IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR PARENTS

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Passed away on 16 Cheshvan, 5769

Mrs **Tzipora** bas Reb **Arye HaLevi** ע"ה
Passed away on 26 Shevat, 5782
Ferszt

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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602 North Orange Drive.
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Tel.: (323) 934-7095 * Fax: (323) 934-7092

http://www.torah4blind.org
e-mail: yys@torah4blind.org

Rabbi Yosef Y. Shagalov,
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In loving memory of
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Passed away on 24 Tamuz, 5783
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Rabbi **Yosef Yitzchok** שיחי׳ **Shagalov**
Los Angeles, California

46

As mentioned several times, "all the appointed times"[1] have already concluded, and my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, has announced that *teshuvah* has already been done and we have also "polished the buttons." Therefore according to all the signs, our generation is the last generation of exile and automatically the first generation of Redemption. What this time requires is that one should prepare **in reality** to "Get you out of your land... to the land I will show you," imminently and immediately.

…Particularly in our generation, the last generation of exile and the first generation of Redemption, there should be a special emphasis on the Divine service of "Get you out of your land... to the land I will show you," and the acquisition of all ten lands.[2] This must be reflected primarily in an increase in Torah study, which foreshadows this service. This needs to be not only with his three intellectual faculties as they are connected to his emotional character traits, but also in the essence of the three intellectual faculties. What this means specifically is an increase in the study of the inner teachings of the Torah (with intellectual explanations[3]), including the subject of Redemption and our righteous Moshiach.

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha,
11 MarCheshvan 5752)

1. *Sanhedrin* 97b.

2. [The land of Israel originally comprised the land of the seven nations; these correspond to the seven emotional attributes. In the Age of Redemption, the Torah promised us that we will acquire an additional three lands; these correspond to the three intellectual faculties. Translator's note.]

3. See also the talk of 8 Cheshvan of this year.

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

RELATING TO THE WEEKLY SECTIONS OF THE TORAH AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS IN THE JEWISH CALENDAR

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

•

Volume VI: *Bereishis*

•

In English rendition
by
Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

LECH LECHA

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN OUR OBSERVANCE OF THE MITZVOS, AND THAT OF OUR PATRIARCHS

Our Sages say[1] that Avraham fulfilled the entire Torah before it was given. But[2] Avraham did not circumcise himself until he was explicitly commanded to do so at the age of 99. Why did he wait to perform this *mitzvah* until he received G-d's command?

This question can be resolved by explaining the difference between the *mitzvos* which the Patriarchs observed before the giving of the Torah and the *mitzvos* which the Jewish people observe after the giving of the Torah.[3] The Patriarchs observed *mitzvos* on their own individual initiative. They were not granted any strength from Above to enhance their observance.[4] In contrast, by commanding the Jews to observe the *mitzvos* at Mount Sinai, G-d empowered them with unique influence.

As such, although the Patriarchs observed the *mitzvos* in deed, they were not able to have the holiness of the *mitzvos* permeate the physical articles with which the *mitzvos* were performed. These material articles did not become holy.

1. *Kiddushin* 82a, *Yoma* 25b.
2. See *Torah Or, Parshas Lech Lecha,* the *maamar* entitled *B'Etzem HaYom HaZeh* (13b); *Likkutei Sichos,* Vol. I, p. 40.
3. See the *sichos* from *Parshas Chayah Sarah* in this series.
4. See the exegesis of the verse (*Shir HaShirim* 1:3): "Your oils are fragrant," in *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* which states: "All the *mitzvos* which the Patriarchs performed before You were ethereal...." See also *Sichos Shabbos Parshas Bereishis,* (1st *Farbrengen*) 5721.

BESURAS HAGEULO
The Announcement Of The Redemption

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It should be noted once again (as I have said many times) **that the Rabbis** must publicize the legal decree that "**all the appointed times have passed**."[1] In regard to *teshuva*,[2] *teshuvah* has already been done and all aspects of Divine service have already been completed. All that remains now is **the true and complete Redemption in actual reality**.

There is nothing more to wait for, since all aspects of Divine service have already been concluded and *teshuvah* has already been done, **and it depends only on the coming of Moshiach himself**. The statement of the Gemara that "It depends only on **teshuvah**" was [required] earlier, but now that teshuvah has already been done it depends only **on the coming of Moshiach himself**. All that is necessary is for Moshiach to come in actual reality and [for us to] "point with his finger and say this is the one,"[3] this is our righteous Moshiach.

One should immediately "point with his finger and say this is the one." I have repeated and emphasized many times that not only will the Redemption eventually come, but **the Redemption already stands on the threshold**. It waits for every man and woman of Israel to open the door and pull the Redemption into the room!!

(At the visit of the Rav and Gaon, Mordechai Eliyahu,
6 Cheshvan 5752)

1. *Sanhedrin* 97b.
2. As the Gemora continues: "it [the coming of Moshiach] depends only on teshuva."
3. See *Ta'anis* at the end. *Shmos Rabba*, end of chapter 23. Rashi's explanation of *Beshalach* 15:2.

Ultimately, the merit of circumcision will cause the Jews to be released from subjugation to the gentile nations — which is equivalent to Gehinom[45] — as our Sages say,[46] commenting on the phrase "Look to the covenant": "Even if Israel does not possess any good deeds, the Holy One, blessed be He, will redeem them in the merit of the circumcision," with the coming of *Mashiach* in the immediate future.

(Adapted from the *Sichos of Yud Yes Kislev,* 5722)



On this basis, we can understand a difference between the versions of this statement which appear in *Eruvin, Bereishis Rabbah,* and *Shmos Rabbah* 19:4 (and similarly in *Midrash Tanchuma,* at the conclusion of *Parshas Lech Lecha*).

The passage from *Shmos Rabbah* speaks about G-d's promise that Jews who have been circumcised will not descend to Gehinom. It does not mention Avraham protecting his descendants. Therefore, to have a sinner enter Gehinom, it is sufficient for an angel to extend his foreskin. (Such a person has not "abrogated the covenant of Avraham." He is not uncircumcised, but is not circumcised either.)

Eruvin speaks of Avraham releasing his descendants. This is prevented only by a person "abrogating Avraham's covenant." The actions of the angel described above would not prevent Avraham from protecting such a person.

Bereishis Rabbah speaks of Avraham sitting at the entrance to Gehinom and G-d preventing "those who sinned greatly" from being saved by him by placing a foreskin on their organ. Since the sins of these people do not include relations with a non-Jewish woman which causes "the abrogation the covenant of Avraham" as in *Eruvin,* Avraham would save such individuals were an actual foreskin not placed on them.

After the foreskin is placed on these people, they are actually uncircumcised; it is not merely *as if* they are uncircumcised, as *Rashi* comments in *Eruvin,* reflecting the opinion of the *Rambam* mentioned above.

45. As our Sages say (*Bereishis Rabbah* 44:21, explained in *Torah Or, Parshas Noach,* in the *maamar* entitled *Mayim Rabbim*), Avraham chose subjugation to the gentiles instead of *Gehinom*.
46. *Aggadas Bereishis,* ch. 17.

For example, the *Zohar*[5] explains that by setting out the staves before Lavan's sheep,[6] Yaakov drew down the same spiritual influence as we draw down through fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *tefillin*. But once he had completed his service with these staves, they remained ordinary pieces of wood.

In contrast, the *mitzvos* observed after the Giving of the Torah have been endowed by G-d with the power to draw down holiness into material objects.

On the other hand, although our *mitzvos* possess a higher dimension than those performed by the Patriarchs, it is the observance of the *mitzvos* by our Patriarchs which makes it possible for us to observe *mitzvos* within the material realm,[7] as it is said:[8] "The deeds of the Patriarchs are a sign for their descendants." Their deeds blazed a path for their descendants,[9] and empowered them to follow.

Since the potential for our observance of the *mitzvos* comes from "the deeds of the Patriarchs," it was necessary that at least one *mitzvah* performed by the Patriarchs resemble the *mitzvos* performed after the giving of the Torah in its entirety. This *mitzvah* and its holiness would permeate material existence and endow it with holiness which would endure even after the observance of the *mitzvah* is completed.

This one *mitzvah* would establish a connection between all the *mitzvos* the Patriarchs observed — even those with an effect only on the spiritual plane — and the *mitzvos* observed after the giving of the Torah. Through this connection, all of

5. Vol. I, p. 162a. See *Torah Or, Parshas Vayeitzei,* p. 23c.
6. See *Bereishis* 30:37ff.
7. See *Torah Or,* the beginning of *Parshas Lech Lecha* (11c), *Parshas Yisro,* the *maamar* entitled *Moshe Yidaber* (67d). See also *Toras Chayim,* the beginning of *Parshas Yisro* (376a ff).
8. *Or HaTorah, Parshas Lech Lecha.* See also the *Ramban's* commentary to *Bereishis* 12:6 which states: "Everything which occurred to the Patriarchs is a sign to their descendants." See also the *Ramban's* commentary to *Bereishis* 12:10.
9. *Bereishis Rabbah* 40:6.

our Patriarchs' *mitzvos* empower us to draw holiness into the material world.

To cite a parallel: When G-d wanted a prophet to convey a prophecy, He would often have the prophet perform certain physical activities, e.g., lying on his right side, or his left side.[10] Why was it necessary to connect prophecy to physical activity? Our Rabbis explain[11] that it is possible for prophecy to have an effect only in the spiritual realms. In order for prophecy to affect the material world, G-d ruled that it be associated with physical activity.

Similarly, for the observance of our Patriarchs to influence our actual performance of the *mitzvos,* it was necessary that, at least in one instance, their observance involve material substance.

"AN ETERNAL BOND IN YOUR FLESH"

The one *mitzvah* by which our Patriarchs drew down holiness into material existence was that of circumcision. For circumcision is unique in that it brings holiness into the human body, and that holiness continues to endure, as it is written:[12] "And My covenant will be an eternal bond in your flesh."

To clarify this point: There are two dimensions to the *mitzvah* of circumcision: a) the onetime act of removing the foreskin, and b) the continuous effect that the person will be circumcised, and that he will not be uncircumcised.[13]

The latter aspect is reflected in the *Rambam's* ruling[14] that a person who causes the flesh of his sexual organ to appear

10. *Yechezkel* 4:4, 4:6.
11. *Ramban, Bereishis* 12:6, *Levush,* commenting on the *Rikanti, Bereishis, loc. cit.* See also *Derashos HaRan, Derashah* 2.
12. *Bereishis* 17:13.
13. Both dimensions are significant, as reflected in a letter authored by the Rogatchover Gaon (printed in *S'dei Chemed, Miluim L'Kuntres Metzitzah*). See also *Tzafnas Paneach L'Rambam, Hilchos Milah.*
14. *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Milah* 3:8. See also the *Jerusalem Talmud, Peah* 1:1.

soul is given an oath concerning how the body will conduct itself after birth.[41] Thus we see that, even before birth, the soul shares a connection with the body. This connection, however, is external: the "candle burns *at his head,*" i.e., above him. Through circumcision, by contrast, the soul's connection to the body is internalized; and thus circumcision marks the entry of the holy soul into the body.

THE REWARD FOR THIS MITZVAH

The two aspects of the *mitzvah* mentioned above: that a Jew becomes circumcised and that he is no longer uncircumcised, are reflected in two aspects of the reward granted for the observance of this *mitzvah.*[42]

The reward granted for the positive dimension of circumcision is that one merits to enter the World to Come, as mentioned previously. The reward for the negative dimension (that one is no longer uncircumcised) is that, as our Sages say,[43] Avraham sits at the entry to Gehinom, and does not allow any circumcised Jew to enter.[44]

41. See also *Likkutei Torah, Devarim* 18c, and the sources mentioned there.
42. Note *Tanya,* ch. 39, which explains that from the reward given for the observance of a *mitzvah,* it is possible to appreciate the *mitzvah*'s nature.
43. *Eruvin* 19a; *Bereishis Rabbah* 48:8.
44. Our Sages' statement *(ibid.)* that Avraham will not save from entry to Gehinom "a Jew who has sexual relations with a gentile woman, who causes his foreskin to be extended," does not reflect a contradiction to the above concepts. As explained above, although a person who caused himself to appear uncircumcised is not uncircumcised, he also does not possess the merit of being circumcised. Nevertheless, since extending the foreskin "abrogates the covenant of Avraham," Avraham will not release such a person from Gehinom.

    To cite a parallel: All authorities, even Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi, agree that the day of Yom Kippur does not atone for punishment of *kareis* for the sin of eating on Yom Kippur (*Kerisus* 7a). Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi maintains that the passage of Yom Kippur atones for all sins punishable by *kareis* committed throughout the year, even when one does not fast on that holy day. Nevertheless, when a transgression involves Yom Kippur itself, atonement is not granted.

    Similarly, in this instance, since it is the merit of circumcision which protects one from Gehinom, a person who abrogates this covenant is not released.

The rationale for this is that the inherent nature of the body and the animal soul is to be attracted to all material entities, as indicated by the verse,[36] "the spirit of the animal descends downward to the earth." Through the *mitzvah* of circumcision, one weakens the excitement and enjoyment one feels in physical pursuits, as cited above. And through this act, one enhances the potential for excitement and enjoyment in the realm of holiness. Thus this is the time when the G-dly soul enters the body's inner dimensions.

AN INNER BOND

There is no source cited for the Alter Rebbe's ruling. It is possible to say[37] that the concept is based on the decision of the *Menoras HaMeor,* by R. Yisrael Alnakavah,[38] which accepts as *halachah* the opinion which states:[39] "When does a child [acquire the right to] enter the World to Come? When he is circumcised."

The World to Come refers to the Era of the Resurrection. The merit which enables the body to arise from the dead stems from the soul's influence over it, and the fact that this influence has been internalized. The decision of the *Menoras HaMeor* that after circumcision, a baby merits resurrection thus serves as a source for the Alter Rebbe's ruling that the entry of a man's G-dly soul into his body comes about through the *mitzvah* of circumcision.

Even before circumcision — indeed even before birth — the soul has a connection with the body, as our Sages say[40] concerning a child in his mother's womb: "A candle burns at his head,... and he is given an oath 'Be righteous...,'" i.e., the

36. *Koheles* 3:21.
37. See *Likkutei Sichos,* Vol. XX, p. 246ff.
38. *Menoras HaMeor,* Vol. IV, the chapter entitled "Raising Children" (p. 131, brought down in *Reishis Chochmah* p. 246b). See also *Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah* 263:5,
39. *Sanhedrin* 110b. See also the *sichah* of *Yud-Tes Kislev* in this series, note 14.
40. *Niddah* 30b.

extended[15] is considered to have "abrogated the covenant of Avraham our Patriarch."

The above reflects two concepts:

a) The intent of the *mitzvah* of circumcision is to affect the actual physical flesh. The physical organ is more than an intermediary through which the *mitzvah* is fulfilled, as are the head and the arm on which *tefillin* are tied. With regard to circumcision, it is not merely that the *mitzvah* is performed with this organ; the purpose of the *mitzvah* is to affect the actual flesh, so that the person be circumcised, and that he not be uncircumcised.

b) The *mitzvah* of circumcision extends beyond the time in which the foreskin is cut, affecting the person for his entire life.

A proof of the continuous nature of circumcision can be gleaned from the *Talmud's* narrative concerning King David.[16] When King David entered the bathhouse and saw himself naked, he exclaimed: "Woe is me! I am no longer clothed with Your *mitzvos.*" When, however, he remembered the *mitzvah* of circumcision, he regained his calm.

This indicates that the *mitzvah* of circumcision is continuous, affecting the person even after the act has been completed. This realization is what allayed David's distress. For we cannot say that David was calmed by the recollection that he had been circumcised years ago, and that this had drawn down holiness upon him. For if this was the case, there would be no difference between the *mitzvah* of circumcision and *mitzvos* associated with other limbs of the body.[17]

15. [In Talmudic times, there were Jews who were circumcised but who, in order to win favor in the eyes of the Greeks and Romans, underwent an operation to make their sexual organ appear uncircumcised.]
16. *Menachos* 43b.
17. See the Responsa of the *Or Zerua,* Responsum 11.

The distinction of circumcision *vis-a-vis* the other *mitzvos* requires clarification. For after the giving of the Torah, the other *mitzvos* we perform also affect the limbs with which they are fulfilled. Putting on *tefillin* refines our heads and hands and endows them with holiness. And this holiness continues even after one removes the *tefillin*. Unquestionably, a hand on which *tefillin* have been placed is not the same as a hand on which *tefillin* have not, חיו, been placed. The distinction is that the *tefillin* — and similarly, all the other *mitzvos* — refine the body and induce holiness, but the *mitzvah* of *tefillin* does not continue forever. With regard to circumcision, by contrast, the *mitzvah* itself remains a part of the person's body.

On this basis, we can also resolve a question asked by *Tosafos*:[18] The *Talmud* derives the fact that women are not obligated to circumcise their sons from the exegesis of a Torah verse. Why is this necessary? Women are not obligated to fulfill any *mitzvos* whose observance is limited to a particular time. Since the *mitzvah* of circumcision has such a limitation — it may be performed only during the day and not at night — it should be obvious that women are not obligated in its observance.

Based on the above, however, this difficulty can be resolved. For although the actual observance of the *mitzvah* of circumcision is limited to a particular time, the *mitzvah* itself — that a Jew is circumcised (and that he is not uncircumcised) — applies at all times.

CHOOSING OBEDIENCE TO G-D OVER HUMAN INITIATIVE

The abovementioned aspects of the *mitzvah* of circumcision — that it endows physical flesh with holiness and endures continuously — applied before the giving of the Torah. Therefore when Avraham wanted his servant Eliezar

18. *Kiddushin* 29a, entry *Oso*.

a *tzaddik*, or even that of a *benoni,* possesses inherent positive attributes and an innate tendency to do good.[31] Similarly, he possesses a natural aversion to certain negative qualities. For example, as explained in *Tanya,*[32] no Jew is willing to deny his Jewish faith. For this, every Jew is willing, with a commitment that surpasses reason or logic, to sacrifice his life, and/or endure the most severe torment.

In light of this potential, the above lesson becomes more relevant. Bringing out the good which every Jew possesses requires effort. Not only must we work to inculcate positive qualities which we do not possess by nature, but we must work to develop even those positive qualities which are inherent to our make-up, to refine and elevate them to a higher plane of holiness.

THE ENTRY OF THE G-DLY SOUL

On this basis, we can also understand a *halachic* ruling delivered by the Alter Rebbe in his *Shulchan Aruch*:[33] "the final and essential dimension of the entry of a man's holy soul is at the age of 13," at *Bar Mitzvah*.

[Thus our Sages[34] interpret the phrase[35] "An old foolish king" to refer to the *yetzer hora* (the evil inclination), and refer to the *yetzer tov* (the good inclination) with the expression: "A weak, but wise lad." The *yetzer hora* is referred to as old because it comes to a person 13 years before the *yetzer tov,* which for that reason is referred to as a lad.]

Nevertheless, as the Alter Rebbe continues, the first stages of the entry of the G-dly soul come during a child's education to the observance of the Torah and its *mitzvos,* and more particularly, at circumcision.

31. See *Tanya,* ch. 1.
32. Ch. 18ff.
33. Vol. II, 4:2.
34. *Koheles Rabbah; Zohar,* Vol. I, *Parshas Vayeishev*.
35. *Koheles* 4:13.

"the uncircumcised," i.e., the *yetzer hora.*[29] This means being free from evil desires.

In particular, this is a twofold activity paralleling *milah* — the cutting of the thick foreskin — i.e., removing crass and gross desires, and *priyah* — tearing away the thin membrane — purging more sophisticated desires.

Just as in the physical sense, a person who is born circumcised is not considered to have completed the observance of the *mitzvah*, so too, there exists a parallel in our Divine service. In *Tanya,*[30] the Alter Rebbe explains that there are individuals who are born with a tendency for diligent study. Thus such a person carries out the service of "do[ing] good" (i.e., being circumcised) naturally, without effort. Similarly, since he is by nature withdrawn, his pursuit of physical desires is restrained, and he is naturally careful in "turn[ing] away from evil" (i.e., not being uncircumcised).

Nevertheless, such Divine service is not sufficient. On the contrary, as the Alter Rebbe explains, such an individual is described as "one who does not serve G-d." Why? Because his Divine service lacks effort. *It is necessary to work*, to apply oneself to Divine service above and beyond what comes naturally.

A similar concept applies with regard to a person whose tendency to "turn away from evil and do good" comes as a result of efforts in the past, but which has now become second nature, as it were. As explained in *Tanya,* such a person cannot rely on his previous activity, but must constantly strive to reach new heights.

This is a directive for every Jew, underscoring how we must constantly labor in our Divine service, instead of remaining satisfied with the good we have already accomplished. Every Jew, even one who has not attained the level of

29. *Sukkah* 52a.
30. Ch. 15.

to take an oath — and an oath must be taken while holding an article sanctified through a *mitzvah*[19] — he told him:[20] "Place your hand beneath my thigh." The holiness of the *mitzvah* of circumcision had continued, and therefore Eliezar could take the oath, swearing by this *mitzvah.*

We can thus understand why Avraham waited to perform the *mitzvah* of circumcision until he was commanded to do so by G-d instead of observing it on his own initiative. Since this *mitzvah* resembles the *mitzvos* observed after the giving of the Torah, it was necessary for its observance to have been commanded by G-d, and thus to be endowed with a measure of Divine influence.

(Adapted from *Sichos Chof-Daled Teves,* 5711, *Yud Shvat,* 5712)

TOWARDS REFINEMENT

The fact that G-d chose the *mitzvah* of circumcision to be the *mitzvah* through which the deeds of the Patriarchs influence the *mitzvos* performed by their descendants indicates that this *mitzvah* has a general import relevant to all the *mitzvos.*

To explain: In the *Guide to the Perplexed*[21] — and many of the concepts stated in the *Guide*[22] are based on the *Zohar* and other Kabbalistic sources[23] — the *Rambam* writes that one of the reasons for the *mitzvah* of circumcision is to weaken the power of sexual desire. This reflects a general purpose common to all *mitzvos,* for they were given "to perfect the created beings,"[24] to refine the physical body so that it will not be

19. *Shavuos* 38b; *Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat* 87:13,15.
20. *Bereishis* 24:2.
21. Vol. III, ch. 35 and ch. 49.
22. See the gloss of the *Tzemach Tzedek* to the *Guide to the Perplexed* (printed in *Sefer HaChakirah — Derech HaEmunah*).
23. See *Sefer HaSichos Kayitz 5700,* p. 41, note 27*. See also the *sichah* of *Parshas Vayeira* in this series.
24. *Bereishis Rabbah* 44:1.

dominated by desire for material pleasures. On the contrary, one's pleasure is to come solely from the realm of holiness.

THREE DIMENSIONS OF CIRCUMCISION

In addition to the general connection which circumcision shares with the other *mitzvos,* there are particular dimensions to circumcision which parallel comprehensive thrusts in our Divine service.

As mentioned above, there are three dimensions to the *mitzvah* of circumcision: a) the actual removal of the foreskin, b) that one becomes circumcised (and, as explained above, this is an ongoing quality), and c) that one is no longer uncircumcised.

Distinguishing between these dimensions is not merely a theoretical exercise; the ramifications affect the actual observance of the *mitzvah*. Each one of these elements is necessary in order to observe the *mitzvah* fully; even when two of the three have been satisfied, the observance of the *mitzvah* is incomplete, and Jewish law requires that the third also be satisfied.

For example when, as sometimes happens, a baby is born circumcised, two of the requirements have been met: he is circumcised, and he is not uncircumcised. Nevertheless, the third requirement — that the act of circumcision be performed — is lacking. And therefore it is necessary to "draw forth the blood of the covenant."[25]

Similarly, when a person has been circumcised and afterwards extends the flesh of the organ in order to appear uncircumcised, two of the three requirements have been met: the act of circumcision has been performed, and he is not considered uncircumcised — as reflected by the fact that he, in contrast to a person who has never been circumcised, may

25. *Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah* 263:4.

partake of *terumah*.[26] He lacks, however, the continuous dimension of circumcision. As mentioned above, the *Rambam* refers to this[15] as "abrogat[ing] the covenant of Avraham our Patriarch."

And finally, when a person is born with two foreskins, and has only one of them removed, again two requirements have been met: the act of circumcision has been performed, and he is circumcised. But he is still considered as uncircumcised,[27] and this must be corrected to complete the observance of the *mitzvah*.

THE PARALLEL IN OUR DIVINE SERVICE

These three dimensions of circumcision reflect three thrusts in our Divine service. As mentioned, the act of cutting the foreskin brings about a twofold result: a) that the person becomes circumcised, and b) that he not be uncircumcised. So too, our Divine service in the observance of the Torah and its *mitzvos* involves performing deeds that must bring about a twofold result.

"Being circumcised" refers to the service of "doing good,"[28] revealing and expressing the good which every Jew possesses. More particularly, this means that each Jew should express the good within himself by having his day-to-day thoughts, words and deeds embrace the study of Torah and the observance of its *mitzvos*. And he should express this good by seeking always to serve as a positive influence on others.

"Not being uncircumcised" refers to the service of "turning away from evil,"[28] not being under the dominion of

26. *Yevamos* 72a; *Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Terumah 7:10.*
27. See *Shabbos* 135b, the gloss of the *Tzafnas Paneach* to the *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Milah, ch. 1.*
28. Cf. *Tehillim* 34:15.