

# 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?

### השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Exodus 1:1-6:1  
הפטרה: Isaiah 27:6-28:13 29:22-23  
הברית: Acts 7:17-35 1 Corinthians 14:18-25  
החדשה

10 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?"

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### שמות 4:24-26

24 אָנֹכִי הִלַּגְתִּי אֶת־בְּנֵךְ בְּכַרְךָ: וַיְהִי בַדְרֹךְ בְּמַלְאֵן וַיִּפְגְּשׂהוּ  
25 יְהוָה וַיִּבְקֶשׂ הַמֵּיתוֹ: וַתִּלְקַח צִפּוֹרָה צֵר וַתִּכְרֹת אֶת־עֲרֻלַּת  
26 בְּנֵהּ וַתִּגַּע לְרַגְלָיו וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי חֲתָן דָּמִים אַתָּה לִּי: וַיֵּרָךְ  
מִמֶּנּוּ אִזּוֹ אָמְרָה חֲתָן דָּמִים לְמוֹלַת:

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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 נגע meaning "to touch," Zipporah caused the foreskin to touch Moshe's 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 previous 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.

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### 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)

40 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  
45 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?"  
50 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***

55 *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  
60 Abraham as well, and I will remember the land. (NASB)*

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

65 *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***

70 *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.  
75 (NASB)*

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

80 *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,*

85 *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)

90 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*)  
95 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  
100 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  
105 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  
110 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  
115 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  
120 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  
125 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  
130 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.

135 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  
140 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  
145 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  
150 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.  
155 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?

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### **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