



Hilkhot Mila LAWS OF CIRCUMCISION

Chapter 3:7-8

7 The foreskin is regarded as an abomination, for which the Gentiles are condemned in Scripture, as it is said, “For all the nations are uncircumcised” (Jer. 9:25). An important institution is circumcision. For the patriarch Abraham was not called perfect till he had circumcised himself, as it is said, “Walk before Me; and be perfect. And I will make My covenant between Me and you” (Gen. 17:1-2). Whoever neglects the covenant of our ancestor Abraham, and retains the foreskin or artificially obliterates the marks of circumcision, even if he has acquired much knowledge of the Torah and practices good deeds, will have no portion in the world to come.

8 Note how strictly the observance of circumcision is to be regarded. Moses, although he was on a journey, did not receive indulgence a single hour for neglecting this duty. In connection with all the precepts of the Torah, three covenants were made with Israel; as it is said, “These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded . . . besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb” (Deut. 28:69). And in the next section it is said, “You are standing this day all of you before the Lord your God . . . that you should enter into the covenant of the Lord your God” (Deut. 29:9-11). Three covenants are here mentioned. But in connection with circumcision, thirteen covenants were made with our ancestor Abraham. “As for Me, behold, My covenant between Me and you” (Gen. 17:2); “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you” (*ibid.* 17:4); “And I will establish My covenant between Me and you” (*ibid.* 17:4); “And I will establish My covenant Me and you” (*ibid.* 17:7); “for everlasting covenant” (*ibid.* 17:7); “And as for you, you shall keep My covenant” (*ibid.* 17:9); “This is My covenant which you shall keep” (*ibid.* 17:10); “And it shall be a token of a covenant” (*ibid.* 17:11); “And My covenant shall be in your flesh” (*ibid.* 17:13); “he has broken My covenant” (*ibid.* 17:14); “And I will establish My covenant with him” (*ibid.* 17:19); “for an everlasting covenant” (*ibid.* 17:19); “But My covenant I will establish with Isaac” (*ibid.* 17:21).