳ אלקיך את לבבך ופי׳ שיש ב׳ בחי׳ מילה[10] האחת היא מלמטה למעלה שצריכים אנו למול את ערלת הלב והוא ענין התשובה

The explanation: first it is written, "You shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart," and it is [also] written, "And Havayah your G-d will circumcise your heart." The meaning is that there are two levels of circumcision. The first is from below upward: we must circumcise the foreskin of the heart, and this is the matter of teshuvah (return),

> The Torah speaks of circumcising the heart in two ways: once as a command to us, and once as a promise that G-d will do it. The first is circumcision "from below upward": our own effort to remove the "foreskin" that blocks the heart from feeling G-dliness, which is teshuvah, returning to G-d.

כמ״ש ושבת עד[11] הוי״ה אלקיך בקיום התורה ומצות וארז״ל [ואמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] אם ישראל עושין תשובה[12] נגאלין ואם לאו אין נגאלין.[13]

as it is written, "And you shall return unto Havayah your G-d," through fulfilling the Torah and mitzvos. And our Sages, of blessed memory, said: "If Israel do teshuvah, they are redeemed; and if not, they are not redeemed."

> The verse about returning to G-d is read as referring to keeping the Torah and mitzvos. The Talmud's teaching ties the redemption to this teshuvah: our own work of return is the condition for being redeemed.

ואחר קבוץ גליות כתיב והביאך אל הארץ והטיבך[14] כו׳. והוא המילה שמלמעלה למטה ומל ה׳ את לבבך

And after the ingathering of the exiles it is written, "And He will bring you into the land… and He will do you good," etc. And this is the circumcision that is from above downward: "And Havayah will circumcise your heart."

> Only after the exiles are gathered in does the Torah promise that G-d will bring Israel to the land and do them good, and only then does it say that G-d will circumcise their hearts. That is the second circumcision, which comes "from above downward," as G-d's own act.

(וזהו והטיבך מאבותיך בחי׳ מה רב טובך אשר צפנת[15] כו׳ כי במשה שנולד מהול[16] כתיב ותרא אותו כי טוב הוא[17] כו׳)[18]

(And this is [the meaning of] "And He will do you good more than your fathers": the level of "How great is Your goodness that You have hidden away," etc.; for regarding Moshe, who was born circumcised, it is written, "And she saw him, that he was good," etc.)

> In a parenthesis the Alter Rebbe links "He will do you good" (vehetivcha, from tov, "good") to the "great goodness" (rav tuvcha) that G-d has stored away. The Sages learn from the word "good" said of the newborn Moshe that he was born already circumcised: the "good" describes a circumcision given from above, not achieved by human effort.

והיינו שבחי׳ מילה ראשונה שמלמטה למעלה[19] היא אתעדל״ת [אתערותא דלתתא] והאתעדל״ע [והאתערותא דלעילא] הוא הגלוי בחי׳ ומל ה׳ את לבבך כו׳.

That is to say: the level of the first circumcision, which is from below upward, is an arousal from below; and the arousal from above is the revelation, the level of "And Havayah will circumcise your heart," etc.

> He restates the two circumcisions in Chassidic terms. Our own circumcision of the heart is an arousal from below, human initiative; G-d's circumcision of the heart is an arousal from above, a revelation that comes from Him.

והנה על מילה שניה הזאת שיהיה לאחר קבוץ גליות ולאחר קיום התורה כולה כתיב מי יעלה לנו השמימה ר״ת [ראשי תיבות] מילה שהיא למעלה מבחי׳ התורה

Now, about this second circumcision, which will be after the ingathering of the exiles and after the fulfillment of the entire Torah, it is written, "Who will go up for us to heaven?" — the initial letters [spelling] milah — which is above the level of the Torah.

> The verse "Who will go up for us to heaven?", whose initial letters spell milah, speaks of this second circumcision that will come after the ingathering of the exiles and after the whole Torah has been kept. Its place in the verse shows that it is higher than the Torah.

כי על התורה נאמר לא בשמים היא[20] שהיא נשפלת למטה דוקא וכנז׳ [וכנזכר] בגמ׳ [בגמרא] שא״ר [שאמר רבי] יהושע אין משגיחין בבת קול[21] מפני שאין התורה בשמים כ״א למטה הימנה ונק׳ תורת הוי״ה

For about the Torah it is said, "It is not in heaven," for it is brought low, below, specifically. And [this is] as mentioned in the Gemara, that Rabbi Yehoshua said, "We pay no heed to a heavenly voice," because the Torah is not in heaven but only below it. And it is called "the Torah of Havayah,"

> "It is not in heaven" teaches that the Torah has been brought down to this world, so its law is decided here by human reasoning; the Talmud tells that Rabbi Yehoshua overruled a heavenly voice on these grounds. Because the Torah came down through the Name Havayah, it is called "the Torah of Havayah."

כי שם הוי״ה יו״ד צמצום[22] ה׳ התפשטות ו׳ המשכה כו׳ שעי״ז נמשכה למטה[23] אבל מילה הנ״ל היא למעלה משם הוי״ה עד שהיא בר״ת [בראשי תיבות] ושם הוי״ה הוא בס״ת [בסופי תיבות] וע״כ היא מבחי׳ ומדרגת השמימה.

for the Name Havayah [is]: the yud, tzimtzum (contraction); the hei, expansion; the vav, drawing down, etc. — through which it was drawn down below. But the circumcision mentioned above is above the Name Havayah, to the point that it is in the initial letters while the Name Havayah is in the final letters; and therefore it is of the level and rank of "to heaven" (hashamaymah).

> The letters of Havayah describe how G-dliness descends: the yud, a single point, is contraction; the hei is expansion; the vav, a vertical line, is drawing down. Circumcision stands at the beginning of the words of the verse while Havayah stands at their end, which shows that circumcision belongs to the higher level of "heaven," above Havayah.

ולמעלה מבחי׳ התורה שנשפלה למטה מבחי׳ שמים אלו.[24] וע״ז ארז״ל [אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] גדולה מילה[25] שנכרתו עליה שלש עשרה בריתות.

And [it is] above the level of the Torah, which was brought low, below, from the level of these heavens. And about this our Sages, of blessed memory, said: "Great is circumcision, for thirteen covenants were made over it."

> So circumcision is above the Torah, which came down from that "heaven." The Mishnah's praise, "Great is circumcision," with its thirteen covenants, is brought as support: the word "covenant" occurs thirteen times in the chapter of Avraham's circumcision.

פי׳ גדולה מילה היא בחי׳ המילה הגדולה שמלמעלה למטה (ע׳ [עיין] במק״מ [במקדש מלך] על הזוהר ח״ג [חלק ג׳] דרל״ג ע״ב[26,27] ובלק״ת [ובלקוטי תורה (להאריז״ל)] פ׳ קדושים[28] בטעמי מצות מענין גדולה מילה) שימול ה׳ את לבבך

The meaning of "Great is circumcision" is: the level of the great circumcision, which is from above downward (see the Mikdash Melech on the Zohar, part 3, page 233b, and in the Likkutei Torah [of the Arizal], Parshas Kedoshim, in Taamei HaMitzvos, on the matter of "Great is circumcision") — that Havayah will circumcise your heart.

> "Great circumcision" is read as the great, higher circumcision that G-d performs from above. The Alter Rebbe refers the reader, in a parenthesis, to the Mikdash Melech's commentary on the Zohar and to the Arizal's Likkutei Torah and Taamei HaMitzvos (the reasons for the mitzvos, recorded by Rabbi Chaim Vital), on Parshas Kedoshim, which explain the phrase in this way. This is the Arizal's book, not the Alter Rebbe's Likkutei Torah.

ולכן נכרתה בי״ג בריתות פי׳ כידוע שענין הכריתת ברית הוא למעלה מן השכל והדעת[29] ע״ד ב׳ אוהבים שעושים כריתת ברית להיות אוהבים זע״ז [זה עם זה / זה על זה]

And therefore it was made with thirteen covenants. The explanation, as is known, is that the matter of making a covenant is above reason and knowledge, like two who love each other, who make a covenant to be loving to one another;

> Why thirteen covenants? A covenant, by its nature, is above reason: two friends make a covenant so that their love will stand whatever their minds may later decide.

דהיינו שיוכרח להיות אוהבו אף אם לא היה נמשך אצלו אהבה זו אליו אח״כ מצד השכל והדעת מ״מ מכריח א״ע [את עצמו] לאהבה בבחינה שלמעלה מהשכל והדעת.

that is, that he will be bound to love him: even if afterward this love for him would not arise in him on account of reason and knowledge, nevertheless he compels himself to love, on a level that is above reason and knowledge.

> The covenant binds a person to go on loving his friend even if at some later time his reason and understanding would no longer produce that love. The love then comes from a place above reason, and that is what a covenant creates.

וכך כדי להיות גילוי והמשכה בחי׳ מילה הגדולה הנ״ל (שהוא בחי׳ מה רב טובך כו׳)

And so too, in order that there be a revelation and drawing down of the level of the great circumcision mentioned above (which is the level of "How great is Your goodness," etc.),

> In the same way the great circumcision, which is the "great goodness" G-d has stored away, must be drawn down from a level above reason.

הוא ע״י י״ג מדה״ר [מדות הרחמים][30] שהן למעלה מהחכמה והשכל ולכך היא למעלה מבחי׳ שם הוי״ה ולמעלה מבחי׳ תורה

it is through the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, which are above Chochmah (wisdom) and intellect; and therefore it is above the level of the Name Havayah and above the level of Torah

> That level is the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, which are above Chochmah and intellect. Since the Torah is G-d's wisdom brought down through Havayah, a circumcision drawn from the Thirteen Attributes is above both Havayah and the Torah.

(כמו שי״ג מדה״ר [מדות הרחמים] הן בחי׳ שלמעלה מהתורה ולכן שם הוא סליחת עון) וע״ז נאמר עד יעבור עמך[31] הוי״ה פי׳ עד יעבור בבחי׳ שלמעלה משם הוי״ה (וגם בי״ג מדה״ר [מדות הרחמים] כתי׳ [כתיב] ויעבור[32] כו׳).

(just as the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy are a level that is above the Torah, and therefore it is there that sin is forgiven). And about this it is said, "Until Your people pass over, Havayah"; meaning, "until [they] pass over" into the level that is above the Name Havayah. (And regarding the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, too, it is written, "And [He] passed," etc.)

> This is why forgiveness of sin comes through the Thirteen Attributes: forgiveness goes beyond what Torah law, which is wisdom, would decide. The verse "until Your people pass over, Havayah" is read as passing beyond Havayah, and the same verb, "He passed," begins the Thirteen Attributes at Sinai. In its plain sense the verse tells of the nations stilled in dread while Israel crosses, with G-d's Name addressed in the vocative ("until Your people pass over, O G-d"). The maamar instead reads the Name as what they pass beyond: Israel rises past the level of Havayah to the level of the Thirteen Attributes.

והנה בזה יובן ענין שאברהם קיים כל התורה כולה עד שלא ניתנה ולא קיים מצות מילה מפני שרצה להגיע לאותה מילה גדולה שמלמעלה למטה.

Now with this can be understood the matter that Avraham kept the entire Torah before it was given, yet did not keep the mitzvah of circumcision: because he wanted to attain that great circumcision which is from above downward.

> Now the opening question is answered. Avraham did not circumcise himself on his own initiative because a circumcision he did himself would have been only the lower one, from below; he wanted the great circumcision that comes from above.

ולכך קיים כל התורה כולה שלמטה מאותה מילה ואח״כ זכה לאותה מילה גדולה שמלמעלה.[33]

Therefore he kept the entire Torah, which is below that circumcision, and afterward he merited that great circumcision which is from above.

> So he kept all the rest of the Torah, which is below that circumcision, as his own service from below, and afterward G-d gave him the higher circumcision.

THE REBBE ON THIS PARAGRAPH • AI research, checked against each source; not yet reviewed by a person

THE REBBE EXPLAINS

In the same sicha of Acharon shel Pesach 5741, explaining „והיתה בריתי בבשרכם לברית עולם" ("My covenant in your flesh for an everlasting covenant"), the Rebbe describes what a covenant is.

A covenant (כריתת ברית), the Rebbe says, is like one made between two who love each other: when they want to secure their love forever, so that no thing and no situation can undo it, they strengthen it by making a covenant. His note gives Likkutei Torah, Nitzavim, and „וראה תו"א ס"פ לך (בנוגע למילה)" ("see Torah Ohr, end of Lech Lecha (regarding milah)"), our ¶2. He adds that between people such a covenant can still be annulled, since people change, while the covenant G-d makes through milah is everlasting („ברית עולם").

The Alter Rebbe: שענין הכריתת ברית הוא למעלה מן השכל והדעת ע"ד ב' אוהבים שעושים כריתת ברית להיות אוהבים זע"ז

The Rebbe: בשעת זיי ווילן פאַרזיכערן אויף שטענדיק די אהבה צווישן זיי באופן אַז קיין זאַך אָדער מצב זאָל דאָס ניט צעשטערן

Likkutei Sichos, vol. כה, p. 87 · אחרון של פסח תשמ"א

THE REBBE EXPLAINS

In the maamar "אשרי תבחר ותקרב" (Thursday night, the eve of Friday of Chayei Sarah, 26 Cheshvan 5716, said at a vachnacht, the night before a bris), explaining why this verse is said before a bris, the Rebbe sets the four worlds of hishtalshelus against milah, „ומילה היא למעלה מהשתלשלות" (which is above them).

„דמילה היא למעלה לא רק מד' העולמות אלא גם מד' האותיות דשם הוי'" (Milah, the Rebbe says, is above not only the four worlds but also the four letters of the Name Havayah) from which the worlds come into being; as Torah Ohr says on „מי יעלה לנו השמימה" ("Who will go up for us to heaven"), milah is in the first letters and Havayah in the last because milah is above Havayah (his note gives our maamar). But to draw that revelation down through milah, „צריך להיות תחלה השלימות דהשתלשלות" (the completeness of the order of the worlds must come first): „כדי שיעבור עליו שבת אחת" (a Shabbos must pass over the child). So, he suggests, „התהלך לפני והי' תמים" ("walk before Me and be (vehyeh) whole"): first vehyeh, the letters of Havayah, and then "whole", the revelation through milah.

The Alter Rebbe: אבל מילה הנ"ל היא למעלה משם הוי"ה עד שהיא בר"ת ושם הוי"ה הוא בס"ת

The Rebbe: דזה שמילה הוא ראשי תיבות והוי' הוא סופי תיבות הוא לפי שמילה היא למעלה מהוי'

Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat (new edition), vol. ג (אדר–סיון), p. קסא · אור ליום ועש"ק פ' חיי שרה, כ"ו מרחשון ה'תשט"ז (published in the kuntres for 18 Nissan 5751)

THE REBBE EXPLAINS

In a sicha printed for Lech Lecha (from the night of Simchas Torah 5711 and Shabbos Naso 5741) on the three sources the Sages give for circumcision overriding Shabbos, the Rebbe considers the view that learns it מפרשת מילה„ שנאמרה לאברהם" (from the passage of milah told to Avraham), before the Torah was given.

If the law that milah overrides Shabbos was known from Avraham's time, before the Torah and before any law of Shabbos, then, the Rebbe says, it is not merely a law of milah or of Shabbos: it is „למעלה ממדידת התורה" (above the measure of the Torah) and above every definition of Shabbos, like the Sages' „גדולה מילה שנכרתו עלי' שלש עשרה בריתות" ("Great is milah, for thirteen covenants were made over it"). His note gives our maamar's reading of "Great is milah" as „מילה הגדולה שמלמעלה למטה" (the great circumcision from above), above the Torah: the Torah „לא בשמים היא" ("is not in heaven"), while „מי יעלה לנו השמימה" ("Who will go up for us to heaven") spells milah first and Havayah last.

The Alter Rebbe: וע"ז ארז"ל גדולה מילה שנכרתו עליה שלש עשרה בריתות

> The Rebbe: אלא שהוא למעלה ממדידת התורה, ולמעלה מכל גדר השבת
> Likkutei Sichos, vol. לה, p. 55-56 · ליל שמח"ת תיש"א; ש"פ נשא תשמ"א

SECTION 3 • ¶3

"Was circumcised" in the essence of the day

3 וז״ש [וזהו שכתוב] נמול אברהם[34] ולא כתיב וימל א״ע [את עצמו] כמ״ש תחלה גבי מילת ישמעאל ומקנת כספו דכתיב וימל[35] כו׳

And this is why it says, "Avraham was circumcised," and it is not written, "And he circumcised himself," as it is written earlier regarding the circumcision of Yishmael and those purchased with his money, where it is written, "And he circumcised," etc.

> The wording of the verse confirms this. Of Yishmael and the servants the Torah says actively that Avraham "circumcised" them, while of Avraham himself it says passively that he "was circumcised," not that he circumcised himself.

לפי שהיא המילה שמלמטה כדכתיב ומלתם את ערלת לבבכם אבל אברהם זכה לגילוי בחי׳ ומל ה׳ את לבבך ע״כ נאמר נמול אברהם כו׳.

For that is the circumcision from below, as it is written, "You shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart." But Avraham merited the revelation of the level of "And Havayah will circumcise your heart"; therefore it says, "Avraham was circumcised," etc.

> The active form fits the circumcision from below, which a person does himself. The passive form shows that Avraham received the circumcision from above, the one G-d performs.

וזהו בעצם היום הזה נמול פי׳ בעצמיות של היום[36] הזה ויום הזה הוא היום שכולו ארוך שכולו טוב[37] כו׳.

And this is [the meaning of] "On that very day (be'etzem hayom hazeh) he was circumcised": that is, in the very essence of this day. And "this day" is the day that is entirely long, that is entirely good, etc.

> The word be'etzem, "on that very day," also means "in the essence." "This day" is the day the Sages call "entirely long" and "entirely good," the World to Come.

והעצמיות של היום הזה היינו אותו הגילוי הגדול שיהי׳ [שיהיה] לע״ל [לעתיד לבוא] גילוי בחי׳ רב טובך[38] וזהו שכולו טוב וכשנתגלה לו בחי׳ העצם של היום הזה אז נמול אברהם כו׳:

And the essence of this day is that great revelation which will be in the time to come: the revelation of the level of "Your great goodness." And this is [the meaning of] "entirely good." And when the level of the essence of this day was revealed to him, then Avraham was circumcised, etc.

The "essence" of that day is the great revelation of G-d's stored-away goodness that will come in the time to come. That revelation was shown to Avraham at his circumcision, and so his circumcision came from above.

THE REBBE ON THIS PARAGRAPH • AI research, checked against each source; not yet reviewed by a person

THE REBBE EXPLAINS

In a sicha of Shabbos Lech Lecha 5711 (unedited text in Sichos Kodesh 5711 p. רו), speaking of the joy of the week after Lech Lecha, when the Torah tells of Avraham after his circumcision, the Rebbe explains how high a level he reached through it.

Everything Avraham reached before the mitzvah of milah, the Rebbe says, had a relation to created beings, and so he could reach it by his own power; milah, however, is something given from above, as it is said that Avraham's circumcision is „מילה שלמעלה" (the circumcision from above), „ומל ד' אלקיך את לבבך" ("And Havayah your G-d will circumcise your heart"). His note for this gives Torah Ohr, end of Lech Lecha, 13c. Through milah, he adds, lights far above creation and the order of the worlds (סדר ההשתלשלות) are drawn down, which is why milah is bound up with birth.

The Alter Rebbe: אבל אברהם זכה לגילוי בחי' ומל ה' את לבבך ע"כ נאמר נמול אברהם

The Rebbe: מצות מילה אָבער איז אַ ענין וואָס מען האָט געגעבן פון אויבן, ווי עס שטייט אַז מילת אַברהם איז דער ענין פון מילה שלמעלה

Likkutei Sichos, vol. א, p. 22-23 · ש"פ לך לך תשי"א

A QUESTION THE REBBE RAISES

In the sicha printed for Lech Lecha in Likkutei Sichos vol. 35 (from the night of Simchas Torah 5711 and Shabbos Naso 5741), having said that milah expresses „התקשרות עצמית דישראל בקוב"ה" (the bond of Israel with G-d) above the Torah, the Rebbe shows it in Avraham's own circumcision, which Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer dates to Yom Kippur („דמילת אברהם היתה ביום הכפורים").

Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer learns from the word etzem (עצם), "on that very day", that Avraham was circumcised on Yom Kippur. The Rebbe asks how, since „מילה שלא בזמנה" (milah not at its time) does not override Yom Kippur; in the plain sense it was the day of the command, so it was "at its time"; in the inner sense, Avraham's milah was of the level above the Torah's measures, and it fits Yom Kippur, „שעיצומו של יום מכפר" (whose very essence (itzumo shel yom) atones) by revealing „ההתקשרות העצמית של ישראל בקוב"ה" (Israel's essential bond with G-d). That bond, he says, shows in „בעצם היום הזה נימול אברהם" ("on that very day Avraham was circumcised"), with the note "see Torah Ohr, end of our parsha". Our ¶3 reads the same word as „בעצמיות של היום הזה" ("the essence of this day"), the day „שכולו טוב" (that is wholly good).

The Alter Rebbe: וזהו בעצם היום הזה נמול פי' בעצמיות של היום הזה

The Rebbe: וקשר זה מתבטא במילת אברהם עצמו, „בעצם היום הזה נימול אברהם", שנמול ביום הכפורים, שבת שבתון

Likkutei Sichos, vol. לה, p. 59-60 · ליל שמח"ת תיש"א; ש"פ נשא תשמ"א

BACKGROUND FROM THE REBBE

In a sicha of 12 Tammuz 5714 (printed for Vayera; unedited text Toras Menachem 5714 vol. 3 p. 81), asking why Yitzchak had to be born „מטיפה קדושה" (from a holy drop), only after Avraham's circumcision, the Rebbe explains what circumcision gave Avraham.

Avraham's own level, the Rebbe says, was Atzilus, „אלקות בהגבלה" (G-dliness within limits); through the mitzvah of milah he reached „תמימות" ("temimus"), wholeness ("walk before Me and be whole"), which is „אלקות שלמעלה מאצילות" (G-dliness above Atzilus). His note for this gives the end of Be'etzem Hayom Hazeh, our ¶3. That, he says, is what called forth Yitzchak's service, a service without limits, not even those of holy intellect (שכל דקדושה).

The Alter Rebbe: והעצמיות של היום הזה היינו אותו הגילוי הגדול שיהי' לע"ל גילוי בחי' רב טובך

The Rebbe: איז ער צוגעקומען צו „תמימות" . . וואָס דאָס איז דער ענין פון אלקות שלמעלה מאצילות

Likkutei Sichos, vol. א, p. 30 · י"ב תמוז תשי"ד

IN ONE'S AVODAH

A person must first do his own part, circumcising the "foreskin" of his heart through teshuvah and keeping the Torah and mitzvos, as Avraham kept the whole Torah. That service from below prepares him for the higher circumcision, which comes as a gift from above, beyond anything his own reason and effort can reach.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why would a circumcision Avraham performed himself have been only the "lower" circumcision, and what did he gain by waiting to be commanded?
2. How does the letter reading of "Who will go up for us to heaven" show that circumcision is above the Torah, when the same verse says the Torah is "not in heaven"?
3. In what sense is a covenant between friends "above reason," and how does this illuminate the thirteen covenants of circumcision?
4. Why must the circumcision from below (teshuvah and Torah) come before the circumcision from above, and why is the second tied to the time after the ingathering of the exiles?
5. What is the difference in meaning between "And he circumcised" and "Avraham was circumcised"?

FOR CHILDREN · AGES 9–13

For the children at the table

Two circumcisions of the heart

THE BIG IDEA

We do our part to come close to G-d, and then G-d gives us a gift from above that is higher than anything we could reach by ourselves.

Avraham kept the whole Torah even before it was given. So why did he wait to do the mitzvah of milah, circumcision, until G-d commanded him? The maamar explains that there are two circumcisions of the heart. The first we do ourselves: through teshuvah, returning to G-d, and through Torah and mitzvos, we remove the hard covering of the heart, as the verse says, "You shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart." The second G-d does for us from above, as the verse says, "And G-d will circumcise your heart." This is a gift beyond reason, higher even than the Torah. A verse hints at it: in the words "Who will go up for us to heaven?" the first letters spell milah, and the last letters spell G-d's holy Name, so milah stands even higher. That is why Avraham kept all the rest of the Torah himself and waited to receive milah from G-d. The Torah says "Avraham was circumcised," not "he circumcised himself," because it came to him from above, "on that very day," a day that is entirely good.

THE MASHAL

Two friends who love each other make a covenant, a promise to stay loving. Even if one day their reasons for that love do not come to mind, the covenant holds, because it is above reasons. In the same way, the great circumcision from above comes from G-d's mercy, which is beyond reason.

QUESTIONS FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

1. What is the difference between the circumcision of the heart that we do and the one that G-d does for us?
2. Why does the Torah say "Avraham was circumcised" and not "Avraham circumcised himself"?
3. What is one thing you can do this week to do your part, so that your heart is ready for G-d's help from above?

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SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Notes

PARAGRAPH 1

1 בעצם היום הזה

Another transcript of this same maamar, opening “to understand the question (mentioned in the books)”; its wording is close to Torah Ohr with small differences, and it gives two explanations.

Genesis 42:1 בראשית מ״ב:א׳

וַיַּרְא יַעֲקֹב כִּי יֶשׁ־שֶׁבֶר בְּמִצְרָיִם וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב לְבָנָיו לָמָּה תִתְרָאוּ׃

Now Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, and Jacob said unto his sons: ‘Why do ye look one upon another?’

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

KEHOT’S NOTE

הנחה אחרת נדפס בסה״מ תקס״ג ע׳ י׳ שם מתחיל ״להבין הקושי׳ (שנז׳ בספרים)״. הלשון קרוב לכאן בשינוים קלים. ושם ב׳ ביאורים — וראה שם כרך ב ע׳ תתא הגהות מהצ״צ. באוה״ת לך לך תשכה, א רשום: ״בד״ה בעצם היום הזה בת״א ס״פ לך לך והוא דרוש תקס״ג ולא שמעתיו בעצמי כ״א מפי כתבים״. ראה לעיל בציונים לכ״ק אדמו״ר זי״ע. המאמר (כמו בסה״מ תקס״ג) עם הגהות באוה״ת בראשית כרך ד תשכה, א (מלקו״ת לג״פ צג, ג). חלק מהמאמר מובא בסה״מ תרל״ג כרך ב ע׳ שצט. לד״ה זה ראה בפלח הרמון בראשית מב, א. ד״ה זה נזכר בלקו״ת ר״ה סג, ד. שמע״צ פה, צ.

2 בעצם היום הזה נמול אברהם

The verse records that Avraham and Yishmael were circumcised on the same day. The maamar opens with it and at the end explains why it says “was circumcised” and “in the essence of that day.”

Genesis 17:26 בראשית י״ז:כ״ו

בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נִמּוֹל אַבְרָהָם וְיִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹ׃

In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son.

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

KEHOT’S NOTE

בראשית יז, כו.

3 מפני מה לא מל אברהם

There the Alter Rebbe explains that Avraham kept the Torah “before it was given” as it is in Beriah, before it was clothed in this physical world: so he kept tefillin, and kept circumcision too before he circumcised himself, since circumcision means removing the hold of the external forces, and he removed it above, though the mitzvah was not yet clothed in the physical act.

KEHOT’S NOTE

בפי׳ ריב״א על התורה כ׳ שמכיון שקיום מצות מילה שייך רק פעם אחת, לכן לא מל א״ע עד שנצטווה על זה — וכן יש עוד תירוצים במפרשים. ראה לקמן מא, ב. הביאור ע״פ דרך הפשט ראה בלקוטי שיחות ח״ה ע׳ 146. ובפנימיות הענינים ראה לקו״ש שם ע׳ 79 הערה 25.

4 שקיים כל התורה כולה עד שלא ניתנה

The closing Mishnah of Kiddushin says that Avraham kept the whole Torah before it was given; the Kehot note points here as well.

Mishnah Kiddushin 4:14 משנה קידושין ד׳:י״ד

... וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר בְּאַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ עָלָיו הַשָּׁלוֹם, (בראשית כד) וְאַבְרָהָם זָקֵן, וַה׳ בֵּרַךְ אֶת אַבְרָהָם בַּכֹּל. מָצִינוּ שֶׁעָשָׂה אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ אֶת כָּל הַתּוֹרָה כֻּלָּהּ עַד שֶׁלֹּא נִתְּנָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר, (שם כו) עֵקֶב אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַע אַבְרָהָם בְּקֹלִי וַיִּשְׁמֹר מִשְׁמַרְתִּי מִצְוֹתַי חֻקּוֹתַי וְתוֹרֹתָי׃

Rabbi Judah said: an unmarried man must not tend cattle, nor may two unmarried men sleep together under the same cover. But the sages permit it. One whose business is with women must not be alone with women. And one should not teach his son a woman’s trade. Rabbi Meir says: one should always teach his son a clean and easy profession, and pray to Him to whom wealth and property belong. For a profession does not contain [the potential for] poverty and wealth, for poverty is not due to ...

Torat Emet 357 (Public Domain) • Mishnah Yomit by Dr. Joshua Kulp (CC-BY)

5 שקיים . . ואפי׳ עירובי תבשילין

The Talmud says that Avraham kept the whole Torah, even eiruvei tavshilin. This is the basis of the question why he waited to be circumcised.

Yoma 28b:10–11 יומא כ״ח ב׳:י׳-י״א

אָמַר (רב), וְאִיתֵּימָא רַב אָשֵׁי: קַיֵּים אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ אֲפִילּוּ עֵירוּבֵי תַּבְשִׁילִין, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: ״תּוֹרֹתָי״, אַחַת תּוֹרָה שֶׁבִּכְתָב וְאַחַת תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה. מַתְנִיָא בֶּן שְׁמוּאֵל אוֹמֵר וְכוּ׳ וְהוּא אוֹמֵר הֵן. מַאן אָמַר ״הֵן״? אִילֵּימָא הָהּ דְּקָאֵי אַאִיגְּרָא — הוּא חָלִים וְהוּא מְפַשַּׁר?! אֶלָּא הָהּ דְּקָאֵי אַאַרְעָא, מְנָא יָדַע?

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KEHOT’S NOTE

יומא כח, ב. וראה במשנה סוף קידושין. ובספר דברי דוד להט״ז פ׳ לך לך כ׳ בשם הב״ח שצ״ל עירובי תחומין.

6 לא בשמים היא

Moshe tells Israel that the Torah is not in heaven, out of reach. The maamar reads the verse’s letters as a sign that circumcision is above the Torah.

Deuteronomy 30:12 דברים ל׳:י״ב

לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם הִוא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲלֶה־לָּנוּ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְיִקָּחֶהָ לָּנוּ וְיַשְׁמִעֵנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה׃

It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say: ‘Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?’

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KEHOT’S NOTE

דברים ל, יב.

mar identifies it with the lower circumcision.

Deuteronomy 30:2 דברים ל׳:ב׳

וְשַׁבְתָּ עַד־ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְקֹלוֹ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם אַתָּה וּבָנֶיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשֶׁךָ׃

and shalt return unto the L-RD thy G-d, and hearken to His voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul;

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KEHOT'S NOTE

דברים ל, ב.

12 אם ישראל עושין תשובה

Rabbi Eliezer's teaching that redemption depends on teshuvah; it shows that the circumcision from below comes before the redemption.

Sanhedrin 97b:14–15 סנהדרין צ״ז ב:י״ד-ט״ו

אָמַר רַב: כֻּלּוֹ כָּל הַקִּיצִין, וְאֵין הַדָּבָר תָּלוּי אֶלָּא בִּתְשׁוּבָה וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים. וּשְׁמוּאֵל אָמַר: דַּיּוֹ לָאָבֶל שֶׁיַּעֲמוֹד בְּאֶבְלוֹ. כְּתַנָּאֵי: רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר: אִם יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹשִׂין תְּשׁוּבָה – נִגְאָלִין, וְאִם לָאו – אֵין נִגְאָלִין. אָמַר לוֹ רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ: אִם אֵין עוֹשִׂין תְּשׁוּבָה אֵין נִגְאָלִין? אֶלָּא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מַעֲמִיד לָהֶן מֶלֶךְ שֶׁגְּזֵרוֹתָיו קָשׁוֹת כְּהָמָן, וְיִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹשִׂין תְּשׁוּבָה וּמַחֲזִירָן לְמוּטָב. תַּנְיָא אִידַּךְ: רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר, אִם יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹשִׂין תְּשׁוּבָה – נִגְאָלִין, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "שׁוּבוּ ...

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KEHOT'S NOTE

סנהדרין צז, ב.

13 ואם לאו אין נגאלין . . ומל ה' את לבבך

The other transcript spells the sequence out: redemption comes through the circumcision from below, circumcising the foreskin of the heart by returning to G-d through keeping the Torah; the second circumcision is like what will be after the redemption, after the ingathering of the exiles, as in "and He will bring you into the land... and do you good."

KEHOT'S NOTE

בסה״מ תקס״ג ע׳ יא ״ואם לאו אין נגאלין כו׳ והוא ע״י המילה שמלמטה כו׳ למול את ערלת הלב כו׳ לשוב אל ה׳ ע״י קיום התורה כו׳ שע״ז נגאלין כו׳. והמילה הב׳ הוא ע״ד שיהי׳ אחר הגאולה כדכתיב ושבת כו׳ והביאך אל הארץ כו׳ והטיבך כו׳ שהוא לאחר קיבוץ הגליות״.

14 והביאך אל הארץ והטיבך

The promise that G-d will bring Israel into the land and do them good more than their fathers; it comes after the ingathering and before "and G-d will circumcise your heart."

Deuteronomy 30:5 דברים ל׳:ה׳

וֶהֱבִיאֲךָ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יָרְשׁוּ אֲבֹתֶיךָ וִירִשְׁתָּהּ וְהֵיטִבְךָ וְהִרְבְּךָ מֵאֲבֹתֶיךָ׃

And the L-RD thy G-d will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. .

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KEHOT'S NOTE

7 מי יעלה . . ר״ת מילה

On "It is not in heaven... nor beyond the sea", Likkutei Torah explains "heaven" as a high encompassing level, like the sky itself, which we do not see (the blue is the air), and there it refers back to this maamar's reading of "Who will go up for us to heaven", initials milah and final letters Havayah.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ת״ז בהקדמה בתחלתה ותי׳ כב. תי׳ ע׳ (קלא, א). בלקו״ת נצבים מה, ד מציין לכאן.

8 מי יעלה לנו השמימה ר״ת מילה וס״ת הוי״ה

The Tikkunei Zohar (Tikkun 70, as the Kehot note cites it; also in its introduction and Tikkun 22) reads the initials of "Who will go up for us to heaven" as milah and the final letters as Havayah.

Tikkunei Zohar 131a:1 תקוני הזהר קל״א א:א׳

... כָּל מַלְאָכֵי חַבָּלָה וּמְקַטְרְגִין דְּלָא יִקְרְבוּ לְגַבֵּיהּ בְּגִין דִּשְׁמָא דַיהוה״ שַׁרְיָא עֲלֵיהּ דְּתִשְׁכַּח לֵקהּ בְּאִלֵּין תֵּיבִין מ י יַעַל ה לָנ ו הַשָּׁמַיְמָ ה, רָאשֵׁי תֵּיבוֹת מִילָ"ה, וְסוֹפֵי תֵּיבוֹת יהו"ה, בִּשְׁמֵיהּ סָלִיק לְעֵילָא נִשְׁמָתֵיהּ, וּבְהַהוּא זִמְנָא יִתְקַיֵּים בֵּקהּ (שם כח ז) וְרָאוּ כָּל עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ כִּי שֵׁם יהו״ה נִקְרָא עָלֶיךָ וְיָרְאוּ מִמֶּךָּ, וּכְמָא דְּאִיהוּ מְקַבֵּל עֲלֵיהּ כָּל פִּקּוּדִין דַּעֲשֵׂה, בְּדָחִילוּ וּרְחִימוּ, הָכִי אַמְלִיכִין לֵקהּ לְעֵילָא חֲיַילִין וּמַשְׁרְיָין, עַל אִלֵּין עָלְמִין דְּתַקִּין לֵקהּ קוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא ...

Tikkunei Zohar - Vocalized (Public Domain)

PARAGRAPH 2

9 ומלתם את ערלת לבבכם

Moshe tells Israel, "You shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no more." The maamar calls this the circumcision from below, done by our own effort.

Deuteronomy 10:16 דברים י׳:ט״ז

וּמַלְתֶּם אֶת עָרְלַת לְבַבְכֶם וְעָרְפְּכֶם לֹא תַקְשׁוּ עוֹד׃

Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

דברים י׳, טז. בסה״מ תקס״ג מביא כאן ג׳ פסוקים ומלתם את ערלת לבבכם כו׳ ואח״כ כתי׳ ושבת עד ה׳ אלקיך כו׳ ואח״כ כתיב ומל ה׳.

10 שיש ב׳ בחי׳ מילה

Iggeres HaKodesh 4 explains that circumcision has two stages, milah and peri'ah, removing the coarse foreskin and the thin membrane, and that the heart likewise has coarse and subtle desires; it reads "circumcise the foreskin of your heart" as removing the worldly garments that cover the inner point of the heart.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה אגה״ק סי׳ ד.

11 ושבת עד ה' אלקיך

The verse of return, which comes before the promises of ingathering and of G-d circumcising the heart; the maa-

sion with this maamar, where Avraham's circumcision is from above.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה בסה"מ עטר"ת ע' פה דשם מבאר דענין המילה דאברהם הוא "ע"ד הבירור מלמטלמ"ע (ועמ"ש בתו"א והוספות בד"ה בעצם היום, וצ"ע)".

20 **לא בשמים היא**

The Torah is "not in heaven," and in the same verse "Who will go up for us to heaven?" hides the word milah; the maamar sets the two parts of the verse against each other.

Deuteronomy 30:12 דברים ל':י"ב

לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם הִוא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲלֶה־לָּנוּ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְיִקָּחֶהָ לָּנוּ וְיַשְׁמִעֵנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה:

It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say: 'Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?'

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KEHOT'S NOTE

דברים ל, יב.

21 **וכנז' בגמ' שא"ר יהושע אין משגיחין בבת קול**

In the dispute over the oven of Achnai Rabbi Yehoshua rejected a heavenly voice, citing "it is not in heaven." The maamar uses it to show that the Torah has been brought down to earth.

Bava Metzia 59b:5 בבא מציעא נ"ט ב:ה'

עָמַד רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ עַל רַגְלָיו וְאָמַר: "לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם הִיא!" מַאי "לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם הִיא"? אָמַר רַבִּי יִרְמְיָה: שֶׁכְּבָר נִתְּנָה תּוֹרָה מֵהַר סִינַי, אֵין אָנוּ מַשְׁגִּיחִין בְּבַת קוֹל, שֶׁכְּבָר כָּתַבְתָּ בְּהַר סִינַי בַּתּוֹרָה "אַחֲרֵי רַבִּים לְהַטֹּת". אַשְׁכְּחֵיהּ רַבִּי נָתָן לְאֵלִיָּהוּ, אֲמַר לֵיהּ: מַאי עָבֵיד קוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא בְּהַהִיא שַׁעֲתָא? אֲמַר לֵיהּ: קָא חָייֵךְ וְאָמַר, "נִצְּחוּנִי בָּנַי! נִצְּחוּנִי בָּנַי!"

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ב"מ נט, ב.

22 **כי שם הוי"ה יו"ד צמצום . . .**

the passage shares nothing with the note

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה אגה"ת פ"ד.

23 **שו"ה בבת קול — ונק' תורת הוי' . . נמשכה למטה**

The words from "And it is called 'the Torah of Havayah'" to "it was drawn down below" are not in the other transcript.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ליתא בסה"מ תקס"ג.

24 **ושם הוי' הוא בס"ת . . מבחי' שמים אלו**

The words from "while the Name Havayah is in the final letters" to "from the level of these heavens" are not in the other transcript.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ליתא בסה"מ תקס"ג.

דברים ל, ה.

15 **מה רב טובך אשר צפנת**

David exclaims, "How great is Your goodness that You have hidden away for those who fear You!" The maamar identifies this hidden goodness with the great circumcision from above.

Psalms 31:20 תהילים ל"א:כ'

מָה רַב־טוּבְךָ אֲשֶׁר־צָפַנְתָּ לִירֵאֶיךָ פָּעַלְתָּ לַחוֹסִים בָּךְ נֶגֶד בְּנֵי אָדָם:

Oh how abundant is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; Which Thou hast wrought for them that take their refuge in Thee, in the sight of the sons of men!

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים לא, כ.

16 **במשה שנולד מהול**

The Sages learn from "she saw him, that he was good" that Moshe was born circumcised.

Sotah 12a:17 סוטה י"ב א:י"ז

"וַתֵּרֶא אוֹתוֹ כִּי טוֹב הוּא". תַּנְיָא, רַבִּי מֵאִיר אוֹמֵר: "טוֹב" שְׁמוֹ. רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אוֹמֵר: "טוֹבְיָה" שְׁמוֹ. רַבִּי נְחֶמְיָה אוֹמֵר: הָגוּן לִנְבִיאוּת. אֲחֵרִים אוֹמְרִים: נוֹלַד כְּשֶׁהוּא מָהוּל. וַחֲכָמִים אוֹמְרִים: בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁנּוֹלַד מֹשֶׁה, נִתְמַלְּא הַבַּיִת כּוּלּוֹ אוֹר. כְּתִיב הָכָא: "וַתֵּרֶא אוֹתוֹ כִּי טוֹב הוּא", וּכְתִיב הָתָם: "וַיַּרְא אֱלֹקִים אֶת הָאוֹר כִּי טוֹב".

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KEHOT'S NOTE

סוטה יב, א.

17 **ותרא אותו כי טוב הוא**

Said of Moshe's mother at his birth; the Sages read "good" as meaning he was born circumcised, which links "good" to circumcision given from above.

Exodus 2:2 שמות ב':ב'

וַתַּהַר הָאִשָּׁה וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתֵּרֶא אֹתוֹ כִּי־טוֹב הוּא וַתִּצְפְּנֵהוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה יְרָחִים:

And the woman conceived, and bore a son; and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמות ב, א.

18 **(וזהו והטיבך . . טוב הוא כו')**

The parenthesis linking "He will do you good" to the hidden goodness and to Moshe born circumcised is not in the other transcript.

KEHOT'S NOTE

הענין ליתא בסה"מ תקס"ג.

19 **שבחי' מילה ראשונה שמלמטה למעלה**

That discourse explains Avraham's circumcision the other way, as a refining from below upward, and itself adds: "see what is written in Torah Ohr and the additions, on 'On that very day,' and this requires study." The note flags the ten-

not return empty. It links "covenant" with the Thirteen Attributes, as the maamar does.

Rosh Hashanah 17b:7–8 ראש השנה י"ז ב:ז'-ח'

אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה: בְּרִית כְּרוּתָה לִשְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה מִדּוֹת שֶׁאֵינָן חוֹזְרוֹת רֵיקָם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי כּוֹרֵת בְּרִית". אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: גְּדוֹלָה תְּשׁוּבָה שֶׁמְּקָרַעַת גְּזַר דִּינוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "הַשְׁמֵן לֵב הָעָם הַזֶּה וְאָזְנָיו הַכְבֵּד וְעֵינָיו הָשַׁע פֶּן יִרְאֶה בְעֵינָיו וּבְאָזְנָיו יִשְׁמָע וּלְבָבוֹ יָבִין וְשָׁב וְרָפָא לוֹ".

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KEHOT'S NOTE

על הגליון בתו"א נרשם: "ע' ר"ה יו, ב ברית כרותה לי"ג מדות כו' (ממורי נ"ע)". [הרה = ר' אייזיק האמיל?].

31 **עד יעבור עמך ה'**

In the Song at the Sea, Moshe and Israel sing that terror will grip the nations "until Your people pass over, O Havayah", until they cross into the land. The maamar reads the words differently: "until [they] pass over" beyond the level of the Name Havayah.

Exodus 15:16 שמות ט"ו:ט"ז

תִּפֹּל עֲלֵיהֶם אֵימָתָה וָפַחַד בִּגְדֹל זְרוֹעֲךָ יִדְמּוּ כָּאָבֶן עַד־יַעֲבֹר עַמְּךָ ה' עַד־יַעֲבֹר עַם־זוּ קָנִיתָ:

Terror and dread falleth upon them; By the greatness of Thine arm they are as still as a stone; Till Thy people pass over, O L-RD, Till the people pass over that Thou hast gotten.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמות טו, טז. על הגליון בתו"א נרשם: שבזכות מילה נבקע הים וע' במדרש תהילים הים ראה וינס ארונו של יוסף ראה וינס ובמדרש רבה השירה הזאת כו' מילה זאת בריתי כו' (ממורי נ"ע).

32 **וגם בי"ג מדה"ר כתי' ויעבור**

The Thirteen Attributes of Mercy open with "And Havayah passed before him," the same verb as in "until Your people pass over."

Exodus 34:6 שמות ל"ד:ו'

וַיַּעֲבֹר ה' עַל־פָּנָיו וַיִּקְרָא ה' ה' אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב־חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת:

And the L-RD passed by before him, and proclaimed: 'The L-RD, the L-RD, G-d, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth;

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33 **ומל ה' אלקיך**

Moshe promises that after the return from exile "Havayah your G-d will circumcise your heart" to love Him. The maamar calls this the circumcision from above, done by G-d.

Deuteronomy 30:6 דברים ל':ו'

וּמָל ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ אֶת־לְבָבְךָ וְאֶת־לְבַב זַרְעֶךָ לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ לְמַעַן חַיֶּיךָ:

And the L-RD thy G-d will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the L-RD thy G-d with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

25 **גדולה מילה**

The Mishnah praises circumcision because thirteen covenants were made over it; the maamar reads "great" as the great circumcision from above.

Nedarim 31b:8–9 נדרים ל"א ב:ח'-ט'

רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה אוֹמֵר: מְאוּסָה הִיא הָעָרְלָה, שֶׁנִּתְגַּנּוּ בָהּ רְשָׁעִים שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "כִּי כָל הַגּוֹיִם עֲרֵלִים". רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל אוֹמֵר: גְּדוֹלָה מִילָה, שֶׁנִּכְרְתוּ עָלֶיהָ שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה בְּרִיתוֹת. רַבִּי יוֹסֵי אוֹמֵר: גְּדוֹלָה מִילָה שֶׁדּוֹחָה אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת חֲמוּרָה.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

נדרים לא, ב.

26 **ע' במק"מ על הזהר ח"ג דרל"ג ע"ב**

Likkutei Torah quotes the Mikdash Melech: the great circumcision is drawn from Yesod of Arich Anpin, which holds the thirteen tikkunim of the beard, the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy.

KEHOT'S NOTE

מובא בלקו"ת פ' תזריע כא, ב. "מארז"ל . . גדולה מילה . . ופי' במק"מ . . דהיינו שנמשך מיסוד דא"א שיש בו י"ג ת"ד שהם י"ג מדות הרחמים".

27 **ע' במק"מ על הזוהר ח"ג דרל"ג ע"ב**

The text itself refers to the Mikdash Melech's commentary on this Zohar passage (Pinchas). As Likkutei Torah quotes it, the commentary explains "great is circumcision" as drawn from Yesod of Arich Anpin, which holds the thirteen tikkunim that are the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy.

Zohar, Pinchas 57:348–350 ספר הזהר, פנחס נ"ז:שמ"ח-ש"נ

28 **ובלק"ת פ' קדושים**

As the note quotes it, Likkutei Torah there says that circumcision is great because thirteen covenants were made over it: just as there are thirteen tikkunim in the upper beard of Arich Anpin, so too in the lower "beard," in Yesod.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה גם לקו"ת עקב טו, ב "גדולה מילה שנכרתו עליה י"ג כריתות שכמו שיש י"ג ת"ד בדיקנא עילאה דא"א כך הוא ג"כ בדיקנא תתאה בבחינת יסוד כו' כמ"ש בלק"ת פ' קדושים".

29 **שענין הכריתות ברית הוא למעלה מן השכל והדעת**

On "to enter the covenant", Likkutei Torah gives the parable of two friends who make a covenant so that their love will never cease, even when reason would end it: the covenant binds them above reason.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה לקו"ת נצבים מד, ב.

30 **הוא ע"י י"ג מדה"ר**

A gloss in the margin of Torah Ohr points here: a covenant has been made with the Thirteen Attributes that they do

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KEHOT'S NOTE

דברים ל, ו.

PARAGRAPH 3

34 **נמול אברהם**

"Avraham was circumcised": the passive form, which the maamar reads as a circumcision given from above.

Genesis 17:26 בראשית י"ז:כ"ו

בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נִמּוֹל אַבְרָהָם וְיִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹ׃

In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son.

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35 **גבי מילת ישמעאל ומקנת כספו דכתיב וימל**

Avraham took Yishmael and all those purchased with his money "and circumcised" them: the active form, which the maamar reads as the circumcision from below.

Genesis 17:23 בראשית י"ז:כ"ג

וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹ וְאֵת כָּל־יְלִידֵי בֵיתוֹ וְאֵת כָּל־מִקְנַת כַּסְפּוֹ כָּל־זָכָר בְּאַנְשֵׁי בֵּית אַבְרָהָם וַיָּמָל אֶת־בְּשַׂר עָרְלָתָם בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אִתּוֹ אֱלֹקִים׃

And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as G-d had said unto him.

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36 **בעצם היום — פי' בעצמיות של היום**

Or HaTorah explains that "this day" is Z'eir Anpin of Atzilus, called "day," and "this" (zeh) as in the clear vision of Moshe's prophecy; its essence is the Infinite Light clothed within it.

KEHOT'S NOTE

באוה"ת פ' פינחס ע' א'רא: ור"ל כי היום הזה היינו ז"א דאצי' שנק' יום ונק' זה ע"ד משה רבינו ע"ה נתנבא בזה היינו בחי' אספקלריא המאירה, אמנם העצמי' של בחי' ז"א היינו אוא"ס המלובש בו ע"ד שנת"ל בפי' בי נשבעתי כו' וכן בגשמיות ביום מאיר השמש אשר שמש הוא בחי' יסוד אבא המאיר בז"א כדפי' הרמ"ז ר"פ בהעלותך ור"פ אמור בענין שמש צדקה.

37 **היום שכולו ארוך שכולו טוב**

The Talmud interprets "that it may be well with you" as referring to the world that is entirely good, and "that your days may be long" to the world that is entirely long.

Kiddushin 39b:8 קידושין ל"ט ב:ח'

הֲרֵי שֶׁאָמַר לוֹ אָבִיו: עֲלֵה לַבִּירָה וְהָבֵא לִי גוֹזָלוֹת, וְעָלָה לַבִּירָה וְשִׁלַּח אֶת הָאֵם וְנָטַל אֶת הַבָּנִים וּבַחֲזִירָתוֹ נָפַל וָמֵת - הֵיכָן טוֹבַת יָמָיו שֶׁל זֶה, וְהֵיכָן אֲרִיכוּת יָמָיו שֶׁל זֶה? אֶלָּא: "לְמַעַן יִיטַב לָךְ" - לְעוֹלָם שֶׁכּוּלּוֹ טוֹב, "וּלְמַעַן יַאֲרִיכֻן יָמֶיךָ" - לְעוֹלָם שֶׁכּוּלּוֹ אָרוֹךְ.

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Chullin 142a:4–5 חולין קמ"ב א:ד'-ה'

הרי שאמר לו אביו עלה לבירה והבא לי גוזלות ועלה ושלח את האם ולקח את הבנים ובחזרתו נפל ומת היכן אריכות ימיו של זה והיכן טובתו של זה אלא למען יאריכון ימיך בעולם שכולו ארוך ולמען ייטב לך לעולם שכולו טוב ודלמא לא הוה הכי רי יעקב מעשה חזא ודלמא מהרהר בעבירה הוה מחשבה רעה אין הקב"ה מצרפה למעשה

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה קידושין לט, ב וחולין קמב, א (ושם: עולם). נוסח הרחמן (בברכת המזון) "ליום שכולו טוב".

38 **רב טובך**

G-d's "great goodness" stored away, which the maamar identifies with the revelation of the time to come and with the great circumcision.

Psalms 31:20 תהילים ל"א:כ'

מָה רַב־טוּבְךָ אֲשֶׁר־צָפַנְתָּ לִירֵאֶיךָ פָּעַלְתָּ לַחוֹסִים בָּךְ נֶגֶד בְּנֵי אָדָם׃

Oh how abundant is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; Which Thou hast wrought for them that take their refuge in Thee, in the sight of the sons of men!

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THE CHASSIDISHE PARSHA

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The Rebbe asked that the maamarim of the week's parsha, the "Chassidishe Parsha," be learned during that week, spread over its seven days (Sichah of Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel 5725 · Toras Menachem vol. 42, pp. 306–309). Why learn it, and the Rebbe's brachos: likuteitorah.com/about/the-chassidishe-parsha/

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מוקדש לכבוד הגאון המקובל רבי לוי יצחק שניאורסאהן זצ"ל

Dedicated in honor of the Rebbe's father, Reb Levi Yitzchok