

*Shamar* – Observe

*Carefully Consider...*

The Promised Land serves as a metaphor for eternal life with God in heaven. That is why this gift is listed as one of the benefits of the Covenant.

The Land known as Yisra'el has always been God's to give. Yahowah created it as well as the humans who seek to dispute His claim. If you are not Jewish by ethnicity or adopted into the Covenant, you do not belong – no matter who is screaming otherwise.

**“And (wa) I will give (nathan – I will provide) to you (la 'atah), and to your offspring (la zera' 'atah – your seed and what you sow) after you ('achar 'atah – thereafter following you), this ('eth) land ('erets – region and realm) where you are living (magowr 'atah – where you are sojourning and dwelling like a stranger, even as a foreigner without discernible status or rights), the entire ('eth kol) land ('erets) of Kana'an (Kana'an – merchant traders who will be humbled and subdued; transliterated Canaan) to (la) eternally ('owlam – to endure forever in and) possess ('achuzah – to inherit and to be settled as a place where you belong).**

**And (wa) I will exist (hayah – I will be) unto them as their (la hem la) God ('elohym).”**  
(Bare'syth / In the Beginning / Genesis 17:8)

Since Yahowah and science both reveal that the Earth will not last “*'owlam* – forever,” the only way this promise can be fulfilled is for the *'erets* to represent the universe, inclusive of the realm known as “*shamaym* – the heavens.” Therefore, the *'erets* represents the conditions experienced in the Garden of 'Eden and those which will be experienced during the one-thousand-year celebration of “*Sukah* – Tabernacles and Shelters.” It speaks of living with God, of camping out with Him.

Along these lines, the reason 'Abraham was currently “*magowr* – living and traveling” in this realm “without his full cadre of rights” is because he had not yet demonstrated to Yahowah that he was willing to trust and rely upon the Covenant's provisions. That would not occur for more than a decade, and not until 'Abraham trusted Yahowah sufficiently for him to walk to Mount *Mowryah* and demonstrate his commitment.

One would have to diligently search the Word of God to find a more important statement than what follows...

**“So then (wa) God said ('amar 'elohym – the Almighty affirmed and declared, making a request (qal imperfect – literally with unfolding consequences)) to ('el) 'Abraham ('Abraham – father who raises and lifts up those who stand up and reach up, father of the abundantly enriched, merciful father, or father of the multitudes who are confused and troublesome), 'As for you (wa 'atah 'eth – in addition and with regard to you), you should continually examine and genuinely**

**consider** (*shamar 'atah* – you should consistently observe, always focusing upon, look at and pay attention to, learn from and care about, diligently and literally contemplating the details which comprise (qal imperfect – literal interpretation of the relationship with ongoing and unfolding consequences throughout time)) **My Family Covenant Relationship** (*beryth 'any* – My Household Accord and Agreement).

**In addition, so should the offspring you conceive** (*wa zera' 'atah* – as well as your seed, descendants, and prodigy) **following you** (*'achar 'atah* – after you) **so that they might approach throughout their generations** (*la dowrym hem* – for them to draw near and reach the goal no matter when or where they live, for every age, period of time, lineage, race, or class of individual).” (*Bare'syth / In the Beginning / Genesis 17:9*)

This is the fourth of five conditions of the Covenant. And it may be the most important because it leads to and explains the other four.

If you were looking for the meaning of life, for the grand unification theory, for the answer to everything, you have found it: “*shamar beryth* – focus upon Yahowah’s family relationship” and everything you could ever imagine will be yours: eternal life, absolute perfection, adoption into the first family, becoming enlightened, enriched, and empowered by a magnitude of infinity raised to the 7<sup>th</sup> power: Infinity<sup>7</sup>.

It should be noted that “*zera'* – seed” and “*dowr* – generations, dwelling places, lives, and epochs of time” were both scribed in the construct form, not only linking the *zera'* and *dowr* together, but also connecting them with *beryth*. Therefore, the “Covenant” is the “seed” from which “generations come to dwell throughout time” with Yah.

According to God, our responsibility regarding His Covenant is to “*shamar* – observe” it – literally and continually examining every nuance of it. It is the same instruction He gives us regarding His Towrah – which not so coincidentally represents the one and only place where we can go to “observe” Yah’s Covenant, as it is the only place where its codicils are recorded.

The means to become a “*zera'* – offspring” of the “*beryth* – family-oriented covenant relationship,” and thereby “*dowr* – live throughout time in God’s dwelling place” is breathtakingly simple: “*shamar* – actually and consistently, carefully and diligently observe and examine every detail” associated with Yahowah’s Covenant as it is presented in His *Towrah*. We should do this, as should our fathers and our children, no matter where or when we live or with whom we are related.

And although “*shamar* – observe” serves as the operative verb with respect to our participation in the Covenant, *shamar* is among the least understood words in the Towrah. It is almost always translated “keep” in English bibles even though etymologically *shamar* is based entirely upon the notions of “using our sense of sight to be watchful, carefully examining and scrutinizing that which can be seen,” of “being focused and visually alert by keeping one’s eyes open,” and of “viewing things from the proper perspective so as to be aware of what is occurring.”

The linguistic inference is that those who “carefully observe and diligently examine everything within their purview will come to understand what they witness,” and that “through this understanding, they will protect that which they value and those they love.” *Shamar* conveys the idea that “people should keep their eyes open, and that they should be focused, alert, aware, and perceptive.”

Therefore, *shamar* is being used to encourage us to “observe” the terms and conditions of the

Covenant by using our eyes to read, indeed to focus upon, what is written in the Towrah. God wants us to “examine and consider” the requirements and benefits of the Covenant as they are delineated in His Towrah so that we are secure, protecting those we love.

*Shamar* is related to *shama*’, “whereby we are encouraged to use our sense of hearing to listen” to what God has to say to us. Collectively then, the senses of sight and hearing enable us to know Yahowah and understand His Towrah by “*qara*’ – reading and reciting” it. But there is more: by observing Yahowah’s Guidance, by listening to God’s Instructions regarding His Covenant, by coming to know and understand His Teaching regarding our salvation, we come to trust Yahowah and rely upon His Directions. Trust and reliance then become the Way, the means to our adoption and to our salvation.

You may have noticed that this proclamation from Yahowah regarding what He expects from those who want to participate in His Covenant was direct and unequivocal. Simply stated: *shamar beryth* is a requirement. If we want to have a relationship with God, we accomplish this by carefully and continually observing His written Towrah testimony.

What many miss, especially those who are religious, is that this statement from God is utterly devastating to Judaism. Jews are told that the Torah should not be considered by anyone other than a rabbi, ostensibly because they won’t understand it. And even then, with rabbis it never takes precedence over the Talmud.

The same is true, albeit for different reasons, for those lost to Pauline Doctrine. Paul’s thesis, better known as the “Gospel of Grace,” is based upon the notion that ‘Abraham was saved, not because He closely examined and carefully considered what Yahowah had personally revealed to him regarding His Covenant, but instead because he “had faith.” According to Paul, ‘Abraham’s salvation was a product of believing and not knowing.

Being observant, especially during personal experiences like this one, leads to *yada*’ | becoming aware, to *byn* | understanding, and to ‘*aman* | trusting, and to relying, while “belief” is the product of not knowing and of not understanding. In fact, all too often it leads to faith in things which are neither reliable nor true.

Those who know, trust. Those who do not know, believe. Moreover, the means to “knowing” is “*shamar* – careful observation.”

God did not ask ‘Abraham to believe Him, nor did He suggest that we should believe Him. He asked ‘Abraham and those who would benefit from the Covenant to carefully consider what He had to say. And to accomplish this, we must read the Towrah, closely examining its every word.

Let’s continue to do what Yahowah requested of us and see where it leads...

**“This specific (*zo ’th* – this one and only, singular entity being discussed as the (demonstrative singular feminine pronoun from *zeh* – lamb and sheep)) **Familial Covenant of Mine** (*beryth* ‘any – My Family Agreement, My Household Accord, and My Home (singular feminine construct)), **which beneficially marks the way to the relationship** (‘*asher* – which to show the way to this fortunate and joyful place that is found by walking the correct way, thereby revealing the steps which lead to life), **you should continuously observe, closely and literally examining, while carefully considering** (*shamar* – focus upon, look at and pay attention to, be aware of, learn about and remember, care about and cling to, retain for protection, diligently contemplate and in great detail evaluate (qal stem imperfect conjugation – literally and genuinely, consistently and**

continually, with actual and ongoing implications regarding the relationship)).

**You should strive to be discerning and make an intelligent connection to understand Me** (*bayn* ‘*any* – to pay attention while being observant and diligently join things together in a rational and prudent way which lead to perceiving, properly regarding, and comprehending Me). **This is for you to be perceptive and prudent regarding the association** (*wa bayn* ‘*atah* – for you to make the appropriate connection after exercising good judgment).

**To form a thoughtful relationship and make a comprehensible connection between** (*wa byn* – to consider the instruction provided and make an intelligent association with) **your offspring** (*zera* ‘*atah* – your descendants and children, your seed and posterity, those you conceive who are harvested) **following you** (*‘achar* ‘*atah* – after you), **you should circumcise** (*muwl* – you should cut off and remove the foreskin, warding off a deadly and debilitating curse by way of this oath, changing priorities while making a binding promise to undergo the benefits of circumcision (scribed with the niphthal stem denoting the genuineness of this relationship while stressing the benefit accrued to the parent, while the infinitive absolute intensifies the importance of the act, and in the imperfect conjugation, reveals that this instruction on circumcision will endure uninterrupted throughout time with ongoing benefits)), **accordingly** (*la* – to facilitate their approach), **your every male to help them remember their status** (*‘atem kol zakar* – every son of yours, every man and every boy to remember, memorialize, and honor the status and renown associated and implied with this celebration of the relationship).” (*Bare’syth* / In the Beginning / Genesis 17:10)

Not only was this request clear and unequivocal, not only does this affirm Yah’s previous appeal, not only does it reinforce the uniqueness of the one and only Covenant, it encourages us to be observant and to think so that we come to understand precisely what God is asking of us.

But also, this condition is additive, providing us with the fifth and final Covenant requirement: circumcise our sons so that we and they remember the Covenant. So, I ask you, when Paul screamed out against circumcision in his letter to the Galatians, demeaning it while promoting a second and different covenant, why did anyone believe him? Why have billions of souls been beguiled into trusting him?

Sometimes, if we pause long enough, if we dig deep enough, if we are especially observant and thoughtful, we learn something we would otherwise miss. Such is the case here. You see, “*muwl* – circumcise” was scribed using the niphthal stem. The niphthal, as the passive form of the qal, conveys three ideas. First, it is a relational stem, affirming the fact that circumcision is germane to our relationship with God. Second, it requires a literal interpretation of the testimony, meaning that these circumcisions are actual and not merely symbolic. And third, the niphthal, as the reflexive counterpart of the qal, indicates that the subject, which is you and me as parents, receive the benefit of the verb’s action, which is circumcision.

Collectively then, when the niphthal stem is used in conjunction with *muwl* in this context, we discover that by circumcising our sons, we as parents benefit from the act. It is as if we, ourselves, are being circumcised. And that is a very good thing, because circumcision is the sign of the Covenant. It affirms our acceptance, confirming our willingness to be cut into this relationship with God. We are in essence saying: we will raise our children to become Your children.

Along these lines, it is intriguing to note that, while the primary definition of *muwl* is “to circumcise,” the secondary connotation speaks to its purpose: “to ward off and incapacitate a curse with an oath.” Similarly, while the primary connotation of *zakar* is “male,” it is equally appropriate

to consider it as a “memory aid – something that not only makes something known, but also helps us remember it.”

Also be aware that through the repeated use of ‘*achar ‘atah*, we are being encouraged to follow ‘Abraham’s example. And the only way to do so is to listen to Yahowah’s instructions, come to understand them, accept them, and then act upon them – just as ‘Abraham has done.

Bringing this all together, God has systematically presented the guidance and instructions necessary for us to know Him, for us to relate to Him, and for us to live with Him. After asking us to walk away from all forms of “*babel* – confusion,” including family traditions, national allegiances, and religious corruption, Yahowah encouraged us to trust and rely upon Him instead. He then asked us to walk to Him and become perfect in the process, with His Towrah providing the directions.

God’s fourth and fifth requests of us, indeed His requirements with respect to our participation in His Covenant, were presented in the previous two statements. He wants us to continuously and genuinely observe His Covenant, focusing upon and diligently considering the conditions and benefits of this relationship. He knows that when we come to appreciate what He is offering that we will respond appropriately. And so now to demonstrate our understanding, to help us remember everything He has shared with us, God is asking us to circumcise our sons. Consider it a signature, a vow to accept and embrace this extraordinary gift – the opportunity to engage in a personal relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Written in the infinitive absolute, and followed by “*kol* – all,” there is no room for negotiation or interpretation regarding circumcision. We can either accept Yahowah’s terms or reject them – but we cannot alter them to suit us as Paul and Akiba have done.

Since Yahowah has established only one prerequisite and four requirements for participation in His Covenant, that we walk away from Babylon (away from mankind’s political, religious, economic, and military schemes), that we come to trust and rely on Him (which necessitates us coming to know Him and understand what He is offering), that we walk to Him (along the specific path which He prepared in the Torah) so as to become perfect, that we carefully and continually observe His Covenant, and that men be circumcised, let’s consider why He has asked this specific thing of us.

**“And (*wa*) you all shall make a declaration by cutting off and separating (*malal* – you shall truthfully proclaim and speak about being circumcised, announcing the truth regarding the principle of circumcision as a sign, as a subtle means of communicating what it means to be set apart (the niphath stem is used to convey the voice of genuine relationships where the subject, which is “you” as a parent, receives the benefit of the verb, which is circumcision, in the perfect conjugation designating that this instruction and resulting action should be accomplished and considered whole and complete, and in the consecutive associating it with our *basar* – flesh)) **your foreskin’s** (*‘arlah* – the fold of skin covering the conical tip of the masculine genitalia; akin to *‘aram* and *‘arak* – the tendency of people to gather together before the cunning and crafty, to be drawn in by the clever counsel and calculating tendencies which are conceived, arranged, set forth, ordained, and esteemed to appear comparable) **association with** (*‘eth*) **one’s animalistic instincts and propensity to preach** (*basar* – the physical body and animal nature but also separating from mankind’s propensity to proclaim and publish what the people yearn to hear).**

**And (*wa*) this will exist** (*hayah* – this is and will be (scribed in the qal perfect, signifying the

relationship is genuine and that the act is only performed once and is considered complete)) **as (la) the sign to remember** (*'owth* – the example to visually illustrate and explain, the symbol and standard, the pledge and attestation of the miraculous nature (singular, as in the one and only sign, construct form, linking the sign to)) **the Family-Oriented Covenant Relationship** (*beryth* – mutually binding familial agreement, household promise, relational accord, marriage vow based upon home and family (feminine singular, scribed in the construct form, eternally associating the *beryth* – covenant with *'owth* – the sign of *muwl* – circumcision)) **between Me, for the purpose of making a connection** (*byn* – in concert with coming to know and understand Me as a result of being perceptive, prudently considering the insights which are discernible regarding Me) **and between you, promoting understanding** (*wa byn* – to cause you to be aware and to more readily comprehend the association).” (*Bare'syth* / In the Beginning / Genesis 17:11)

It is interesting to be sure. Yahowah did not explain the reason that He wanted us 1) to disassociate from our country and its customs and culture, 2) to trust and rely upon Him, 3) to walk to Him and become perfected, or 4) to closely examine and carefully consider these conditions. He must have considered, as I do, that the reasons were either self-evident or that we were smart enough to figure them out for ourselves, especially considering the context in which they were presented. However, with circumcision, God obviously wanted us to appreciate the merits associated with this sign. So let's explore them.

Yahowah wants us to “*muwl* – be cut off and separated from” our “*eth* – association with” our “*basar* – physical bodies and animal nature, as well as our tendency to get preachy.” To be associated with God, we are to disassociate ourselves from man and man's message. Therefore, not only is the “*'owth* – sign” of the “*beryth* – covenant” a reminder that we must walk away from Babylon before we can walk to God, it signifies that to be adopted into our Heavenly Father's family, symbolically we are evolving from physical beings, with mortal, imperfect, substantially limited, and decaying bodies, to spiritual beings who are elevated, empowered, and enriched by this relationship.

It is interesting to note that, while circumcision is therefore a symbolic sign, the act itself is literal and physical. Further, *hayah*, which was scribed in the third person masculine singular, and was rendered “this will exist” in the passage, was more literally scribed “he shall exist” as the sign. Therefore, when we accept the terms of Yahowah's Covenant, we, ourselves, become symbolic of the relationship.

Furthermore, as those who read *An Introduction to God* will discover in the “*Dabar* – Word” volume, Hebrew verbs do not designate the past, present, or future, as is the case with English tenses, but instead they reflect truths which remain unchanged throughout time. Such is the case with *hayah*, meaning “was, is, and will be.” Therefore, we were, we are, and we will always be associated with the Covenant.

“*Owth* – sign to remember” and “*uwth* – to consent and agree” are written identically in Hebrew. As such, circumcision, this separation from our physical and animal nature, is a “visual means to illustrate and explain the miraculous nature” of the Covenant. It is our way of showing our “desire,” our “consent and agreement,” to raise our children in accord with the conditions Yahowah has outlined.

Circumcision is a parent's pledge to honor God's family-oriented agreement. It is our signature on their adoption papers – telling our Heavenly Father that we want our children to become His children, that we will dedicate ourselves to assuring that this occurs. This is

accomplished by reciting the Towrah to our children, consistently exposing them to its Covenant, sharing the prerequisite, requirements, and benefits of the Family.

**“Therefore, with** (*wa* – it follows that with) **a son** (*ben* – a male child) **of eight** (*shamonah* – from *shamen*, meaning olive oil, which is symbolic of the Spirit, of light, of being anointed, and of being rooted in the land) **days** (*yowmym*), **you shall circumcise** (*muwl* – you shall cut off and separate his foreskin (scribed using the niphal stem denoting a relationship which is genuine whereby the parents benefit from doing as God has requested, and in the imperfect conjugation which tells us that this must continue to occur over time because it is designed to produce ongoing results)) **with regard to your** (*la*) **every** (*kol*) **male to remember** (*zakar* – masculine individual; from *zakar*: to commit to memory, to remind, and to remember) **throughout** (*la*) **your dwelling places and generations** (*dowr* – your protected households and extended families, elevating and extending your lives), **those naturally born** (*yalyd* – those naturalized as a member of the extended family through natural childbirth) **in the home** (*beyth* – into the household and family (singular absolute)), **and also** (*wa*) **those wanting to be** (*kasap* – those desiring, yearning, and passionately longing to be) **acquired and included** (*mignah* – purchased and obtained; from *qanah* – to be redeemed (speaking of adoption)), **of** (*min*) **every** (*kol*) **son** (*ben* – male child) **of foreign lands** (*nekar* – of places where they were not properly valued and appreciated, and yet who are nonetheless observant) **who relationally** (*‘asher* – by way of making a connection) **are not** (*lo’*) **from** (*min*) **your seed** (*zera’*).” (*Bare’syth* / In the Beginning / Genesis 17:12)

Eight denotes eternity, which is why the symbol for infinity (as a line which never ends – ∞) and the numeral (8) itself are so similar. In the Towrah this association is celebrated on the eighth day of the *Miqra’* of *Sukah* – Shelters, which is symbolic of us camping out with God throughout eternity. Additionally, the Hebrew word for “eight,” *shamonah*, is based upon *sheman*, meaning “olive oil.” This oil is used as a metaphor for the Set-Apart Spirit because She enlightens us, nurtures us, anoints us, heals us, and cleanses us. The olive tree is not only native to Yisra’el, it is one of the world’s longest lived organisms.

We ought to be reassured by the realization that we were designed by the Author of this instruction to receive the benefits of circumcision. The eighth day is the perfect time to perform this minor procedure, because bleeding is minimized, as is infection, because human blood coagulates most effectively on the eighth day of our lives.

You may have noticed that this is the second time Yahowah has used “*zakar* – male” in association with circumcision. Since the instruction is directed toward, albeit not exclusive to, young boys, literally “*ben* – sons,” the reason for using *zakar* becomes obvious when we consider the word’s etymology. *Zakar* means: “to establish in one’s memory, to remind, to remember, to reflect, to recall, and to memorialize something important, making it known.” It also conveys the idea that “truth can cleanse and purify, causing us to shine brightly and brilliantly.” When we are enveloped in the Set-Apart Spirit’s Garment of Light, we are cleansed and purified by Her so that we can radiate Yahowah’s pure and brilliant light. Moreover, each time a parent bathes their son, they will be reminded of their commitment to raise him such that he is prepared to follow us into the Covenant.

Especially relevant, there are two types of individuals to be circumcised, two distinct different groups of people who can become part of Yahowah’s Covenant Family. ‘Abraham’s direct descendants through Yitschaq and Ya’aqob (who became Yisra’el) can be “*yalyd* – naturally born” into Yahowah’s “*beyth* – family.” But since Yahowah has routinely promised that the benefits of

the Covenant would also be available to “*gowym* – people from different races and places,” He has provided a provision for adoption. That is what “*kasap miqnah* – those deeply desiring to be acquired and included” from “*nekar* – foreign lands” represents. These are adopted *gowym*. And in this regard, as we progress, we will discover that the root of *nekar*, *nakar*, speaks of “an observant individual.”

Unfortunately, most English bibles base their translations of this verse on the Masoretic Text, where the *ksp* root of “*kasap* – longing” is pointed “*kesep* – money.” As *kasap miqnah*, the clause speaks of those who “really want to be acquired and included.” But as *kesep*, the order of things has to be reversed, and *miqnah kesep* becomes a string of nouns: “acquisition money,” which is then corrupted to read “purchased with money.”

And yet while the “*kasap miqnah* – wanting to be acquired and included” translation is more consistent with the Covenant and more informative, the *miqnah kesep* vocalization does address adoption, and thus provides us with two distinct ways to be included in the Covenant: natural childbirth as a literal descendant of ‘Abraham, and by choice through adoption. And thus both renderings are acceptable when viewed from this perspective.

By chance, should you have an aversion to adoptive parents “purchasing” a child when they value that child more than his or her natural parents, be aware that this is how Yahowah adopts us. He paid the price for us to live with Him as His children. This is what Passover, UnYeasted Bread, and Firstborn Children represent.

Since both the “*kasap* – wanting and therefore choosing” to be included (which speaks of the exercise of freewill), and “*kesep*” acquired with “money” (which speaks of adoption) provide valuable insights into the Covenant, I was curious as to how the Masoretic vocalization managed to rob us of these perspectives. How is it that their diacritical markings have come to be considered authorized, even inspired, while other equally valid options have been subsequently ignored? So I checked to see if the basis of Masorete could be found in the Prophets. And sure enough, we find it in *Yachezq’el* 20:37.

But before we begin, you may be interested to know that this prophet’s name, which has been crudely transliterated “Ezekiel,” actually means: “God Grows,” the very thing the Covenant enables. His prophetic presentation begins: “**the Word (*dabar*) of Yahowah to Yachezq’el.**”

Among these words we find God using *masoret* in a most interesting place:

“**And (*wa*) I will extend myself and lead you by way of a specific path** (*‘abar ‘eth ‘atah* – I will guide you by way of Passover to remove your transgressions and I will carry you away, I will enable you to pass over and travel through) **under the auspices of** (*tachath* – through an orderly and logical, nonrandom nor chaotic arrangement of events over time, pertaining to, on behalf of, relating to, and for the sake of) **the scepter of the family** (*ha shebet* – people who are closely related and who are associated with one another by way of the *shebet* –staff and branch (symbolic of *Dowd’s* | David’s authority)).

**And I will arrive and bring** (*bow’* – I will return and gather) **you** (*‘eth ‘atah* – through this association and accompaniment) **into** (*ba*) **agreement with** (*masoret* – compliance with the agreement associated with the binding oath) **of the Family-Oriented Covenant Relationship** (*ha beryth* – the mutual agreement, pledge, binding oath, and promise of the familial association (feminine singular absolute)).” (*Yachezq’el* / God Grows / Ezekiel 20:37)

From Yahowah’s perspective, this is exceedingly positive. He is going to assure that His

children are “in agreement with” the conditions of the Covenant upon His return with Dowd | David. By doing so, Yisra’el and Yahuwdym will receive the benefits God is obliged to provide. This is a bond between Yahowah and His people.

Being brought into compliance with something exceedingly favorable is beneficial. However, religious Jews have sought to bind their adherents to them, fettering their kin such that they remain in compliance with the stifling obligations of their religious edicts.

This is perhaps why rabbis have elected to associate their Masorete title with *‘asar*, which means “to tie, to bind, and to harness, to obligate and to imprison.” This is particularly telling in that the English word “religion” is from the Latin, *relegare*, meaning: “to bind, to tie, and to fasten.” The related *religio* is defined as “the obligatory bonds between man and the gods.” Used in this way, *masoret* is a really bad idea. Rabbis, calling themselves “*Masoret*,” have misappropriated and misconstrued Yahowah’s promise, binding Jews to their rules and to their religion.

This passage from *Yachezq’el* / Ezekiel, and the one before and after it from *Bare’syth* / Genesis, provide us with a window into the translation process which we would be remiss for not considering. With *kasap* versus *kesep*, each vocalization and definition was consistent and insightful, so we were challenged to consider both. But with *masoret*, the notion of “being in agreement with” Yahowah’s promises fits, while being “bound or fettered” does not. The positive and negative options then provide a referendum between man’s approach and God’s, with one constraining and the other liberating.

Looking even closer, there may be a most interesting clue should *masoret*, from which Masoretic is derived, be a compound of *ma* – to question and *‘asar* – to bind. It suggests that we should ponder the things which tie us to Yahowah while questioning anything which restrains our approach. *Ma-‘asar* | Masorete would be to “question the Masoretic.”

Since we have been regaled with the amazing benefits of being brought into compliance with the Covenant, to understand the consequence of being bound to the Masoretic interpretation of things, let’s consider Yahowah’s next statement in *Yachezq’el*.

**“Then (*wa*) I will completely purge, totally eliminating (*barar* – I will remove entirely from existence (scribed in the perfect conjugation, telling us that this purging and removal will be total and complete at this moment in time, consecutive, demonstrating volition, and in the first person singular, ascribing this act to God)) from you (*min ‘atah*) those who choose to rebel audaciously (*ha maradyim* – those who consciously resist and boldly oppose, who are combative, aggressively attacking within the venues of religion and politics) and those who are defiant and indignant (*wa ha pasa’* – and those who transgress, rising up in clear opposition, holding a grudge) against Me (*ba ‘any*) from whatever land they are living (*min ‘erets magowr hem* – out of any culture no matter their rights or privileges).**

**I will proceed against them (*yatsa’ ‘eth hem* – I will come out against them and cause them to go away) so that (*wa*) to the land of Yisra’el (*‘el ‘adamah Yisra’el*) they do not come (*lo’ bow’*). Then you will know (*wa yada’* – you will appreciate and acknowledge) that I am (*ky ‘any*) **Yahowah** (יהוה – the pronunciation of *YaHoWaH* as guided by His *towrah* – teaching regarding His *hayah* – existence).” (*Yachezq’el* / God Grows / Ezekiel 20:38)**

These anti-religious lessons understood, as we return to God’s Covenant testimony, it is important that we consistently approach Yahowah’s Word from the proper perspective and with

an open mind. In this light we know that, when a word is repeated in Hebrew, it serves to substantially emphasize its importance. Such is the case with “*muwl muwl*” in this next passage.

Also, while its primary definition is “to circumcise, to cut off, to separate, and to remove the foreskin,” you may be surprised by *muwl*’s secondary and tertiary definitions which are listed below. Additionally, because of what we learned about *kasap* versus *kesep*, the following translation includes both renderings, one following the other.

**“He (*huw*’ – third person masculine singular pronoun, addressing fathers) **should absolutely circumcise him, definitely cutting off the foreskin (*muwl muwl* – he can ward off a deadly and debilitating curse by way of this oath, promising to cease what he is currently doing by changing his priorities while making a binding promise to undergo circumcision (scribed with the niphil stem denoting the genuineness of this relationship while stressing the benefit accrued to the parent, in the infinitive absolute which intensifies the importance of the act, and in the imperfect conjugation, telling us that this instruction on circumcision will endure uninterrupted throughout time with ongoing benefits)) of the naturally born (*yalyd* – naturalized as a member of an extended family through natural childbirth) in your home (*beyth* – into your household and your family) and also (*wa*) those desiring to be (*kasap* – those wanting, strongly yearning, and passionately longing to be) included (*miqnah* – acquired, purchased, redeemed, and obtained) as well as those who are acquired (*miqnah* – purchased through adoption and included) with your money (*kecep* – your precious metals; born out of a deep longing and love for adoption).****

**This shall be (*hayah* – this was, is, and will be, existing as (qal stem denotes a genuine relationship between the subject and the action of the verb which is existence, in the perfect conjugation revealing an act that is complete, lacking nothing, when accomplished, in the singular conveying that there are no other options or contingencies, and in the consecutive form, associating our existence with the *beryth* – family-oriented covenant relationship and its sign, *muwl* – circumcision)) My Family-Oriented Covenant Relationship (*beryth-y* – My mutually binding familial agreement and relational accord), in (*ba*) the flesh (*basar* – physical realm with humanity), serving as a means to approach toward (*la* – to the goal of) an everlasting and eternal (‘*owlam* – forever existing and never-ending) Family-Oriented Covenant Relationship (*beryth* – mutually binding agreement and promise, relational accord and marriage vow based upon home and family (feminine singular)).” (*Bare’syth* / In the Beginning / Genesis 17:13)**

Based upon this declaration from God, a Talmud or, worse, a “New Covenant” where circumcision is not required, is a nonstarter. Do not believe anyone who tells you otherwise, and that includes Paul. Also, if someone condemns “the flesh,” calling it evil, as Paul was wont to do, please note that Yahowah’s Covenant was cut with us in the flesh.

As we consider Yahowah’s closing statement of circumcision, I would like to address some of the excuses which are commonly advanced in hostility to it. Some are opposed because they believe God would not keep a poor old guy out of heaven just because he wasn’t circumcised. Others suggest that unless it is done by a priest, and on the eighth day, and in a certain precise way, it doesn’t qualify. And many simply side with Paul, and believe that God authorized the self-proclaimed apostle to contradict Him.

The “poor old guy” hypothetical isn’t valid for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it presupposes that there are a material number of elderly individuals out there who have walked away from their religious and political affiliations late in life and who are now trying to observe the Towrah and walk to God along the path He has delineated, who now cannot afford

circumcision. The list of such individuals is so short as to be nonexistent. This argument is only postured by those who want to appear more inclusive and as if they are more thoughtful than God. Further, age is irrelevant. 'Abraham was one hundred when he was circumcised. Therefore, Yahowah has already provided a provision for adults being circumcised in this narrative.

He never tells us that the foreskin must be cut by a "Levite," much less a priest or a rabbi. He does not say how much needs to be removed, or how the procedure is to be done. Therefore, this argument is moot as well.

God's instructions have been all-encompassing and perfectly clear – especially on circumcision. He asked parents to circumcise their sons on the eighth day. The request is easy, safe, and inexpensive when done shortly after birth. It is man who has messed this up. Very few parents read the Towrah, much less consider its implications. Fewer still observe God's instructions or share what He had to say with their children. As a consequence, circumcision is one of many things which separate us from the profane – ordinary traditions of man.

As for Paul being authorized by God to contradict Him on a subject as essential and the Covenant's sign, circumcision, you would have to be a fool to believe this occurred. Yahowah said one thing, and Paul said the opposite. One of them was not telling the truth. Guess who?

Beyond this, if God changed His mind, if He decided to do something new which was counter to His previous promises, He would then cease to be trustworthy or reliable. The notion of placing one's faith in a god prone to make exceptions is a fool's folly.

God is serious about circumcision. So we should be as well. This next statement is as enlightening as it is unequivocal. And especially relevant is *'arel*, a word which when fully amplified explains the nature of those who are uncircumcised.

**“Therefore (wa), the uncircumcised (‘arel – the stubborn, unresponsive, untrusting, and self-reliant, those unwilling to listen and those who are unobservant, those who are not separated and who are unwilling to be set apart) male (zakar – man who fails to remember to do this) who relationally (‘asher – by association does not know the proper way or the benefits of the relationship and) is not circumcised (lo’ muwl – willing to change his direction and priorities and make this binding promise to ward off the curse (nifal imperfect – men who continually remain uncircumcised as a result of their inaction suffer the consequence)) with regard to (‘eth) the flesh (basar – physical, human, and animal nature in addition to being separated from those who preach and publish what mankind wants to hear in association with) of his foreskin (‘arlah – symbolic of ‘aram and ‘arak – man’s propensity to be drawn together by crafty counsel, by cunning tendencies, and that which is conceived, arranged, set forth, ordained, and esteemed to appear comparable), that soul (ha nepesh ha hy’ – speaking of what makes each individual unique, alive, aware, and conscious) shall be cut off, be excluded, and banished (karat – it shall be severed and cut down, it shall be uprooted and die, perishing and destroyed, ceasing to exist (nifal perfect – they will not only have caused their soul’s banishment, they will suffer the effect of their exclusion as a result of this singular failure during their brief lives)) from (min) her / Her (hy’ – addressing the nepesh which is now severed from the Ruwach Qodesh’s Covenant) family (‘am – people who are kin, related biologically or through a common language or experience).**

**By way of association (‘eth – therefore as a result), they violated and broke by creating two separate variations, thereby dissociating themselves from (parar – they nullified the agreement and injured themselves by revoking the Covenant’s promises, tearing asunder and**

thwarting the relationship's benefits, splitting away and harming themselves in the process by severing the agreement through the process of tearing into two parts (hifil perfect – their act of creating a new covenant led to their own demise such that neither they, nor their new covenant will endure)) **My Family-Oriented Covenant Relationship** (*beryth-y* – My mutually binding agreement and promise, My relational accord and vow based upon home and family (feminine singular, scribed in the construct form, connecting and associating the *beryth* – covenant with God's *'am* – family; written with the first person singular suffix: My – reminding us that this specific and unique Covenant is God's))." (*Bare'syth* / In the Beginning / Genesis 17:14)

There are many questions which are answered by this passage, so let's pause here and consider them one at a time. First, *karat*, like so many Hebrew terms, has a dark and light side. The word's divergent implications influence us differently depending upon the choices we make. On the bright side, *karat* was used by Yahowah to tell us that He has "*karat* – cut" a "*beryth* – agreeable deal" with us—one which separates those who accept it from those who do not.

But as for those who ignore Yahowah's Covenant, who reject it, or try to change it, they will endure the cutting and divisive side of *karat*. They shall be "cut off" from Yahowah's Family. They will be "excluded" from His Covenant. And they will be "banished" from His Home. Those who choose not to sign their name on Yahowah's Covenant by way of circumcision, those who are unwilling to "*muwl* – change their direction and priorities" will be "*karat* – uprooted" from the land. They will "*karat* – die" and their souls will "perish, ceasing to exist."

Second, while "*muwl* – circumcision" is a physical act in the flesh, our "*nepesh* – souls" are everything but physical. The *nepesh* represents our "consciousness." While it is an essential part of our nature, as all animals have a "*nepesh* – soul, a unique personality, and an awareness of their environment," it has no physical properties. A soul has no mass and it is not matter. And yet, by failing to be circumcised, our soul dies, because it is expressly excluded from Yahowah's Covenant Family. Therefore, the choices we make in our mortal, material bodies influence whether or not we are elevated to a spiritual status.

Third, circumcision is not the means to salvation. But it is a barrier to salvation. While most of those who are circumcised will not be adopted into God's family, none of those who have not been circumcised will be admitted.

Fourth, we either agree to God's terms or we nullify the opportunity He has given us to survive our mortality and to live with Him. There is no hint of leniency here, no sense of compromise, no opportunity for a future revision to alter this condition. We either accept it or not. No circumcision, no Covenant. No Covenant, no relationship with God. No relationship with God, no salvation. And therein is why such souls die.

God is not about to compromise. He not only isn't going to change the terms of His agreement, He cannot change them without becoming unreliable. There is a singular path to life, and we either walk to God along it without wavering, or it is goodbye and good riddance. There is no accommodation for individual approaches to salvation, or for the collective appeal of Christianity, Judaism, or Islam.

The implication here is something no Christian or Muslim seems willing or able to appreciate. Most believe it matters not if their beliefs are in compliance with God's instructions, because He knows their heart. Contradictions become irrelevant. To them, God is God no matter what you call Him. To them, observing the Sabbath is not relevant, and Friday prayers and Sunday worship are

perfectly acceptable. Jihad and Grace are both embraced by the faithful, and many paths are thought to lead to Heaven. Sure Christmas and Easter are pagan, but since that is not what they mean to the celebrant, they believe that their god will be understanding. For them mercy invokes a level of capriciousness which they do not see as either unjust or untrustworthy. Their god would not condemn them for getting some of this wrong.

And yet, all of these musings are inconsistent with the God who inspired these words. With Yahowah, you accept the Covenant on His terms or you will be considered to have rejected it. Not only are we in no position to negotiate with God over something integral into His very nature, we have everything to gain if we agree to His terms, and He loses nothing if we don't.

Fifth, the "*nepesh* – souls" of those who do not accept God's instructions "*karat* – die, they perish and cease to exist." Throughout the Towrah and Prophets this is the prevailing outcome for human souls. At the end of a person's mortal life, they will cease to exist. Their souls will simply perish. But this is not a penalty or a Divine punishment. In fact, Yahowah has little to do with this eventuality. It is by "*karat* – disassociating from" God that this fate occurs naturally. You see, eternal life with God requires us to associate with Him in the specific manner He has delineated. If we do not accept His terms, if we don't avail ourselves of the path He has provided, then our souls, disconnected from the source of life, will perish, which means that individual consciousnesses will simply cease to exist.

While eternal separation from God is a penalty, having one's soul perish is not. Each individual is given the gift of life and freewill. Everyone can do with them as they please. If a person chooses to avail themselves of Yahowah's Covenant, to walk away from Babylon and to walk to Him along the path He has provided, God has promised to give him or her the gift of eternal life, to mercifully forgive their sins, to empower such an individual, to enrich them, and to adopt that soul into His family so that he or she can spend an eternity in His presence.

But if we choose instead to ignore God's provision, to rely on a different scheme, to alter the deal He has cut with us, or simply reject it, we will be ignored by God and remain unaltered by His Covenant promises. It is ashes to ashes and dust to dust. Such souls do not know God and God does not know them. As a result, death will be the end of life.

The sixth lesson brings us back to Paul. Circumcision is the fulcrum upon which those who rely on Yahowah's Word move in a different direction than those who believe the "Thirteenth Apostle." In Acts, the moment we are introduced to Paul, we learn that he advised against circumcision. As a result, he was called to Yaruwshalaim to explain his departure from Yahowah's Covenant instructions by those Yahowsha' had selected and taught. When they did not concur with his contrarian approach, Paul wrote to the Galatians to demean Yahowsha's Disciples, especially *Shim'own* | Peter (One who Listens), *Yahowchanan* | John (Yahowah is Merciful), and *Ya'aqob* | Jacob (Yahowsha's brother, who was renamed "James" to flatter an English king). In Galatians, Paul ruthlessly attacks circumcision, and demeans Yahowah's Covenant, calling them: "of the flesh," "a cruel taskmaster," "enslaving," and a "curse," "incapable of saving anyone."

Therefore, Christians have a choice. They can trust Yahowah, or they can believe Paul. Their claims are diametrically opposed and irreconcilable.

It is also instructive to know that we cannot blame this conflict between Yahowah and Sha'uwl (Paul's actual name, based upon She'owl and meaning "to question") on scribal error. While not a word from *Bare'syth* | Genesis 8:21 to 17:11 can be found among the Qumran scrolls, these

passages on circumcision are not only extant, they are unchanged. There is not a single discrepancy between the Dead Sea Scrolls, dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, and the Masoretic Text from Bare'syth 17:12 through the end of the chapter. And on the other end, we have a complete copy of Paul's letter to the Galatians dating to the late 1<sup>st</sup> century CE.

Moreover, the preposterous notion that Paul didn't write Galatians, a book he claims to have written, a book which is universally attributed to him, a book which provides the most sweeping panorama of his life, and a book which serves as the most direct rebuttal to the Disciples regarding his animosity toward circumcision, the Covenant, and the Torah, does not exonerate Paul. He is equally opposed to circumcision, the Covenant, and the Torah in Acts and in Romans.

And that means that the conflict between Yahowah and Paul cannot be resolved. If you side with Paul, you will invalidate the benefits of the Covenant. You will be excluded from God's family. And your soul will cease to exist. And that is why the choices we make in the flesh, while we retain our physical and animal nature, are so important.

Simply stated, as a sign of our desire to participate in Yahowah's Covenant, we are to be circumcised. The covering of the male genitalia responsible for consummating a marriage and producing children is to be "cut off and separated" – set apart. Our Heavenly Father's Covenant is about bearing children and building a family by way of a monogamous marriage relationship. Yahowah does not want anyone to miss this point.

So then immediately after discussing circumcision...

**“God (wa 'elohym) said to ('amar 'el – spoke as the Almighty to (qal imperfect – stating literally and mentioning continually)) ‘Abraham (‘Abraham – father who raises and lifts up those who stand up and reach up, father of the abundantly enriched, merciful father, or father of the multitudes who are confused and troublesome), ‘So as for you (wa 'atah 'eth – in addition and with regard to you), ‘Saray (Saray – Noble Woman, Wife with Status, Leader, and Official Offshoot or Branch), your wife ( 'ishah – female individual, woman, mother, and source of warmth and light), you shall not actually make a habit of calling (lo' qara' – you shall not continually invite or summon, nor literally read or recite, greet with or welcome (qal imperfect)) her by the name ('eth shem hy' – her with the personal and proper name), Saray (Saray – Noble Woman, Wife with Status, Leader, and Official Offshoot or Branch), but instead (ky – rather) Sarah (Sarah – to contend and strive, to engage and endure, to struggle and wrestle, to be empowered and persist, to exert oneself and persevere, and to be free, an upright leader with royal birth who is empowered by nobility and becomes an emancipator) shall be her name (shem hy' – she shall be known as).”**  
(Bare'syth / In the Beginning / Genesis 17:15)

Names are important to Yahowah. Most communicate something God wants us to understand. For example, Sarah, who serves as the mother of Yahuwdym and Yisra'el, was named “strive with, contend with, engage with and be empowered by, persist and persevere with,” even “be set free by” – each of which pertains to the Covenant. Her name forms the middle portion of *Yisra'el*, a compound term comprised of “yish – individuals” who “sarah – strive, contend, engage, and endure with, persist and persevere with,” and “be empowered and set free by” “'el – Almighty God.”

Speaking of the greater good that would come from Sarah, Yahowah said...

**“And (wa) I choose to kneel down and bless (barak – I want to lower, diminish, and humble Myself out of love to commend and provide favor, greeting and welcoming her contribution to**

reconciliation and to a better and enriching circumstance for humankind (scribed in the piel stem thereby affirming that this blessing will come into being through and on behalf of Sarah, in the perfect conjugation, speaking of the total completion of this fortuitous act, and in the consecutive mood, implying that this is Yahowah's desire, His choice)) **through her** ('*eth* – in association with her (speaking of Sarah)).

**And also** (*wa gam* – moreover as a concession and in addition to coordinate our relationships), **I will literally give** (*nathan* – I will actually grant, produce, and bestow for (qal perfect)) **you a son from her** (*min hy' la 'atah ben* – from her to you a son).” (*Bare'syth* / In the Beginning / Genesis 17:16)

The idea that God diminishes Himself, the notion that He would bow down before men, makes religious people very uncomfortable, as they are compelled to invert His plan. And yet having men and women bow down to God is the antithesis of what God wants.

Man worshiping God not only diminishes our Heavenly Father, it serves no purpose. Can you imagine being so insecure, so inadequate, so self-absorbed, that you would create an inferior being, say garden slugs for example, for the purpose of prostrating themselves as they slime up the ground under your feet while ritualistically and repetitively burping out how wonderful you are – all the while devouring much of what you have created. Thirty seconds of such mindless flattery in the midst of such ugliness would be more than enough to make a rational and moral individual so uncomfortable they would recognize that they had made a horrible mistake. They would walk away, saddened, shaken, and indeed diminished by having conceived such a foolish experiment.

But now imagine conceiving beings in your image, and then getting down on your knees, diminishing yourself for a brief time, to show them how much you would like to engage with them. And while on your knees before them, imagine revealing yourself to them, telling them all about you, so that they can come to know you, even enjoy a relationship with you. Imagine showing them the way to your home and promising to adopt them, to enrich and empower them. All you want in return is for some of them to choose to reciprocate your love so that you and they can grow together. That is the essence of the Towrah, of its Covenant Family, and of Yahowah.

Returning to God's statement, you may have noticed that while Yahowah is committing to bless Sarah, His initial blessing was not for Sarah, but was instead for us through Sarah. Giving 'Abraham a son through this woman was part of the process God would use to "*barak* – favor us."

Sarah even serves as a metaphor for the *Ruwach Qodesh*, our Spiritual Mother. Listen...

**“And** (*wa*) **I choose to kneel down and bless** (*barak* – I want to lower, diminish, and humble Myself out of love to commend and provide favor, greeting and welcoming her contribution to reconciliation and to a better and enriching circumstance for humankind (scribed in the piel stem thereby affirming that this blessing will come into being through and on behalf of Sarah, in the perfect conjugation, speaking of the total completion of this fortuitous act, and in the consecutive mood, implying that this is Yahowah's desire, His choice)) **through her** ('*eth hy'* – in association with her (speaking of Sarah)).

**And also** (*wa gam* – moreover as a concession and in addition to coordinate our relationships), **I will literally give** (*nathan* – I will actually grant, produce, and bestow for (qal perfect)) **you a son from her** (*min hy' la 'atah ben* – from her to you a son).

**I will bless her** (*barak hy'* – I will provide favor and reconciliation through her), **and she shall be** (*wa hayah* – she shall exist as) **a way to reach out to** (*la* – to move toward) **individuals**

**from different races and places** (*gowym* – people everywhere). **An empowered and authorized** (*melekym* – a royal) **family** (*'am* – kin who are related biologically and through language) **shall come to exist through her** (*hayah min hy* – they shall be because of her (scribed in the qal stem, imperfect conjugation, telling us that this relational plan will literally unfold over time and produce ongoing results)).” (*Bare'syth* / In the Beginning / Genesis 17:16)

By producing the first of thousands of children who would be born into God's family by way of His Covenant, by establishing the lineage which would lead to *Moseh* | Moses, the great liberator and Towrah scribe, to *Dowd* | David, the Messiah, Shepherd, King of Kings, and Son of God, and to *Yahowsha*, the Passover Lamb, *Yahowah* made it possible for “*gowym* – people everywhere” “*hayah* – to become” by adoption “*melekym* – empowered and authorized” members of our Heavenly Father's “*'am* – family.” As such, this serves as a succinct summary of God's “*beryth* – family-oriented covenant relationship.

At this point, we find absolute confirmation that the Covenant Relationship *Yahowah* was now enjoying with ‘Abraham and Sarah was a relaxed affair.

**“And then** (*wa*) **‘Abraham** (*'Abraham* – the Loving, Merciful, Enriching, and Forgiving Father) **fell** (*naphal* – dropped, having lost control) **on** (*'al*) **his face** (*paneh huw* – in His presence) **and** (*wa*) **he laughed** (*tsachaq* – he humorously expressed the irony he saw, and he playfully poked fun muttering under his breath (noting that *tsachaq* would be incorporated into *Yitschaq*'s name by a playful God)), **saying** (*'amar*) **to himself** (*ba leb huw* – within his heart), **‘What's the point or purpose of** (*ha la* – questioning the goal and process of) **a son** (*ben* – a child) **being born to** (*yalad*) **a hundred-year-old** (*me'ah shanah*)?”

**And what of** (*wa im* – and what about) **Sarah** (*Sarah* – to strive and contend with, to engage and endure with, and to be empowered by and persevere with)? **How is** (*ha*) **a ninety-year-old** (*tish'iym shanah*) **daughter** (*bath* – the female child or a mother) **going to conceive and bear a child** (*yalad* – going to give birth)?” (*Bare'syth* / In the Beginning / Genesis 17:17)

*Yahowah*, who incidentally is God, and thus the Creator of the universe and the Architect of life, made a prophetic promise and ‘Abraham doubled over and fell down in laughter, muttering to himself under his breath. That's funny.

Sure, a man calling his ninety-year-old wife a “*bath* – daughter” seems a bit awkward, but not after you consider that the root of *bath* is *banah*: “to build a home” with “*ben* – children.” Beyond this etymological insight into the purpose of the Covenant, consider the bigger, and more obvious, observation: ‘Abraham poked fun at God without any negative repercussions. In fact, *Yahowah* responded favorably to ‘Abraham's sense of humor. It is as if this is what God wanted in the first place: an honest reaction, a relaxed relationship, and some good fun.

*Yahowah* enjoyed it so much, He asked ‘Abraham to name his son, *Yitschaq*. It was chosen based upon ‘Abraham's “*tsachaq* – sense of humor expressed over the irony when he playfully poked fun” at the situation.

But that was not the end of it. After questioning God's sanity, even His ability, and after falling on his face and laughing at God's plan, the old guy started negotiating with God, as if he had a better idea...

**“Then** (*wa*) **‘Abraham** (*'Abraham* – Loving, Merciful, Enriching, and Forgiving Father) **said** (*'amar*) **to** (*'el*) **the Almighty** (*ha 'elohym*), **‘Why not** (*luw* – emphatically exclaiming, earnestly pleading for understanding, and hoping for something unlikely to happen, if only You'd consider

and why not the possibility of) **Yshma'el | Ishmael** (*Yshma'el* – God Heard Me) **living** (*chayah* – being restored and renewed, even growing) **near (la) your presence** (*paneḥ 'atah*)?” (*Bare'syth / In the Beginning / Genesis 17:18*)

Yshma'el had initially been Sarah's idea. It was common practice in the day, should a wealthy woman be barren, to provide her husband with an heir by encouraging him to use the womb of her slave as a surrogate. While it is not overtly stated, it is reasonable to assume based upon the narrative that she would have inherited Hagar as a result of her time with Pharaoh in Egypt. The Covenant Family would not be a gift of Pharaoh (meaning Great House). And its appeal through freewill and offer of emancipation and liberty would not be usurped through slavery.

The *Yshma'el | Ishmael* paradigm was actually worse than it may appear to the casual reader. The story actually speaks about 'Abram's transition from an ordinary man to 'Abraham, a child of the Covenant. And when we consider what transpired, we gain a more complete understanding as to why there was no chance, not one in trillions of billions, that the boy born of an Egyptian slave would be heir to what Yahowah intended.

During this disappointing episode, the man of few words had many, and they were all a bit twisted...

**“Accordingly, just as** (*ka-asher* – using a comparison to reveal the nature of the relationship) **he was about to enter** (*qarab la bow* – approach and present himself upon his arrival) **Mitsraym | Egypt** (*Mitsraym* – the Crucibles of the Besieged), **then** (*wa*) **he said to** (*'amar 'el*) **Saray | Sarai** (*Saray* – Princess), **his wife** (*'ishah huw* – his woman), **‘Pay attention** (*hineh*), **please** (*na' – I beg*), **I am actually aware** (*yada' – I realize and know*) **that indeed** (*ky*) **you are seen as** (*mar'eh 'atah* – by all appearances, you are viewed as) **a beautiful woman** (*'ishah yaphah* – you are an attractive and lovely female, a delightful, enjoyable, and pleasurable, gorgeously adorned wife, sleek, slender, and pretty). (*Bare'syth / In the Beginning / Genesis 12:11*)

**So it shall come to pass** (*wa hayah*) **when** (*ky*) **the Mitsry | those who Oppress and Subjugate** (*ha Mitsry* – the Egyptians who besiege and forcefully impose their will on others) **see you** (*ra'ah 'eth 'atah* – look at you), **they will say** (*wa 'amar*), **“This is his woman** (*'ishah huw' zo'th* – this is his wife).” **Then they will kill me** (*wa harag 'eth 'any*) **because they want you to continue living** (*wa 'eth 'atah chayah* – their desire will be to let you live (piel imperfect jussive)). (*Bare'syth / Genesis 12:12*)

**Please choose to say** (*'amar na' – I beseech you, as a command or of your own freewill, state (qal imperative)*) **you are my sister** (*'achowth 'any 'atah* – also implying an intimate connection with a beloved bride) **for the expressed intent that** (*la-ma'an* – on account and purpose of this reason that) **it will be good for me** (*yatab la 'any* – I do well, I become successful and prosper, accumulating many possessions which become mine) **as a result of your participation** (*ba 'abuwr 'atah* – on account of you, for your sake, in that you cause this beneficial outcome based upon the expected result of your involvement in these events, predicated upon what you reap). **Moreover** (*wa*), **my soul** (*nepesh 'any* – my inner being and persona, my consciousness) **will be kept alive** (*chayah* – will actually live and be preserved) **because of you** (*ba galal 'atah* – for your sake, with you providing the reason).” (*Bare'syth / Genesis 12:13*)

So much for the conditions of the Covenant. He was not trusting or relying upon Yahowah. He was walking toward trouble, not away from it. And he was a nation away from perfect. Especially concerning, he expressly wanted to use Saray's physical beauty and appealing feminine

attributes for his own benefit. It was immoral and, perhaps, criminal. Moreover, he knew that in Pharaoh's house she would be a lot more than a pretty adornment or, as we say today, arm candy. I realize that it is implied, not overtly stated, but this reads like he was willing to prostitute his wife for material gain.

It had to break Yahowah's heart.

**“As a result, when** (*ka* – consequently in this manner) **‘Abram** (*‘Abram*) **entered** (*bow*) ***Mitsraym* | Egypt** (*Mitsraym* – the Crucibles of the Besieged), **the *Mitsry* | those who Oppress and Subjugate** (*ha Mitsry* – the Egyptians who besiege and forcefully impose their will on others) **saw** (*wa ra’ah* – they perceived, noticed, and viewed) **that the woman** (*‘eth ha ‘ishah* – that this female) **was by comparison** (*ky* – indeed) **exceptionally** (*hy’ me’od* – she was abundantly and utterly, to the maximum extent possible, a perfect 10 on this scale) **attractive** (*yaphah* – beautiful and lovely, delightful, enjoyable, and pleasurable, even gorgeously adorned, sleek, slender, and pretty). (*Bare’syth* / Genesis 12:14)

**So** (*wa*) ***Phar’oah*'s | Pharaoh's** (*Phar’oah* – Great House, the king of *Mitsraym*) **official representatives** (*sar* – commanders, officers, nobles, and high-ranking government officials) **extolled, boasting** (*halal* – radiated and praised, bragging over and glorifying themselves (note: *Halal* is Satan's name)) **about her to** (*‘eth hy*) **to *Phar’oah* | Pharaoh** (*Phar’oah* – the Great House, the king of *Mitsraym* – those who besiege, oppress, and subjugate).

**And** (*wa* – it follows) **the woman** (*ha ‘ishah* – the female, the feminine marriage partner and potential concubine added to a harem) **was forcibly grasped against her will by those compelled to take her without her permission** (*laqach* – was seized and obtained, taking her into their possession to lead her away as a captive on Pharaoh's command with ongoing implications (pual hofal imperfect – she continually suffered the effect of being brought into their possession through force because Pharaoh ordered them to grab her and take her away)) **to the house** (*beyth* – household, family, and home) **of *Phar’oah* | Pharaoh** (*Phar’oah* – the Great House, the king of *Mitsraym* – those who besiege, oppress, and subjugate).” (*Bare’syth* / Genesis 12:15)

*Mitsraym*, the plural of *mitsra*, is from *matsowr*, which is in turn based upon the verb *tsuwr*. It epitomizes all that is wrong with how the empowered treat others, especially women. It shows them “seizing and besieging them, subjugating and oppressing captives, binding them and confining them, while holding them against their will in hostile and adversarial fashion.” ‘Abram knew this, and he let it happen.

Most religious scholars are wont to discount this blemish on ‘Abraham's character with the simple reference to him having told a half-truth. But that is wholly inadequate. Written in the pual hofal imperfect, Sarah was kidnapped on Pharaoh's order. She was “*laqach* – forcibly grasped against her will by those compelled to take her without her permission. The woman was seized and taken into their possession so that they could lead her away as a captive on Pharaoh's command with ongoing implications. As affirmed by the pual hofal imperfect – she continually suffered the effect of being brought into their possession through force because Pharaoh ordered his men to grab her and take her” to his house, where she became part of his household – a place of subjugation where captives were bound and abused to amuse their oppressors.

Worse, a deal was struck to the benefit of the man culpable for what was now occurring – the man who expected to profit from it.

**“And so as for ‘Abram** (*wa la ‘Abram* – therefore, as a result, concerning ‘Abram), **he did**

**well, prospering** (*yatab* – he was treated favorably, and he was pleased, joyful over accumulating many possessions) **on her account** (*ba ‘abuwr hy’* – as a result of what she was enduring).

**He came to be with** (*wa hayah la huw’* – it would transpire over time that he actually came to exist as a result with (qal imperfect)) **flocks of sheep** (*tso’n*), **herds of cattle** (*baqar*), **and donkeys** (*wa chamowr*), **even male and female slaves** (*‘ebed wa shiphchah* – men and women owned as servants), **in addition to** (*wa*) **she-asses to carry away burdens** (*‘atown* – female donkeys to carry burdens) **and camels as a reward** (*wa gamal* – as a form of payment).” (*Bare’syth* / Genesis 12:16)

This is disappointing in the extreme. Based upon this deplorable situation, I am reminded of three things. First, God is keeping it real. He is not sugarcoating His relationship with ‘Abraham in hopes that we will find it appealing for the wrong reasons. Second, ‘Abraham was not chosen because he was a fine, upstanding young man of exemplary character, but instead because he was on an exclusive list of those who had chosen to leave Babylon and were willing to listen. And third, by reaching out to an often dimwitted and highly flawed individual of questionable repute, Yahowah is making it abundantly clear that He works through flawed people because it is the best way to demonstrate His ability to overcome our deficiencies. For example, *Moseh* | Moses, the man who was asked to reveal Yahowah’s name and guidance to the world, including this story, stuttered. *Dowd* | David, a man who had more flaws than hair by his own admission, demonstrates the Towrah’s ability to perfect the imperfect.

However, in this case, Yahowah was not amused.

“**Therefore** (*wa*) **Yahowah** (*Yahowah* – a transliteration of יהוה, our *‘elowah* – God as directed in His *towrah* – teaching regarding His *hayah* – existence) **reached out** (*naga’* – touched by extending Himself and struck, even caused an affliction or a plague) **against** (*‘eth*) **Phar’oah** | **Pharaoh** (*Phar’oah* – the Great House, the king of *Mitsraym* – those who besiege, oppress, and subjugate), **and against his household** (*wa ‘eth beyth huw’* – along with his home and family), **with many intense** (*gadawl* – a significant number of unusual and meaningful) **blows** (*nega’* – strikes from physical trauma to pandemics, isolated wounds to widespread infections) **over** (*‘al* – against) **the affair, these events, statements, and matters** (*dabar* – what was communicated and occurred, this situation) **regarding Saray** (*Saray* – of the Princess), **‘Abram’s wife** (*‘Abram ‘ishah* – ‘Abraham’s woman).” (*Bare’syth* / Genesis 12:17)

We can debate why Yahowah lashed out at Pharaoh, rather than striking some sense into ‘Abram. Your assessment is likely as valid as my own. But since it is germane to this discussion, I think God was sending potentates like Pharaoh a message. Just because you can does not mean you should. He may have had the power and authority to treat people as if he owned them, but it did not give him the right, and for that there would be a consequence. What Yahowah did to Pharaoh, He will do to every king and queen, every caesar and tsar, every pope, president, and potentate. To be fair, to be just, He must hold them accountable.

As for ‘Abram, he was deeply flawed, serving as proof that God isn’t expecting much from us. Should we listen to Him, stop being political or religious, trust Him, answer His Invitations, observe His Towrah, and circumcise our sons, He will adopt us. Moreover, as a benefit of the Covenant, Yahowah no longer sees His children’s mistakes.

Pharaoh was wrong, but not stupid. He may have liked Saray, but he was not going to lose everything for her. That said, like so many men, the Egyptian was unwilling to accept

responsibility for his actions.

“**So** (*wa*) **Phar’oah** | **Pharaoh** (*Phar’oah* – the Great House, the king of *Mitsraym* – those who besiege, oppress, and subjugate) **summoned** (*qara’ la* – called out to) ‘**Abram** (*‘Abram*) **and said** (*‘amar*), ‘**Why have you acted in this way regarding me** (*mah zo’th ‘asah la ‘any* – why have you caused me to engage and act in this way and what is this you have done to me (qal perfect))?’

**For what reason did you not tell me** (*la mah nagad la ‘any* – why did you not report to me and inform me, announcing and making known) **that she was your wife** (*ky ‘ishah ‘atah hy’*)? (*Bare’syth* / Genesis 12:18)

**Why did you say** (*la mah ‘amar*), “**She is my sister** (*‘achowth ‘any hy’*),” **such that** (*wa*) **I actually and regularly took her** (*laqach ‘eth hy’* – I selected, received, and accepted her, grasping hold of her (qal imperfect – routinely and genuinely took her)) **as my wife and woman** (*la ‘any la ‘ishah* – as a female concubine for my harem)?

**So now** (*wa ‘atah* – so then) **pay attention to** (*hineh* – behold, look up and see) **your wife** (*‘ishah ‘atah* – your woman). **If you want her, take her** (*laqach* – of your own accord and volition, grasp hold of her and take her away (qal imperative)), **going wherever you would like** (*halak* – choosing of your own freewill to walk according to the conduct of your life (qal imperative))!’ (*Bare’syth* / Genesis 12:19)

**Then** (*wa* – in addition) **Phar’oah** | **Pharaoh** (*Phar’oah* – the Great House, the King of *Mitsraym* – those who besiege, oppress, and subjugate) **provided instructions** (*tsawah* – ongoing directions and decrees with the force of authority, and thus commands and orders which had to be followed (piel imperfect)) **to individuals** (*‘ysh* – to people, especially men) **regarding him** (*‘al huw’* – over him and toward him), **and they sent him away** (*wa shalach ‘eth huw’* – so they dispatched him, setting him free, releasing him (piel imperfect)) **with his wife** (*wa ‘eth ‘ishah huw’*) **and with all that he had** (*wa ‘eth kol ‘asher la huw’* – as well as everything he regarded as a result of this arrangement).” (*Bare’syth* / Genesis 12:20)

But even that is not the end of the story. Yisra’el’s patriarch, the man who in many ways would come to be symbolic of his nation, returned to whence he had come, albeit enriched.

“**Abram** (*‘Abram*) **ascended** (*‘alah* – withdrew, rising in stature with increased wealth) **out of** (*min* – from) **Mitsraym** | **Egypt** (*Mitsraym* – the Crucibles of the Besieged). **He and his wife** (*huw’ wa ‘ishah huw’*), **and everything** (*wa kol*) **which was directed toward him** (*‘asher la huw’* – as a benefit of this relationship), **and Lowt** | **Lot** (*wa Lowt* – the blinded by having been too tightly wrapped) **with him** (*‘im huw’*) **to the Negeb** (*ha Negeb* – the parched region of Southern *Yahuwdah* | Judah). (*Bare’syth* / Genesis 13:1)

**But now** (*wa*) ‘**Abram** (*‘Abram*) **was exceedingly wealthy** (*kabed me’od* – abundantly rich, substantially burdened with an accumulation of riches) **in livestock** (*ba miqnah* – herds of domestic animals; from *qanah* – to acquire and possess), **in silver** (*ba ha keseph* – with money and belongings), **and with gold** (*wa ha zahab* – in precious metals).” (*Bare’syth* / In the Beginning / Genesis 13:2)

This was not as the Covenant was intended. And so, “**when** (*wa*) ‘**Abraham** (*‘Abraham* – Loving, Merciful, Enriching, and Forgiving Father) **said** (*‘amar*) **to** (*‘el*) **the Almighty** (*ha ‘elohym*), ‘**Why not** (*luw* – emphatically exclaiming, earnestly pleading for understanding, and hoping for something unlikely to happen, if only You’d consider and why not the possibility of)

**Yshma'el | Ishmael** (*Yshma'el* – God Heard Me) **living** (*chayah* – being restored and renewed, even growing) **near** (*la*) **your presence** (*paneh 'atah*)?" (*Bare'syth / Genesis 17:18*) the answer was unequivocally "No!" That is not how this is going to be accomplished.

After all, of *Yshma'el | Ishmael*, Yahowah has said, **"He shall consistently be** (*wa huw' hayah*) **a wild ass** (*pere*) **of a man** (*'adam*). **His hand** (*yad huw'*) **will be against everyone** (*ba ha kol*) **and everyone's hand** (*wa yad kol*) **against him** (*ba huw'*). **Even in opposition to the presence** (*wa 'al paneh*) **of all of his brothers** (*kol 'ach huw'*) **he will live and remain** (*shakan*)." (*Bare'syth / Genesis 16:12*)

Now as we consider Yahowah's answer regarding Ishmael, be aware that "*'abal* – to the contrary" does not just mean "no," it is indistinguishable from *'abal*, which means "to lament." So while Yahowah would honor His promise to give him a son, He wanted him to know in no uncertain terms that Ishmael would not be considered.

**"But** (*wa*) **God** (*'elohym*) **said** (*'amar* – replied (qal imperfect – actually and consistently)), **'No, absolutely not, to the contrary** (*'abal* – strongly communicating a completely contrasting denial while expressing the correct conclusion in an assertive and authoritative voice which leaves nothing to question).

**"Sarah** (*Sarah* – to strive and contend with, to engage and endure with, and to be empowered by and persist with), **your wife** (*'ishah 'atah* – your female and woman), **shall give birth to a child** (*yalad* – shall conceive and bear) **for you** (*la 'atah*) **a son** (*ben* – progeny to come from you, to bear your name, to represent you, and to engage in your business).

**And** (*wa*) **you shall call** (*qara*) **his name** (*'eth shem huw'*): **Yitschaq | Laughter** (*Yitschaq* – one who laughs; from *tsachaq* – to laugh, jest, and play)." (*Bare'syth / In the Beginning / Genesis 17:19* in part)

I am glad that Yahowah has a sense of humor, or else, we would be in serious trouble. They had laughed at God, and so the Almighty responded in kind.

Yahowah customarily layers His responses with multiple levels of potential meanings. He often laces His testimony with prophetic references regarding future events. He likes to answer questions with analogies, using beautiful mental imagery. He does these things to encourage us to think, and so that we will engage more deeply in the process of getting to know Him, and of growing to trust Him through an appreciation of the unending brilliance and intricacies in His Word. So, when Yah's answer is nothing more than "No," it is pretty darn obvious that He is making sure there is no mistaking His position on this matter.

His answer is not subject to negotiation.

God's response is as important as any we have considered thus far. By Yahowah's standard, Ishmael was a colossal mistake. First, by fathering a child outside of his marriage covenant, 'Abram's example was in conflict with the nature of *the* Covenant. The *beryth* is about unity (in the sense of a father and mother becoming one to beget children); it's about family (in the sense of nurturing, growing, protecting, and sharing); and it's about love (in the sense of genuine passion and sacrificial devotion). That was all torn asunder when 'Abram impregnated a slave girl he received when he put his wife in harm's way. That was not acceptable, so Yahowah said emphatically: "No!"

By relenting, and having a child through a slave, 'Abram was demonstrating that he did not

trust God to deliver on His promises. As such, Saray's alternative plan (the self-reliant solution), with which 'Abram agreed, violated the primary principle of the Covenant. It served as a wholesale rejection of the Covenant's requirement: Trust and rely upon Yahowah.

God commits to bestowing the following: an enjoyable personal relationship, adoption into His family, restoration and renewal, life eternal, salvation by way of redemption and vindication, an overwhelming increase in power and energy, the opportunity to live with Him in the Promised Realm, and the inheritance of all that is His to provide. To receive these gifts, we must walk away from human corruptions and seek to know Yahowah. We must come to trust and rely upon Him, which requires us coming to understand His teaching. We must walk to God and become perfect in accord with His provisions. We are asked to explore this relationship, while observing and considering all of its requirements and provisions as they are delineated in the Towrah. And He asks us to raise our families in accordance with His Covenant. But in the end, it is God's offer, His plan, and His gift, not ours. 'Abraham chose his way over God's way. That was not acceptable, so Yahowah said "No."

We have been given the answer to each of these questions: Is God willing to negotiate on His Covenant: "Absolutely not!" Is God willing to alter His Covenant to accommodate our approach: "Absolutely not!" Is God willing to consider a different means to restoration and life: "Absolutely not!" Is God open to a different path to living in His presence: "Absolutely not!" Is God willing to compromise with man when it comes to His Covenant: "Absolutely not!" Is there any possibility that God changed His mind and authorized a New Covenant: "Absolutely not!"

'Abraham was asking Yahowah to compromise on His core values. 'Abraham knew, as do I, that God is willing to discuss anything we would like, but He is not negotiable when it comes to any of His instructions. He is not going to change when it comes to His Towrah. So while He loves to engage in give-and-take conversations, as they are essential ingredients to a reciprocal relationship, to a marriage, and of a family, do not ask or expect God to negotiate with regard to His Towrah, His Covenant, or His Invitations.

Give and take on other matters, however, such as the day-to-day musings and experiences of life, is what the Covenant is all about. God gives us something and takes something from us in return. But, and this is a hell of a but, if you want God to work with you on something, if you want Him to acquiesce to something you want, then don't ask for something in conflict with His nature or plan. 'Abram's proposal was inconsistent with the Covenant Relationship. It was rooted in oppression, in subjugation, in deception, having man's fingerprints all over it. That was not acceptable, so Yahowah said "No."

While 'Abraham was positioning Ishmael to be the beneficiary of the Covenant, the only question he asked Yahowah to consider was whether the bastard child could be "restored" and allowed "to live in His presence." "No" was the answer. It was not: "Let me think about it." It was not: "Maybe." It was not: "Let's discuss it further." It wasn't, "In consideration of this change of events, perhaps we could..." It was: "No." Ishmael could not exist in Yahowah's presence. But why?

The Towrah tells us that Ishmael headed toward Babylon and away from the Promised Land. He would spend his life in league with Lord Ba'al. Rather than walking "to God," he walked away from Him.

When it comes to being adopted into Yah's family, there are no exceptions. Just because

Ishmael was ‘Abraham’s son, just because he was born in the right place and at the right time, just because he was rich, just because he was handsome and handy, just because his dad was connected and pleaded with God, it did not matter. When it comes to admission into God’s presence, God does not compromise. He cannot. If He did, His Word, and therefore He, Himself, would become inconsistent, imperfect, unreliable, and untrustworthy. And that is something a perfect and just God cannot be or do. There is One Way, and only One Way. Nothing else counts. There are no exceptions. Period. End of conversation. “No.”

If you have a problem with that, if you think it is unloving and intolerant, too bad. Do not bother complaining to Him or me. It is His house. You do not have to go there if you do not like Him or His conditions.

God did not, however, treat Ishmael poorly. While He did not save him or include him, He did not punish him. The “wild ass” eventually fathered twelve sons, and he became rich and powerful. Ishmael became the patriarch of a vast nation – as billions of Muslims would claim him as their patriarch. Billions “raise their hands in hostility” in Ishmael’s name.

What is interesting at this point is that God did not give up on ‘Abraham or on His plan. He simply got back to business. This tells us that Yahowah is willing to accept and work with flawed implements. (Thank goodness, or we would all be unemployed.)

“Laughter!” Indeed, the first child accepted into the Covenant was named for its purpose. We entertain Yahowah; we amuse Him. We bring a smile to His face. We make Yah happy. He enjoys getting to know us. We cause God to laugh and have a good time. The Covenant is for “Laughter!”

But while this is the Covenant’s purpose, Yahowah still had to facilitate our participation. So He promised:

**“And so (*wa*) I will stand up and establish (*quwm* – I want to completely restore and raise up, I choose to totally fulfill and accomplish, I desire to encourage and I shall ratify and confirm (scribed in the hifil stem, perfect conjugation, consecutive form)) accordingly (*’eth*) My Family-Oriented Covenant Relationship (*beryth-y* – My mutually binding agreement, My household promise, My relational accord, My marriage vow based upon home and family (feminine singular, scribed in the construct form, eternally binding, connecting, and associating the *beryth* – covenant with *quwm* – God standing up for us so that we could stand with Him; written with the first person singular suffix: My – telling us that the Covenant is God’s)) with him (*’eth huw’* – in a personal association with him) – for the purpose of (*la* – to the point and goal of) an eternal and everlasting (*’owlam* – never-ending always enduring) family-oriented relationship (*beryth* – covenant agreement and personal partnership) on behalf of (*’eth la* – to approach) his offspring (*zera’ huw’* – his seed and what he sows among his descendants (singular construct)) after him (*’achar huw’*).” (*Bare’syth* / In the Beginning / Genesis 17:19)**

There are few words in the whole of God’s Word as important as *quwm* – especially when it is scribed in Yahowah’s voice with the hifil stem, perfect conjugation, and consecutive form. It tells us that God not only wants to establish His Covenant Relationship, but that He is willing to do whatever it takes to facilitate and enable the relationship. Doing so requires Yahowah to “*quwm* – to stand up for us so that we can stand with Him.” It represents the complete fulfillment of His plans. Moreover, He did not delegate this work, but instead accomplished it all Himself.

Specifically, the hifil stem associated with *quwm* indicates a causative effect whereby the subject, which is Yahowah, causes the object, which is the Covenant, to participate in the action,

which is standing up, restoring, and establishing, as an understudy, or reflection of Himself. That is to say that Yahowah is the power behind the Covenant, causing it to work, and that the Covenant reflects Yahowah's nature.

With *quwm* scribed in the perfect conjugation, we further discover that Yah's work is complete, that He has totally fulfilled His promises, and that He has accomplished His mission. His Covenant does everything which is required to enable us to stand with Him, established and restored in His presence. Moreover, the resemblance is absolute. The Covenant represents the totality of Yahowah's nature, purpose, and plan and its solution is complete, lacking nothing.

Lastly, by using the consecutive form, we know that this is God's choice. He wants us to rise up and stand in His presence. It is His desire for us to benefit from His Covenant. And He chose to fulfill His promises.

The "*beryth* – family-oriented relationship agreement" Yahowah calls "My Covenant" is "*owlam* – eternal and everlasting" – as are its beneficiaries. As a result, there is no "Old Testament," as in something which previously existed, or a "New Testament," for a new covenant.

## אָוֹלָם

The Covenant is more important to God than the universe and all that is in it. The Covenant is the very reason we exist. It encapsulates God's promise to His creation. It is His means to interact with us. It is His future and ours as well.

With so much at stake, let's review its lone prerequisite, its four requirements, its instructional insights, its answers, its benefits, and its promises.

To set the stage, the Towrah says that Yahowah asked 'Abram to walk away from: **"the land of his birth in Ur of the Chaldeans** (a.k.a. Babylon, from *babel* – corruption and confusion which is the result of commingling)." (*Bare'syth* 11:28)

Prerequisite / Condition 1:

**"Then and now (*wa*) Yahowah (*Yahowah*) said (*'amar*) to (*'el*) 'Abram (*'Abram*), 'Of your own volition walk, actually conducting your life's journey (*halak la 'atah*) apart and separate from (*min*) your country (*'atah 'erets*), apart and separate from (*wa min*) identifying with the circumstances of your birth, your contrarian culture, community, and customs as well as the incompatible religion and politics of your parents (*mowledeth 'atah*), and away from (*min*) your father's (*'ab*) house, home, and household (*beyth*), to God's (*'el*) realm (*ha 'erets*) which as a benefit of the relationship and to lead along the proper path (*'asher*) I will reveal to you and show you (*ra'ah 'atah*). (*Bare'syth* 12:1)**

**And then (*wa*) I will engage on your behalf, continually acting to make for you (*'asah 'atah la*) a greatly empowered (*gadowl*) community comprised of every race (*gowy*).**

**I will kneel down in love to bless you by lifting you up (*wa barak 'atah*). In addition (*wa*), I will cause, as an expression of My will, your name to continuously grow in importance (*gadal shem 'atah*) so that (*wa*) you come to exist as (*hayah*) a blessing and a means to reconciliation (*barakah*). (*Bare'syth* 12:2)**

**Then (wa) I will continually choose to favor and hold in high regard ('abarakah) those who hold you in high regard, who see you as a source of blessings, of reconciliation, and of the beneficial relationship (barak 'atah).**

**But (wa), he who disdains or despises you, even trivializes you (qalal 'atah), I will actually besmirch as disrespectful and may continuously incarcerate as inferior ('arar).**

**So (wa) with you (ba 'atah), shall be commended and blessed, reconciled and favorably greeted (barak), all of (kol) the people exercising good judgment regarding the means to resolve disputes (mishpachah) of the land ('erets)." (Bare'syth 12:3)**

Condition 2:

**"And so (wa) he completely trusted in and totally relied upon, displaying complete and total confidence in ('aman ba) Yahowah (Yahowah). Therefore (wa), based upon this thinking and His plan, He credited and accounted it as (chashab huw') being correct, and thus vindicated (tsadaqah) with him (la huw')." (Bare'syth 15:6)**

Condition 3:

**"When (wa) 'Abram | Uplifting Father ('Abram) became (hayah) as a son (ben) of ninety-nine years (tesha' shanah wa tesha' shanah), then Yahowah (Yahowah) was seen, appearing to (ra'ah 'el) 'Abram ('Abram) and He said to him (wa 'amar 'el huw'), 'I Am God ('any 'el), the One who is sufficient to provide everything which is required (shaday).**

**Choose of your own volition and of your own initiative to walk by yourself (halak) toward My presence and to approach Me (la paneh 'any).**

**You will thereby (wa) enjoy becoming genuinely (hayah) perfect, entirely right, innocent, and fulfilled, lacking nothing throughout the whole of time (tamym). (Bare'syth 17:1)**

**I want to actually give (nathan) My Family Covenant Relationship (beryth 'any) for the purpose of understanding by making connections between Me and you (bayn 'any wa 'atah wa byn 'atah).**

**And then (wa) I will continually increase every aspect of your nature (rabah 'eth 'atah) to the greatest extent and highest degree possible (ba me'od me'od)." (Bare'syth 17:2)**

Condition 4:

**"So then (wa) God said ('amar 'elohym) to ('el) 'Abraham ('Abraham), 'As for you (wa 'atah 'eth), you should continually examine and genuinely consider (shamar 'atah) My Family Covenant Relationship (beryth 'any). In addition, so should the offspring you conceive (wa zera' 'atah) following you ('achar 'atah) so that they might approach throughout their generations (la dowrym hem)." (Bare'syth 17:9)**

Condition 5:

**"This specific, one and only (zo'th), Familial Covenant of Mine (beryth 'any), which beneficially marks the way to the relationship ('asher), you should continuously observe, closely and literally examining, while carefully considering (shamar). You should strive to be discerning and make an intelligent connection to understand Me (bayn 'any).**

**This is for you to be perceptive and prudent regarding the association (wa bayn 'atah). To form a thoughtful relationship and make a comprehensible connection between (wa byn)**

**your offspring (*zera* 'atah) following you ('achar 'atah), you should circumcise (*muwl*), accordingly (*la*), your every male to help them remember their status ('atem kol zakar). (*Bare'syth* 17:10)**

**And (*wa*) you all shall make a declaration by cutting off and separating (*malal*) your foreskin's ('arlah) association with ('eth) one's animalistic instincts and propensity to preach (*basar*).**

**And (*wa*) this will exist (*hayah*) as (*la*) the sign to remember ('owth) the Family-Oriented Covenant Relationship (*beryth*) between Me, for the purpose of making a connection (*byn*) and between you, promoting understanding (*wa byn*). (*Bare'syth* 17:11)**

**Therefore, with (*wa*) a son (*ben*) of eight (*shamonah*) days (*yowmym*), you shall circumcise (*muwl*) with regard to your (*la*) every (*kol*) male to remember (*zakar*) throughout (*la*) your dwelling places and generations (*dowr*), those naturally born (*yalyd*) in the home (*beyth*), and also (*wa*) those wanting to be (*kasap*) acquired and included (*miqnah*), of (*min*) every (*kol*) son (*ben*) of foreign lands (*nekar*) who relationally ('asher) are not (*lo*) from (*min*) your seed (*zera*'). (*Bare'syth* 17:12)**

**He (*huw*') should absolutely circumcise him, definitely cutting off the foreskin (*muwl muwl*) of the naturally born (*yalyd*) in your home (*beyth*) and also (*wa*) those desiring to be (*kasap*) included (*miqnah*) as well as those who are acquired (*miqnah*) with your money (*kesepe*).**

**This shall be (*hayah*) My Family-Oriented Covenant Relationship (*beryth-y*), in (*ba*) the flesh, in the physical realm with humanity (*basar*), serving as a means to approach toward (*la*) an everlasting and eternal ('owlam) Family-Oriented Covenant Relationship (*beryth*).” (*Bare'syth* 17:13)**

As a result, additional benefits would include...

**“After ('achar) these ('el-leh) conversations (*dabarym*), the Word (*dabar*) of Yahowah (*Yahowah*) came to exist as (*hayah*) God unto ('el) 'Abram ('Abram) in the form of a personal, visual, and illuminating manifestation which could be seen and experienced (*ba ha machazeh*): ‘Do not be awed ('al yare) 'Abram ('Abram).**

**On your behalf and for you to draw near (*la*), I am ('anky) your defender, surrounding you, shielding and delivering you from harm (*magen*), your exceedingly (*me'od*) great and facilitating (*harbeh*) reward (*sakar*).” (*Bare'syth* 15:1)**

**“It was then that (*wa*) He took him (*yatsa*') with Him ('eth *huw*') outside to an expansive place (*chuwts*).**

**And He said (*wa 'amar*), ‘Please (*na*') observe and choose to consider the implications of (*nabat*) the heavens and the spiritual realm (*ha shamaym*).**

**Accurately relate to and of your own freewill make a declaration regarding (*wa saphar*) the light of the stars and heavenly powers (*ha kowkab*).**

**If ('im) you are able to actually comprehend, genuinely understand this, you will thereby endure forever (*yakol*) by accounting for and quantifying these things and that which is associated with them in this written document (*la saphar 'eth hem*).’ And then (*wa*) He made a promise by saying to him ('amar *la huw*'), ‘Your extended family (*zera* 'atah) will actually**

**and forever exist (*hayah*) in this manner and place (*koh*).” (*Bare’syth* 15:5)**

**“As for you (*wa ‘atah*), you shall continually pursue and come to God (*bow’ ‘el*), your Father (*‘ab ‘atah*), in peace, and thus reconciled, satisfied, safe, and saved, restored, and renewed (*ba shalown*).” (*Bare’syth* 15:15)**

**“And (*wa*) I will grow, be fruitful, and flourish (*parah*) with you (*‘eth*) in (*ba*) the extreme and to the greatest extent possible (*me’od me’od*). And (*wa*) I will provide for you and at some point in time enable (*nathan ‘atah*) the approach of (*la*) people from differing races and places (*gowym*). And therefore (*wa*) royalty serving as counselors (*melekym*) will come forth (*yatsa’*) from you (*min ‘atah*). (*Bare’syth* 17:6)**

**I will take a stand to establish and confirm, to validate and honor, fulfilling and accomplishing (*wa quwm*), therefore (*‘eth*), My Covenant Family (*beryth ‘any*). For the purpose of encouraging understanding, achieved through making connections between Me and you, it will promote an association with (*bayn ‘any wa ‘atah wa byn*) your offspring (*zera’ ‘atah*) after you (*‘achar ‘atah*) for their generations to approach (*la dowrym hem*) by way of (*la*) an everlasting (*‘owlam*) Family Covenant Relationship (*beryth*).**

**I will exist as (*la hayah*) your God (*la ‘atah la ‘elohym*) as well as (*wa*) for your offspring (*la zera’ ‘atah*) after you (*‘achar ‘atah*).” (*Bare’syth* 17:7)**

There have been three questions, five answers, twelve insightful instructions, two affirmations, four promises, two warnings, one prerequisite, four conditions, and sixteen benefits. And while each of these is important, since the five things required of us determine our eternal fate, let’s never forget what God is expecting of us.

There is still more to consider, in that we have yet to journey with ‘Abraham to Mount *Mowryah*. As we turn the page, that will be the subject of the next chapter.