



PhiloTorah D'var Torah

THE FULL BRIT

Recommended to read MITZVA notes in the Sh'VII portion of the Sedra Summary and then read this PTDT.

Mazal Tov, your cousin or your friend had a baby boy and you were informed about the BRIT, to take place right after Shacharit on Monday morning. (No significance to the choice of day of the week; just painting the scenario.)

Side point: The custom of not inviting people to a BRIT - just informing them about it, is thought to be because if one is invited, then he must attend. So as not to obligate a person to go, we just inform. Actually, the 'problem' is not inviting to the Brit, but rather to the seuda of the Brit. The custom doesn't change - we are supposed to inform, rather than invite.

Okay, so what's the BRIT? You know, the circumcision of the boy on the 8th day of his life.

Correct, but incomplete.

The circumcision itself is better called the MILA. True, the mitzva to circumcise is called BRIT, when HaShem says to Avraham, ZOT B'RITI

ASHER TISHM'RU - this is My Covenant that you shall keep...

And He calls circumcision OT B'RITI - the sign of My Covenant.

But there is more. A lot more.

Look at B'reishit 17, p'sukim 1-14, towards the end of Parshat Lech L'cha. The words B'RIT and B'RITI occur a total of ten times. That number is significant. It represents a certain completeness.

The first time the word occurs, we can say it is introducing the idea of the whole Covenant, the agreement between G-d and Avraham and his descendants.

Then we find the part of the Covenant that is between G-d and Avraham - the part in which G-d changes Avram's name to Avraham and tells him that he will become "the father of many nations". ANI HINEI V'RITI ITACH. ITACH, with you.

Then, what follows, is the next aspect of the Covenant, that HaShem will be our G-d AND that He will give Avraham and his offspring (through Yitzchak and Yaakov - but that's another topic), ERETZ YISRAEL.

With this part of the B'rit, the Torah repeatedly says, Between Me and you and your children... throughout the generations.

And then comes to circumcision part

of the Covenant, the B'RIT OLAM, the eternal Covenant.

So, you are going to a B'RIT? Know that it is so much more than a circumcision and the party that celebrates it. (Holy Bagel, anyone?)

All this is why LECH L'CHA is considered to be the source of the mitzva, rather than the pasuk in Parshat Tazri'a. Tazri'a addresses the MILA aspect of the mitzva; so does Lech L'cha, but it includes the WHOLE B'RIT.

Where do women fit into all this?

They give birth to the baby boy. They share their husband's obligations to raise their sons and daughters to be good people and good Jews. And because of the particular organ involved in BRIT MILA, they become (equal) partners in the BEINI UVEI-NECHA UVEIN ZARACHA ACHARECHA L'DOROTAM - between Me and you and your offspring through the generations.

Yes, there are details and technicalities of Brit Mila that apply to males only. But the concept of the WHOLE BRIT - HaShem's being our G-d, and His giving us Eretz Yisrael, and the total picture of raising a child (male and female) to a life of Torah and Mitzvot, definitely includes the partnership of Husband and Wife, Man and Woman.

The two p'sukim that follow the 14-pasuk portion we've been examining, clearly bring Sara Imeinu into the picture and show us the partnership that is to exist between Man and Woman. **PTDT**