

חול המועד

סוכות

Chol HaMo'ed Sukkot

Shemot / Exodus 33:12-34:26, Ezekiel 38:18-39:16

I will perform Miracles beyond imagination!

When the Lord renewed the covenant with the people following the sin of the golden calf (*Shemot / Exodus 32*, Parashat Ki Tisa) what was the major focus? God gave a promise and a warning. A promise of His working in their midst, and a warning was given to the people on idolatry that is in the Land of Canaan. The Lord said to Moshe, *Shemot / Exodus 34:10-14*, וַיֹּאמֶר ה' הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי פֹרֵת בְּרִית נֶגֶד כָּל-עַמֶּךָ אֲעֲשֶׂה, נִפְלְאוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא-נִבְרְאוּ בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-הַגּוֹיִם וְרָאָה כָּל-הָעָם אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּה בְּקִרְבּוֹ אֶת-מַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה כִּי-נִוְרָא הוּא אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה עִמָּךְ: יֵא שְׁמֹר-לָךְ אֶת אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם הַנִּגְנִי גֵרֶשׁ מִפְּנֵיךָ אֶת-הָאֲמֹרִי וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהַפְּרִזִּי וְהַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי: יב הִשְׁמֹר לָךְ פֶּן-תִּכְרַת בְּרִית לִיּוֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה בָּא עֲלֶיךָ פֶּן-יְהִיֶּה לְמוֹקֵשׁ בְּקִרְבְּךָ: יג כִּי אֶת-מִזְבְּחֹתָם תִּתְּצוּן וְאֶת-מִצְבְּתָם תִּשְׁבִּירוּן וְאֶת-אֲשֵׁרֵי תִּכְרַתוֹן: יד כִּי לֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לֵאלֹהֵי אֲחֵר כִּי יְהוָה קָנָא

34:10 Then God said, 'Behold, I am going to make a covenant. Before all your people I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of the Lord, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you. 34:11 'Be sure to observe what I am commanding you this day: behold, I am going to drive out the Amorite before you, and the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. 34:12 'Watch yourself that

you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst. 34:13 'But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim 34:14 for you shall not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. (NASB) Notice how the Lord proclaims that He will perform mighty miracles in the midst of the people of God. He will also go forth before Israel and drive out the nations ahead of them. Note this message of the Lord going forth does not mean the people were to sit back and do nothing. The Lord God goes forth and prepares the way, he drives the wicked from their place. We are also to move in the power of God to do what is right, and strive for His righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth. We don't just sit back and say "*Yeshua makes me righteous and holy before God, now I don't need to strive for God's righteousness and holiness in my life.*" Our relationship with God through Yeshua the Messiah does not work that way. We are called to holiness, righteousness, and justice as the people of God! The Lord God Almighty is saying that he will make a covenant with the people and that He promises to walk in the midst of the Children of Israel. The Lord indicates that this fact will be known and it is a fearful thing the God of Israel living in the midst of His people. Both Israel and the nations will see the power of God working in the lives of His people. The way the Lord distinguishes His people from everyone else is by saying, נִגְדַת כָּל-עֲמֻדָה, אֲעֲשֶׂה נִפְלְאוֹת *"I will perform miracles in full view of your whole people the like of which I have never performed on earth."* The kind of miracle the rabbis use as an example is that of when Joshua was called upon the Lord to make the Sun and the Moon stand still on the day the Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel. (*Joshua 10:13*) This miracle God performed was as if time had stopped until the victory of Israel had come about. The commentary *Rabbeinu Bahya on Shemot / Exodus 34:10* states the following:

Rabbeinu Bahya on Shemot / Exodus 34:10 Part 1

אשר לא נבראו בכל הארץ ובכל הגוים, "*the like of which have not been created anywhere on earth nor amongst any of the nations.*" G'd referred specifically to the arrest of the sun and moon in their respective

orbits by Joshua and regarding the radiation of rays of light from Moses' forehead. This is why G'd added the words: "which I perform with you." Seeing that in this verse G'd promised Moses that he would experience miracles which had never been performed before, he was encouraged to request such a miracle when his legitimacy as a leader was challenged by Korach and company in Numbers chapter 16. Moses requested that the unrepentant Korach be swallowed up live by the earth (Numbers 16,29-30). I shall discuss that decree of G'd further when commenting on the episode in question.

The commentary provides multiple examples from the Scriptures on the miracles of God. In *Shemot / Exodus 34:10*, the miracles and wonders that would be performed in the midst of the congregation, one of the ways in which this was fulfilled was in the way the Lord worked in the rebellion of Korach, fire from heaven consuming 250 men and the company of people who joined themselves with Korah went down to the grave alive as the ground opened up and swallowed them all alive. (*Bamidbar / Numbers 16:29-30*) The promises of God was that He would personally go with His people and give his people a mark of distinction. This promise according to Sforno states “הנה ברית אונכי כורת ברית, ‘I will make/cut a covenant,’ to be in your midst. Compare *Megillah 29* when the Jewish people were exiled to *Babylonia* the presence of the Lord was ‘exiled’ together with them, i.e. accompanied them; when they were exiled to *Eylam* the same was true. Even when they were exiled to *Edom* (by the Romans) this remained true.” (*Sforno on Shemot / Exodus 34:10 Part 1*) This basic concept may also be derived from the end of the book of *Jeremiah*, when some of the people went to *Egypt* and there remained a call to repentance to turn from idolatry and false gods they had served in *Israel* because God’s presence was with them even in the diaspora and committing such acts would lead to their deaths. The rabbinic interpretation is the presence of God never left the people, as he stated that He will never leave nor forsake us. (see *Devarim / Deuteronomy 31:6*) This promise included the Lord God Himself going with the people into exile, this

interpretation agrees with God's Words the Lord God Almighty will never leave nor forsakes us. (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 31:6*) The rabbis state that the phrase that describes the distinctive acts God will perform, and all of the people seeing this in their midst, these wonderful acts He would perform would be the result of His special relationship with Moshe. (*Tur HaAroch on Shemot / Exodus 34:10 Part 2*) The idea is the people would be beneficiaries due to the relationship between Moshe and the God of Israel because of the covenant. Note a remark that is made here, the Lord God will perform even greater miracles than what he had performed already in the past. This sounds very familiar. The NT account provides us with a very similar account to our faith in Yeshua, believing in what He has done, and because of God's special relationship with Yeshua we are the beneficiaries in the covenant. Yeshua says in *John 14:12 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. (NASB)* There is quite a parallel here to what we read in this week's Torah portion, in light of Parashat Ki Tisa. In this week's Torah portion, Moshe offered himself on behalf of the people, and in parallel fashion, Yeshua did the same and it was accepted.

This week we are looking at the verses from *Shemot / Exodus 34:10-26*.

Shemot / Exodus 34:10-26

34:10 Then God said, 'Behold, I am going to make a covenant. Before all your people I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of the Lord, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you.

34:11 'Be sure to observe what I am commanding you this day: behold, I am going to drive out the Amorite before you, and the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. 34:12 'Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst. 34:13 'But rather, you are to

tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim 34:14 for you shall not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God 34:15 otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice, 34:16 and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons also to play the harlot with their gods. 34:17 'You shall make for yourself no molten gods. 34:18 'You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in the month of Abib you came out of Egypt. 34:19 'The first offspring from every womb belongs to Me, and all your male livestock, the first offspring from cattle and sheep. 34:20 'You shall redeem with a lamb the first offspring from a donkey; and if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. You shall redeem all the firstborn of your sons. None shall appear before Me empty-handed. 34:21 'You shall work six days, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during plowing time and harvest you shall rest. 34:22 'You shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks, that is, the first fruits of the wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year. 34:23 'Three times a year all your males are to appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. 34:24 'For I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your borders, and no man shall covet your land when you go up three times a year to appear before the Lord your God. 34:25 'You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread, nor is the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover to be left over until morning. 34:26 'You shall bring the very first of the first fruits of your soil into the house of the Lord your God. You shall

not boil a young goat in its mother's milk. (NASB)

י וַיֹּאמֶר ה' הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי בֹרֵת בְּרִית נֶגֶד כָּל-עַמֻּם אֲעֲשֶׂה נִפְלְאוֹת
אֲשֶׁר לֹא-נִבְרְאוּ בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-הַגּוֹיִם וְרָאָה כָּל-הָעַם
אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּה בְּקִרְבּוֹ אֶת-מַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה כִּי-נֹרָא הוּא אֲשֶׁר
אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה עִמָּךְ: יא שְׁמֹר-לָךְ אֶת אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם
הַנִּנְי גֵרֶשׁ מִפְּנֵיךָ אֶת-הָאֲמֹרִי וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהַפְּרִזִי וְהַחִוִּי
וְהַיְבוּסִי: יב הַשְׁמֹר לָךְ פֶּן-תִּכְרֹת בְּרִית לְיוֹשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה בָּא עֲלֶיךָ פֶּן-יִהְיֶה לְמוֹקֵשׁ בְּקִרְבְּךָ: יג כִּי
אֶת-מִזְבְּחֹתָם תַּתְּצוּן וְאֶת-מִצְבְּחֹתָם תִּשְׁבְּרוּן וְאֶת-אֲשֵׁרֵי
תִּכְרֹתוֹן: יד כִּי לֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְאֵל אֲחֵר כִּי יְהוָה קָנָא שְׂמוֹ
אֵל קָנָא הוּא: טו פֶּן-תִּכְרֹת בְּרִית לְיוֹשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ וְזָנּוּ |
אֲחֵרֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְזָבְחוּ לְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְקָרָא לָךְ וְאָכַלְתָּ מִזְבְּחֹ:
טז וְלִקְחֹתָ מִבְּנֹתָיו לְבָנֶיךָ וְזָנּוּ בְּנֹתָיו אֲחֵרֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶן וְהִזְנוּ
אֶת-בָּנֶיךָ אֲחֵרֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶן: יז אֱלֹהֵי מִסְכָּה לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה-
לָךְ: יח אֶת-חַג הַמִּצּוֹת תִּשְׁמֹר שְׁבַעַת יָמִים תֹּאכַל מִצּוֹת
אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָךְ לְמוֹעֵד חֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב כִּי בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב יֵצְאֶתָ
מִמִּצְרָיִם: יט כָּל-פֶּטֶר רְחֵם לִי וְכָל-מִקְנֶה תִזְכֹּר פֶּטֶר שׁוֹר
וְשֶׂה: כ וּפֶטֶר חֲמֹר תִּפְדֶּה בְּשָׂה וְאִם-לֹא תִפְדֶּה וְעִרְפָּתוֹ
כָּל בְּכוֹר בְּנֶיךָ תִּפְדֶּה וְלֹא-יֵרָאוּ פְּנֵי רִיקָם: כא שֵׁשֶׁת
יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי תִשְׁבֹּת בְּחֹרֵישׁ וּבִקְצִיר תִּשְׁבֹּת:
כב וְחַג שְׁבַעַת תַּעֲשֶׂה לָךְ בַּכּוֹרֵי קִצִּיר חֲטִיִּם וְחַג הָאֲסִיף
תִּקּוּפַת הַשָּׁנָה: כג שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה יִרְאָה כָּל-זְכוּרָךְ
אֶת-פְּנֵי הָאֵדֶן | יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: כד כִּי-אוֹרֵישׁ גּוֹיִם
מִפְּנֵיךָ וְהִרְחַבְתִּי אֶת-גְּבֻלְךָ וְלֹא-יִחַמַּד אִישׁ אֶת-אַרְצְךָ
בְּעִלְתָּךְ לִרְאוֹת אֶת-פְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה:
כה לֹא-תִשְׁחַט עַל-חִמָּץ דָּם-זָבָחִי וְלֹא-יִלִּין לְבַקֵּר זָבַח חַג
הַפִּסּוֹחַ: כו רֵאשִׁית בַּכּוֹרֵי אֲדָמָתְךָ תָּבִיא בֵּית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
לֹא-תִבְשֵׁל גְּדִי בְחֵלֶב אִמּוֹ:

The last Torah portion before the new annual reading cycle begins again in Parashat Bereshit (*Bereshit / Genesis 1*) we are given both a blessing and a warning. The blessing is of the Lord God remaining

with us, dwelling in our midst, and performing great miracles. The warning is to turn from idolatry. The significance of this is all of the nations will see, know, and fear the presence of God in the midst of His people. We are told in the Apostolic Writings, when Yeshua returns to earth, He is heading straight to national Israel, and to Jerusalem in particular. There He will be received as Israel's King and Savior and will rule during the millennial kingdom. The Fourth Temple spoken of in *Ezekiel 40-48* will be built and the nations will come to Jerusalem to pay homage to the LORD God of Israel. All the nations will celebrate the feast of Sukkot, and those that refuse will be plagued with drought according to the Scriptures (*Isaiah 4:2-6, Zechariah 14:17-18*). The Mount of Olives is one of the best places to view Jerusalem. In King David's day, the summit of the Mount of Olives held a place "*where God was worshiped*" (*2 Samuel 15:32*). And yet, that same context revealed the rejection of God's chosen king, David, who crossed the Kidron Valley and ascended the slope weeping as he fled from his rebellious son. According to Zechariah we are given a prophecy which states the following:

Zechariah 14:1-4

14:1 Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. 14:2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. 14:3 Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. 14:4 In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. (NASB)

The significance of Yeshua returning to the mount of olives reveals to us God's purpose and plan for Israel. In fact, *Jeremiah 31:31-37*

speaks of Israel continuing to exist as a nation as long as there is a sun and moon in the sky. The idea of replacement theology is dangerous that leads to anti-Semitism and false eschatological views. These Scriptures from Zechariah speak of the restoration of Jerusalem to the head of the nations during the kingdom of God on earth. Ultimately the Lord will tear down every idol and every nation will submit to His authority. The commandments given in Parashat Ki Tisa on the promise and a warning against idolatry illustrates the very thing that sets Israel apart from the nations. Israel is warned not to intermingle with the nations as they would lure them into worshipping their traditional deities. This is why the prohibition against making an image cast in iron or wood is mentioned here again (*Shemot / Exodus 34:11*). This underlines the importance of the pilgrimage feasts (the shelosh regalim) the three festivals (Pesach, Shavuot, Succot) to Jerusalem, to solidify the relationship of the average person with the God of Israel three times a year.

In the Zohar Volume 2, Noach 21 *“And he repaired the altar of HaShem that was broken down,”* the covenant of God is connected to the Sfirah of Yesod which correlates to the reproductive organ of man. The Zohar states there is a spiritual connection to circumcision, the underlying lesson of this section is all war, natural disasters, famine, slaughter, and massacre are traced back to sexual immorality. The reason the Lord God chose the sign of circumcision for the covenant was because of the intimate nature of sexual relations. Abraham was commanded to undergo circumcision (brit milah) at age 99; a majority of Jewish males since then have been circumcised at eight days old. The Lord commanded Abraham this saying, *“This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and thy descendants after thee, every male among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall be circumcised on the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations.”* (*Bereshit / Genesis 17:10-12*) Considering the context of the covenant of God and the reproductive organ, remember why David fled Absalom? (*2 Samuel 15:13-23*) This was the result of His sexual sin with BatShevah and killing Uriah her husband. The idea here is David violated his covenant agreement with God according to the Torah, this

connects back to both idolatry and sexual sin. This is what is being taught in this week's Torah portion, a promise is given of God working in our midst, and a warning is given concerning idolatry, which can be anything that takes the foremost place in our lives as opposed to the God of Israel. Consider Parashat Pinchas, the sin of the people at Baal Peor led to both idolatry and sexual sin, a violation of the covenant of God. It is interesting how in our modern society, sex and marriage have become separated illustrated by the fact that in today's culture, men and women sleep together, live together, even have children together without getting married. Sex is seen as simply an act of the body and marriage is an unnecessary part of it. The Torah however views marriage as a covenant relationship, and sexual union as a binding covenantal act. Secular society however does not view these things in this way. The Scriptures tell us *"therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."* (*Bereshit / Genesis 2:24*) This describes man and woman as complementing one another (*Bereshit / Genesis 2:18*) and this complementary relationship is for our benefit as it provides a loving home for children, righteousness, and holiness. There is a centrality of sexual union to marriage in the Scriptures, however the modern culture wants to separate the sex act from marriage. This is illustrated in Parashat Pinchas as the sexual act is connected also to idolatry, something that is being brought into the midst of the congregation of Israel, the place where the Lord God Almighty dwells. This has a serious implication for us today, as our bodies are the place for the indwelling of God's Holy spirit. This draws us back to the covenant and the reproductive organ that is being taught in the Zohar. The idea of this connection to intimacy, and covenant agreement are coupled to the sexual act according the Scriptures.

- *Bereshit / Genesis 24:67*, Isaac brought Rebekah into the tent *"and took Rebecca, and she became his wife."* Their sexual union, made Rebekah the wife of Isaac.
- *Bereshit / Genesis 29:23-25*, Jacob intended to marry Rachel, and a feast was thrown for Jacob and Rachel. However, Laban tricked Jacob that night by bringing him Leah, and Jacob *"went in to"* Leah and was now her husband. Though Jacob

intended to marry Rachel, he never questioned that Leah was now his wife and not Rachel.

- *Devarim / Deuteronomy 21:10-14*, if a man sees a beautiful woman among captives and he desires to take her as his wife, he must allow her to mourn for one month. After this, he “*may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be [his] wife*” (21:13). The man’s “*going in to her*” is the only thing mentioned in the marriage process.
- *Devarim / Deuteronomy 25:5*, the Levirate marriage, in which a brother is to marry his deceased brother’s wife because they had no children. The brother “*shall go in to her and take her as his wife*” (*Bereshit / Genesis 38:8*). The idea of “*going in to her*” is synonymous with becoming married.
- *Ezekiel 16:8* speaks of a marital “*vow*” or “*to swear an oath*” is a metaphor for which God “*entered into a covenant*” with Israel. At first this appears to be a verbal vow, but the context shows that the vow is the act of sexual union, as the woman is at “*the age for love*” and the passage uses euphemisms to describe a relationship that is as intimate as sexual relations.

Based upon these passages, the sexual act is meaningful; it is also understood as a witness to the covenant between a man and a woman by the shedding of blood. This being at one with one another (one flesh) speaks to the relationship we are to have with the Lord, by His dwelling in our midst. The reason the reproductive organ is connected to the covenant, is because of its connection to idolatry, it either makes, breaks, or renews a covenant. Consider those who are bound up in pornography, it becomes an idol that is worshiped, that breaks faith with God and the marriage covenant that was made with one’s spouse. So we read in the Scriptures about honoring the marriage covenant (*Hebrews 13:4*) and as Yeshua said, “*So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate*” (*Matthew 19:6*). This is the forcefulness of what is being taught in this week’s Torah portion on the blessing and the warning God is giving His people. In *Shemot / Exodus 34:10-14* notice how the Lord proclaims that He will perform mighty miracles in the midst of the people of God and He will go forth before Israel and drive out the

nations ahead of them. If they succumb to idolatry however, this will not happen. This teaching is very practical and its implications are far reaching. We are given a responsibility, and are accountable for our actions, and to our calling before God. The Lord God of Israel does not leave us without help however. He tells us in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 30:6* that He will change us from the inside out (circumcision of the heart, note again the spiritual implication here) and that He will never leave us nor forsake us (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 31:6*). He sent His Son Yeshua to die for each and every one of us, and our faith in Him, the Lord send His Spirit to dwell within our hearts, sanctifying our bodies. This again draws in the context of idolatry, sexual morality, relationship and marriage. The Lord Himself will help us to overcome, and we are called to seek the righteousness of God all the days of our lives! This is how the Torah and the Gospel Message go together!