

Circumcision in Tanakh

Source Sheet by Max DuBoff

Mentions of circumcision in Tanakh can be roughly divided into three categories: i) the act of cutting the foreskin, which is related to a covenant with Avraham and is commanded to the Israelites after the exodus from Egypt; ii) metaphorical foreskin, which represents deficiency, esp. morally; and iii) a group identity marker, which sets off the Israelites from neighboring tribes. Some passages fit into multiple categories. This source sheet explores representative examples from each of these categories. In each category, sources are given in their order in Tanakh.

As you review the sources, consider:

- What is the significance of circumcision in each source?
- Does the role of circumcision shift throughout Tanakh, and if so, how?
- How do and should these mentions of circumcision relate to contemporary views on, and practices around, circumcision?

1. Covenant and Commandment

Genesis 17

(1) When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am El Shaddai. Walk in My ways and be blameless. (2) I will establish My

בראשית י"ז

(א) וַיְהִי אַבְרָם בְּן־תְּשַׁעִים שָׁנָה
וַתֵּשַׁע שָׁנָיִם וַיֵּרָא ה' אֶל־אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר
אֵלָיו אֲנִי־אֵל שָׁדַי הַתְּהִלָּה לְפָנַי וְהָיָה
תְּמִים: (ב) וְאֶתְנָה בְרִיתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ

covenant between Me and you, and I will make you exceedingly numerous.” (3) Abram threw himself on his face; and God spoke to him further, (4) “As for Me, this is My covenant with you: You shall be the father of a multitude of nations. (5) And you shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I make you the father of a multitude of nations. (6) I will make you exceedingly fertile, and make nations of you; and kings shall come forth from you. (7) I will maintain My covenant between Me and you, and your offspring to come, as an everlasting covenant throughout the ages, to be God to you and to your offspring to come. (8) I assign the land you sojourn in to you and your offspring to come, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting holding. I will be their God.” (9) God further said to Abraham, “As for you, you and your offspring to come throughout the ages shall keep My covenant. (10) Such shall be the covenant between Me and you and your offspring to follow which you shall keep: every male among you shall be circumcised. (11) You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. (12) And throughout the

וארבה אותך במאד מאד: (ג) ויפל
אברם על-פניו וידבר אתו אלקים
לאמר: (ד) אנכי הנה בריתי אתך
והיית לאב המון גוים: (ה) ולא יקרא
עוד את-שםך אברם והיה שםך
אברהם כי אב-המון גוים נחתיך: (ו)
והפאתי אתך במאד מאד ונחתיך
לגוים ומלכים ממך יצאו: (ז) והקמתי
את-בריתי ביני ובינך ובין זרעך
אתריך לדורתם לברית עולם להיות
לך לאלקים ולזרעך אתריך: (ח)
ונחתי לך ולזרעך את ארץ
מגריה את כל-ארץ כנען לאחוזת
עולם והייתי להם לאלקים: (ט)
ויאמר אלקים אל-אברהם ואתה
את-בריתי תשמר אתה וזרעך אתריך
לדורתם: (י) זאת בריתי אשר תשמרו
ביני וביניכם ובין זרעך אתריך המול
לכם כל-זכר: (יא) ונמלתם את בשר
ערלתכם והיה לאות ברית ביני
וביניכם: (יב) ובן-שמינת ימול
לכם כל-זכר לדורתכם יליד בן
ומקנת-כסף מכל בן-זכר אשר לא
מזרעך הוא: (יג) המול | ימול יליד
ביתך ומקנת כסף והיתה בריתי
בבשרכם לברית עולם: (יד) וערל |
זכר אשר לא-ימול את-בשר ערלתו
ונכרתה הנפש ההוא מעמיה
את-בריתי הפר: {ס} ... (כג) ויקח

generations, every male among you shall be circumcised at the age of eight days. As for the homeborn slave and the one bought from an outsider who is not of your offspring, (13) they must be circumcised, homeborn and purchased alike. Thus shall My covenant be marked in your flesh as an everlasting pact. (14) And if any male who is uncircumcised fails to circumcise the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his kin; he has broken My covenant.”... (23) Then Abraham took his son Ishmael, and all his homeborn slaves and all those he had bought, every male in Abraham’s household, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins on that very day, as God had spoken to him. (24) Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, (25) and his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. (26) Thus Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised on that very day; (27) and all his household, his homeborn slaves and those that had been bought from outsiders, were circumcised with him.

אֲבָרָהֶם אֶת־יִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹ וְאֵת
כָּל־יְלִידֵי בֵיתוֹ וְאֵת כָּל־מִקְנֵת כֶּסֶף
כָּל־זָכָר בְּאַנְשֵׁי בֵּית אֲבָרָהֶם וַיִּמָּל
אֶת־בְּשָׂר עַרְלָתָם בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֱתוֹ אֱלֹהִים: (כד)
וְאֲבָרָהֶם בְּוֶת־שָׂעִים וַתֵּשַׁע שָׁנָה
בְּהַמְלֹךְ בְּשָׂר עַרְלָתוֹ: (כה) וַיִּשְׁמָעֵאל
בְּנוֹ בְּוֶת־שָׁלֹש עָשָׂר שָׁנָה בְּהַמְלֹךְ אֵת
בְּשָׂר עַרְלָתוֹ: (כו) בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
נִמְּוֹל אֲבָרָהֶם וַיִּשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹ: (כז)
וְכָל־אֲנָשֵׁי בֵיתוֹ יְלִיד בָּיִת וּמִקְנֵת־כֶּסֶף
מֵאֵת בְּוֶת־נֶכֶד נִמְּלוּ אִתּוֹ: {פ}

Genesis 21:1-4

(1) The LORD took note of Sarah as He had promised, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. (2) Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken. (3) Abraham gave his newborn son, whom Sarah had borne him, the name of Isaac. (4) And when his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him.

בראשית כ"א:א'-ד'

(א) וַיִּזְכֹּר יְהוָה אֶת-שָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר וַיַּעַשׂ ה' לְשָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר: (ב) וַתְּהַרֵּוּ וַתֵּלֶד שָׂרָה לְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן לְזִקְנָיו לְמוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר אֲתוֹ אֱלֹהִים: (ג) וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם אֶת-שְׁם-בְנוֹ הַנּוֹלָד-לּוֹ אֲשֶׁר-יָלְדָה-לּוֹ שָׂרָה יִצְחָק: (ד) וַיִּמַּל אַבְרָהָם אֶת-יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ בֶּן-שְׁמֹנֶת יָמִים כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֲתוֹ אֱלֹהִים:

Exodus 4:24-26

(24) At a night encampment on the way, the LORD encountered him and sought to kill him. (25) So Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin, and touched his legs with it, saying, "You are truly a bridegroom of blood to me!" (26) And when He let him alone, she added, "A bridegroom of blood because of the circumcision."

שמות ד':כ"ד-כ"ו

(כד) וַיְהִי בַדְרֹךְ בַּמַּלְאָךְ וַיִּפְגְּשֵׁהוּ ה' וַיִּבְקֹשׁ הַמַּיִתּוֹ: (כה) וַתִּקַּח צִפּוֹרָה צֹר וַתִּכְרֹת אֶת-עֶרְלַת בְּנֹהָ וַתַּגַּע לְרַגְלָיו וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי חֲתָן-דָּמִים אַתָּה לִּי: (כו) וַיִּרַף מִמֶּנּוּ אִזְ אֲמָרָה חֲתָן דָּמִים לְמוֹלַת: {פ}

Exodus 12:43-49

(43) The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: This is the law of the passover offering: No foreigner shall eat of it. (44) But any slave a

שמות י"ב:מ"ג-מ"ט

(מג) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן זֹאת חֻקַּת הַפֶּסַח כָּל-בֶּן-נֹכַח לֹא-יֹאכַל בּוֹ: (מד) וְכָל-עֶבֶד אִישׁ מִקְנֵי-כֶסֶף

man has bought may eat of it once he has been circumcised. (45) No bound or hired laborer shall eat of it. (46) It shall be eaten in one house: you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house; nor shall you break a bone of it. (47) The whole community of Israel shall offer it. (48) If a stranger who dwells with you would offer the passover to the LORD, all his males must be circumcised; then he shall be admitted to offer it; he shall then be as a citizen of the country. But no uncircumcised person may eat of it. (49) There shall be one law for the citizen and for the stranger who dwells among you.

וּמִלֶּתָהּ אֹתוֹ אֵז יֹאכַל בּוֹ: (מה) תֹּשֵׁב
 וְשָׂכִיר לֹא-יֹאכַל בּוֹ: (מו) בְּבַיִת אֶחָד
 יֹאכַל לֹא-תֹצֵיא מִן-הַבַּיִת מִן-הַבָּשָׂר
 חֹצְצָה וְעֶצֶם לֹא תִשְׁבְּרוּ-בּוֹ: (מז)
 כָּל-עֲצֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל יַעֲשׂוּ אֹתוֹ: (מח)
 וְכִי-יִגְוֹר אֶתְךָ גֵר וְעָשָׂה פֶסַח לְה'
 הַמּוֹל לּוֹ כָּל-זָכָר וְאִזּוֹ יִקְרַב לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ
 וְהָיָה כַּאֲזַרְח הָאָרֶץ וְכָל-עָרַל
 לֹא-יֹאכַל בּוֹ: (מט) תִּנְרָה אַחַת יִהְיֶה
 לְאֲזַרְח וְלִגֵּר הֶגֶר בְּתוֹכְכֶם:

Leviticus 12:1-3

(1) The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: (2) Speak to the Israelite people thus: When a woman at childbirth bears a male, she shall be unclean seven days; she shall be unclean as at the time of her menstrual infirmity.— (3) On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.—

ויקרא י"ב:א'-ג'

(א) וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: (ב)
 דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר אִשָּׁה כִּי
 תִזְרִיעַ וַיִּלְדָּה זָכָר וְטִמְאַהּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים
 כִּימֵי נִדַת דְּוֹתָהּ טִמְאָה: (ג) וּבַיּוֹם
 הַשְּׁמִינִי יִמּוֹל בְּשָׂר עָרְלָתוֹ:

Joshua 5:2-9

(2) At that time the LORD said to

יהושע ה':ב'-ט'

(ב) בָּעֵת הַהִיא אָמַר ה' אֶל-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ

Joshua, “Make flint knives and proceed with a second circumcision of the Israelites.” (3) So Joshua had flint knives made, and the Israelites were circumcised at Gibeath-haaraloth. (4) This is the reason why Joshua had the circumcision performed: All the people who had come out of Egypt, all the males of military age, had died during the desert wanderings after leaving Egypt. (5) Now, whereas all the people who came out of Egypt had been circumcised, none of the people born after the exodus, during the desert wanderings, had been circumcised. (6) For the Israelites had traveled in the wilderness forty years, until the entire nation—the men of military age who had left Egypt—had perished; because they had not obeyed the LORD, and the LORD had sworn never to let them see the land that the LORD had sworn to their fathers to assign to us, a land flowing with milk and honey. (7) But He had raised up their sons in their stead; and it was these that Joshua circumcised, for they were uncircumcised, not having been circumcised on the way. (8) After the circumcising of the whole nation was completed, they remained where they were, in the camp, until they recovered. (9) And

עֲשֵׂה לָךְ חַרְבוֹת צַרִּים וְשׁוּב מִלֵּךְ
אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁנִיתָ: (ג) וַיַּעֲשֶׂה־לוֹ
יְהוֹשֻׁעַ חַרְבוֹת צַרִּים וַיִּמְלֵךְ אֶת־בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־גִּבְעַת הָעֵרְלוֹת: (ד) וְזֶה
הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־מָלַךְ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ כָּל־הָעָם הַיֵּצֵא
מִמִּצְרַיִם הַזְּכָרִים כֹּל ׀ אֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה
מָתוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר בַּדֶּרֶךְ בְּצֵאתָם מִמִּצְרַיִם:
(ה) כִּי־מָלִים הָיוּ כָּל־הָעָם הַיֵּצֵאִים
וְכָל־הָעָם הַיִּלְדִּים בַּמִּדְבָּר בַּדֶּרֶךְ
בְּצֵאתָם מִמִּצְרַיִם לֹא־מָלוּ: (ו) כִּי ׀
אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה הָלְכוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל
בַּמִּדְבָּר עַד־תָּם כָּל־הַגֹּיִם אֲנָשֵׁי
הַמִּלְחָמָה הַיֵּצֵאִים מִמִּצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר
לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ בְקוֹל ה' אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע ה'
לָהֶם לְבָלִיתִי הָרְאוּתָם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר
נִשְׁבַּע ה' לְאַבוֹתָם לָתֵת לָנוּ אֶרֶץ זָבַת
חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ: (ז) וְאֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם הַקִּיִּם
תַּחֲתָם אַתֶּם מָלַךְ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ כִּי־עֵרְלוּ הָיוּ
כִּי לֹא־מָלוּ אוֹתָם בַּדֶּרֶךְ: (ח) וַיְהִי
כַּאֲשֶׁר־תָּמּוּ כָל־הַגֹּיִם לְהַמּוֹל וַיִּשְׁכּוּ
תַּחֲתָם בַּמַּחֲנֶה עַד חַיּוּתָם: {פ}
(ט) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ הַיּוֹם גִּלּוֹתִי
אֶת־חַרְפַּת מִצְרַיִם מֵעַלְיֶכֶם וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמֵם
הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא גִלְגָּל עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:

the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt.” So that place was called Gilgal, as it still is.

2. Metaphor

Exodus 6:10-12

(10) The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, (11) “Go and tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the Israelites depart from his land.” (12) But Moses appealed to the LORD, saying, “The Israelites would not listen to me; how then should Pharaoh heed me, a man of impeded [*aral*, uncircumcised] speech!”

שמות ו':י-י"ב

(י) וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: (יא)
בֵּא דַבֵּר אֶל־פַּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם
וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ־מִצְרָיִם: (יב)
וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה לִפְנֵי ה' לֵאמֹר הֲוֹי
בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ אֵלַי וְאֵיךְ
יִשְׁמְעוּנִי פַרְעֹה וְאֲנִי עֶרְל שְׂפָתַיִם: {פ}

Deuteronomy 10:15-20

(15) Yet it was to your fathers that the LORD was drawn in His love for them, so that He chose you, their lineal descendants, from among all peoples—as is now the case. (16) Cut away, therefore, the thickening [*umaltem et orlat*, alt. circumcise the foreskin] about your hearts and stiffen your necks no more. (17) For the LORD your God is God supreme and Lord supreme,^d the great, the mighty, and the awesome

דברים י':ט"ו-כ'

(טו) רַק בְּאַבְרָהָם חָשַׁק ה' לְאַהֲבָה
אוֹתָם וַיִּבְחָר בְּזַרְעָם אַחֲרֵיהֶם בְּכֶם
מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים כִּי־הָיָה: (טז) וּמִלְתֶּם
אֶת־עַרְלַת לְבַבְכֶם וְעַרְפְּכֶם לֹא תִקְנְשׁוּ
עוֹד: (יז) כִּי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהֵי
הָאֱלֹהִים וְאִדּוּשֵׁם הָאֱדֻנִּים הָאֵל הַגָּדֹל
הַגָּבֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִשָּׂא פָנָיִם וְלֹא
יִקַּח שֹׁחַד: (יח) עֲשֵׂה מִשְׁפָּט יְתוּם
וְאַל־מַגְּנֶה וְאַהֲבֵה גֵר לְתַת לּוֹ לְחֶם
וְשִׁמְלָה: (יט) וְאַהֲבַתֶּם אֶת־הַגֵּר

God, who shows no favor and takes no bribe, (18) but upholds the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and befriends the stranger, providing him with food and clothing.— (19) You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. (20) You must revere the LORD your God: only Him shall you worship, to Him shall you hold fast, and by His name shall you swear.

כִּי־גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: (כ)
 אֶת־ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִירָא אֹתוֹ תַעֲבֹד וְכוּ
 תִדְבָּק וּבִשְׁמוֹ תִשָּׁבַע:

Deuteronomy 30:5-8

(5) And the LORD your God will bring you to the land that your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will make you more prosperous and more numerous than your fathers. (6) Then the LORD your God will open up [*umal*, circumcise] your heart and the hearts of your offspring to love the LORD your God with all your heart and soul, in order that you may live. (7) The LORD your God will inflict all those curses upon the enemies and foes who persecuted you. (8) You, however, will again heed the LORD and obey all His commandments that I enjoin upon you this day.

דברים ל':ה'-ה'

(ה) וְהֵבִיאָה ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ
 אֲשֶׁר־יְרָשׁוּ אֲבֹתֶיךָ וַיְרַשְׁתָּהּ וְהִיטְבָהּ
 וְהִרְבֶּה מֵאֲבֹתֶיךָ: (ו) וּמַל ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 אֶת־לִבְּךָ וְאֶת־לִבְּבָרְךָ לְאַהֲבָה
 אֶת־ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ
 לְמַעַן תֵּחִיָּה: (ז) וְנָתַן ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת
 כָּל־הָאֵלֹת הָאֵלֶּה עַל־אֵיבֶיךָ
 וְעַל־שֹׁנְאֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר רָדְפוּךָ: (ח) וְאָתָּה
 תָּשׁוּב וְשָׁמַעַתָּ בְּקוֹל ה' וְעָשִׂיתָ
 אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה
 הַיּוֹם:

Jeremiah 4:4

(4) Open [*himolu*, circumcise] your hearts to the LORD,
Remove the thickening [*orlot*, *foreskins*] about your hearts—
O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem—
Lest My wrath break forth like fire,
And burn, with none to quench it,
Because of your wicked acts.

ירמיהו ד:ד'

(ד) הַמְלוּ לַיהוָה וְהִסְרוּ עֲרֻלוֹת לְבַבְכֶם
אִישׁ יְהוּדָה וַיִּשְׁבִּי יְרוּשָׁלַם פֶּן־תִּצְאָ
כְּאִשׁ חֲמָתִי וּבִעֲרָהּ וְאִין מְכַבֶּה מִפָּנַי
רַע מַעֲלֵלֵיכֶם:

Jeremiah 6:10-16

(10) To whom shall I speak,
Give warning that they may hear?
Their ears are blocked [*areilah*,
uncircumcised]
And they cannot listen.
See, the word of the LORD has
become for them
An object of scorn; they will have
none of it.
(11) But I am filled with the wrath
of the LORD,
I cannot hold it in.
Pour it on the infant in the street,
And on the company of youths
gathered together!
Yes, men and women alike shall be
captured,
Elders and those of advanced years.
(12)
Their houses shall pass to others,
Fields and wives as well,

ירמיהו ו:י-ט"ז

(י) עַל־מִי אֲדַבֵּר וְאֶעֱיֵד וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ
הִנֵּה עֲרֻלָּה אֲזַנָּם וְלֹא יוֹכְלוּ לְהִקְשִׁיב
הִנֵּה דַבְרֵי־ה' הִנֵּה לָהֶם לְחִרְפָּה לֹא
יִחַפְּצוּ־בּוֹ: (יא) וְאֵת חֲמָתִי ה' מְלֵאֲתִי
נִלְאַתִּי הַכִּיל שִׁפְךָ עַל־עוֹלָל בְּחוּץ
וְעַל סוּד בַּחוּרִים יִחַדְדוּ כִּי־גַם־אִישׁ
עִם־אִשָּׁה יִלְכְּדוּ זָקֵן עִם־מְלֵא יָמִים:
(יב) וְנִסְבּוּ בְּתִיָּהֶם לְאַחֲרִים שְׁנוֹת
וְנָשִׁים יִחַדְדוּ כִּי־אֵטָה אֶת־יָדַי עַל־יִשְׁבִּי
הָאָרֶץ נְאֻם־ה': (יג) כִּי מִקְטָנָם
וְעַד־גְּדוֹלָם כָּלוּ בּוֹצֵעַ בָּצַע וּמִנְבִּיא
וְעַד־כֹּהֵן כָּלוּ עֲשֵׂה שִׁקָּר: (יד) וַיִּרְפְּאוּ
אֶת־שִׁבְרָ עַמִּי עַל־נִקְלָה לֵאמֹר
שָׁלוֹם | שָׁלוֹם וְאִין שָׁלוֹם: (טו)
הַכִּישׁוּ כִּי תוֹעֵבָה עֲשׂוּ גַם־בּוֹשׁ
לֹא־יִבֹּשׁוּ גַם־הַכְּלִים לֹא יִדְעוּ לָכֵן
יָפְלוּ בַּנְּפִלִים בְּעַת־פְּקֻדָּתִים יִכְשְׁלוּ

For I will stretch out My arm
 Against the inhabitants of the
 country
 —declares the LORD. (13) For
 from the smallest to the greatest,
 They are all greedy for gain;
 Priest and prophet alike,
 They all act falsely. (14) They offer
 healing offhand
 For the wounds of My people,
 Saying, “All is well, all is well,”
 When nothing is well. (15) They
 have acted shamefully;
 They have done abhorrent things—
 Yet they do not feel shame,
 And they cannot be made to blush.
 Assuredly, they shall fall among the
 falling,
 They shall stumble at the time when
 I punish them
 —said the LORD.
 (16) Thus said the LORD:
 Stand by the roads and consider,
 Inquire about ancient paths:
 Which is the road to happiness?
 Travel it, and find tranquillity for
 yourselves.
 But they said, “We will not.”

Jeremiah 9:24-25

(24) Lo, days are coming—declares
 the LORD—when I will take note
 of everyone circumcised in the
 foreskin: (25) of Egypt, Judah,

אָמַר ה' : {ס} (טז) כֹּה אָמַר ה'
 עֲמְדוּ עַל־דַּרְכֵימִים וּרְאוּ וְשִׂאֲלוּ |
 לַנְּתִיבוֹת עוֹלָם אִי־זֶה דַּרְךְ הַטּוֹב |
 וּלְכוּ־כִּהֵה וּמִצְאוּ מַרְגּוּעַ לְנַפְשְׁכֶם
 וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא גִלְדִי:

ירמיהו ט': כ"ד-כ"ה

(כד) הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־ה' וּפְקַדְתִּי
 עַל־כָּל־מִוֵּל בְּעָרְלָה: (כה) עַל־מִצְרַיִם
 וְעַל־יְהוּדָה וְעַל־אֲדוֹם וְעַל־בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן

Edom, the Ammonites, Moab, and all the desert dwellers who have the hair of their temples clipped. For all these nations are uncircumcised, but all the House of Israel are uncircumcised of heart.

וְעַל-מוֹאָב וְעַל כָּל-קְצוּצֵי פֹאֵה
 הַיִּשְׁבִּים בְּמִדְבָּר בְּי כָל-הַגּוֹיִם עֲרֻלִים
 וְכָל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲרֻלֵי-לֵב: {פ}

Ezekiel 44:5-9

(5) Then the LORD said to me: O mortal, mark well, look closely and listen carefully to everything that I tell you regarding all the laws of the Temple of the LORD and all the instructions regarding it. Note well who may enter the Temple and all who must be excluded from the Sanctuary. (6) And say to the rebellious House of Israel: Thus said the Lord GOD: Too long, O House of Israel, have you committed all your abominations, (7) admitting aliens, uncircumcised of spirit and uncircumcised of flesh, to be in My Sanctuary and profane My very Temple, when you offer up My food—the fat and the blood. You have broken My covenant with all your abominations. (8) You have not discharged the duties concerning My sacred offerings, but have appointed them to discharge the duties of My Sanctuary for you. (9) Thus said the Lord GOD: Let no alien, uncircumcised in spirit and

יחזקאל מ"ד:ה'-ט'

(ה) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי ה' בֶּן-אָדָם שִׁים לְבָבְךָ^ו
 וְרֵאָה בְּעֵינֶיךָ וּבְאָזְנֶיךָ שְׁמַע אֶת
 כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְדַבֵּר אֵתְךָ לְכָל-חֻקֹּת
 בֵּית-ה' וְלְכָל-תּוֹרָתוֹ וְשָׁמַתָּ לְבָבְךָ
 לְמַבּוֹא הַבַּיִת בְּכָל מוֹצְאֵי הַמִּקְדָּשׁ: (ו)
 וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל-מְרִי אֶל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל כֹּה
 אָמַר אֲדוּשֶׁם ה' רַב-לְכֶם
 מִכָּל-תּוֹעֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל: (ז)
 בְּהִבִּיאְכֶם בְּנֵי-נֹכַר עֲרֻלֵי-לֵב וְעֲרֻלֵי
 בָשָׂר לְהִנּוֹת בְּמִקְדָּשִׁי לְחַלְלֹו אֶת-בֵּיתִי
 בְּהַקְרִיבְכֶם אֶת-לֶחְמֵי חֵלֶב וְדָם וַיִּפְּרוּ
 אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אֵל כָּל-תּוֹעֲבוֹתֵיכֶם: (ח)
 וְלֹא שָׁמַרְתֶּם מִשְׁמֶרֶת קֹדֶשִׁי וְתִשְׁמְרוּ
 לְשֹׁמְרֵי מִשְׁמֶרְתִּי בְּמִקְדָּשִׁי
 לְכֶם: {ס} (ט) כֹּה-אָמַר
 אֲדוּשֶׁם ה' כָּל-בֶּן-נֹכַר עֲרֻל לֵב וְעֲרֻל
 בָשָׂר לֹא יָבֹא אֶל-מִקְדָּשִׁי
 לְכָל-בֶּן-נֹכַר אֲשֶׁר בָּתוּךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

flesh, enter My Sanctuary—no alien whatsoever among the people of Israel.

3. Group Identity

Genesis 34:6-27

(6) Then Shechem's father Hamor came out to Jacob to speak to him. (7) Meanwhile Jacob's sons, having heard the news, came in from the field. The men were distressed and very angry, because he had committed an outrage in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter—a thing not to be done. (8) And Hamor spoke with them, saying, "My son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him in marriage. (9) Intermarry with us: give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves: (10) You will dwell among us, and the land will be open before you; settle, move about, and acquire holdings in it." (11) Then Shechem said to her father and brothers, "Do me this favor, and I will pay whatever you tell me. (12) Ask of me a bride-price ever so high, as well as gifts, and I will pay what you tell me; only give me the maiden for a wife." (13) Jacob's sons answered

בראשית ל"ד:ו'-כ"ז

(ו) ויצא חמור אבי־שכם אל־יעקב לדבר אתו: (ז) ובני יעקב באו מן־השדה כשמעו ויתעצבו האנשים ויחר להם מאד כִּי־נבלה עשה בישראל לשכב את־בת־יעקב וכן לא יעשה: (ח) וידבר חמור אתם לאמר שכם בני חשקה נפשו בבתכם תנו נא אתה לו לאשה: (ט) והתחתנו אתנו בנתיכם תתנו־לנו ואת־בנותינו תקחו לכם: (י) ואתנו תשבו והארץ תהיה לפניכם שבו וסחרוה והאחזו בה: (יא) ויאמר שכם אל־אביה ואל־אחיה אמצא־חן בעיניכם ואנשר תאמרו אלי אתו: (יב) הרבו עלי מאד מזה ומתן ואתנה פאנשר תאמרו אלי ותנו־לי את־הנער לאשה: (יג) ויענו בני־יעקב את־שכם ואת־חמור אביו במרמה וידברו אשר טמא את דינה אחתם: (יד) ויאמרו אליהם לא נוכל לעשות הדבר הזה לתת את־אחלתנו לאיש אשר־לו ערלה כִּי־חרפה הוא

Shechem and his father Hamor—speaking with guile because he had defiled their sister Dinah— (14) and said to them, “We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to a man who is uncircumcised, for that is a disgrace among us. (15) Only on this condition will we agree with you; that you will become like us in that every male among you is circumcised. (16) Then we will give our daughters to you and take your daughters to ourselves; and we will dwell among you and become as one kindred. (17) But if you will not listen to us and become circumcised, we will take our daughter and go.” (18) Their words pleased Hamor and Hamor’s son Shechem.... (24) All who went out of the gate of his town^b heeded Hamor and his son Shechem, and all males, all those who went out of the gate of his town,^bwere circumcised. (25) On the third day, when they were in pain, Simeon and Levi, two of Jacob’s sons, brothers of Dinah, took each his sword, came upon the city unmolested, and slew all the males. (26) They put Hamor and his son Shechem to the sword, took Dinah out of Shechem’s house, and went away. (27) The other sons of Jacob came upon the slain and plundered the

לָנוּ: (טו) אֲדֹ-בָזֹאת נִאֲוֹת לָכֶם אִם
תִּהְיוּ כְמֵנוּ לְהַמְלִל לָכֶם כָּל-זָכָר: (טז)
וְנִתְּנוּ אֶת-בָּנֵי-נוּ לָכֶם וְאֶת-בָּנֹתֵיכֶם
נִקְחָ-לָנוּ וְיִשְׁכְּנוּ אִתְּכֶם וְהִיְנוּ לְעַם
אֶחָד: (יז) וְאִם-לֹא תִשְׁמָעוּ אֵלֵינוּ
לְהַמְוֹל וְלִקְחָנוּ אֶת-בָּתְּנוּ וְהִלְכָנוּ: (יח)
וְיִטְבוּ דְבָרֵיהֶם בְּעֵינֵי חָמוֹר וּבְעֵינֵי
שְׁכֶם בֶן-חָמוֹר: ... (כד) וְיִשְׁמָעוּ
אֶל-חָמוֹר וְאֶל-שְׁכֶם בָּנוּ כָּל-יִצְאֵי
שָׁעַר עִירוֹ וַיִּמְלֹוּ כָּל-זָכָר כָּל-יִצְאֵי
שָׁעַר עִירוֹ: (כה) וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי
בְּהִיוֹתָם כְּאֶחָד וַיִּקְחוּ שְׁנֵי-בְנֵי-יִעֲקֹב
שִׁמְעוֹן וְלֵוִי אֲחֵי דִינָה אִישׁ חֶרְבּוֹ
וַיָּבֹאוּ עַל-הָעִיר בְּטַח וַיַּהַרְגוּ כָּל-זָכָר:
(כו) וְאֶת-חָמוֹר וְאֶת-שְׁכֶם בָּנוּ הָרְגוּ
לְפִי-חָרֶב וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת-דִּינָה מִבֵּית שְׁכֶם
וַיֵּצְאוּ: (כז) בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹב בָּאוּ
עַל-הַחֲלָלִים וַיָּבֹאוּ הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר טָמְאוּ
אֹחֹתָם:

town, because their sister had been defiled.

Judges 14:1-3

(1) Once Samson went down to Timnah; and while in Timnah, he noticed a girl among the Philistine women. (2) On his return, he told his father and mother, “I noticed one of the Philistine women in Timnah; please get her for me as a wife.” (3) His father and mother said to him, “Is there no one among the daughters of your own kinsmen and among all our people, that you must go and take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?” But Samson answered his father, “Get me that one, for she is the one that pleases me.”

I Samuel 14:4-6

(4) At the crossing^b by which Jonathan sought to reach the Philistine garrison, there was a rocky crag on one side, and another rocky crag on the other, the one called Bozez and the other Seneh. (5) One crag was located on the north, near Michmas, and the other on the south, near Geba. (6) Jonathan said to the attendant who

שופטים י"ד:א-ג'

(א) וַיֵּרַד שָׁמְשׁוֹן תְּמַנָּה וַיֵּרָא אִשָּׁה
בְּתִמְנָתָה מִבְּנוֹת פְּלִשְׁתִּים: (ב) וַיַּעַל
וַיִּגְדַּל לְאָבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אִשָּׁה רָאִיתִי
בְּתִמְנָתָה מִבְּנוֹת פְּלִשְׁתִּים וְעַתָּה
קְחוּ-אוֹתָהּ לִי לְאִשָּׁה: (ג) וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ
אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ הֲאִין בְּבָנוֹת אַחֵיךָ
וּבְכָל-עַמִּי אִשָּׁה כִּי-אַתָּה הוֹלֵךְ לְקַחַת
אִשָּׁה מִפְּלִשְׁתִּים הָעֲרֵלִים וַיֹּאמֶר
שָׁמְשׁוֹן אֶל-אָבִיו אוֹתָהּ קַח-לִי כִּי-הִיא
יִשְׁרָה בְּעֵינַי:

שמואל א י"ד:ד'-ו'

(ד) וַיְבִין הַמַּעְבְּרוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּקֶשׁ יוֹנָתָן
לְעֹבֵר עַל-מִצֵּב פְּלִשְׁתִּים שׁוֹן-הַסֵּלַע
מִהָעֵבֶר מִזֶּה וְשׁוֹן-הַסֵּלַע מִהָעֵבֶר מִזֶּה
וְשֵׁם הָאֶחָד בּוֹצֵץ וְשֵׁם הָאֶחָד סִנְה:
(ה) הַיָּשׁוּן הָאֶחָד מִצּוֹק מִצְפּוֹן מוֹל
מִכְמָשׁ וְהָאֶחָד מִצְּנָב מוֹל
גָּבַע: {ס} (ו) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹנָתָן
אֶל-הַנָּעֵר | נִשָּׂא כִלְיוֹ לְכֹה וְנַעֲבֹרָה

carried his arms, “Come, let us cross over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf, for nothing prevents the LORD from winning a victory by many or by few.”

אֶל־מִצֵּב הָעֲרָלִים הָאֵלֶּה אוֹלִי יַעֲשֶׂה
ה' לָנוּ כִּי אֵין לָהּ מַעְצוֹר לְהוֹשִׁיעַ
בָּרַב אוֹ בְּמֵעוֹט:

I Samuel 17:26

(26) David asked the men standing near him, “What will be done for the man who kills that Philistine [Goliath] and removes the disgrace from Israel? Who is that uncircumcised Philistine that he dares defy the ranks of the living God?”

שמואל א י"ז:כ"ו

(כו) וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־הָאֲנָשִׁים הָעֹמְדִים
עִמּוֹ לֵאמֹר מַה־יַּעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִכֶּה
אֶת־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי הַלְזוֹ וְהִסִּיר חָרָפָה מֵעַל
יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי מִי הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי הָעֲרָל־הַזֶּה כִּי
חָרַף מַעֲרָכוֹת אֱלֹקִים חַיִּים:

Ezekiel 32:19-32

(19) Whom do you surpass in beauty? Down with you, and be laid to rest with the uncircumcised! (20) They shall lie amid those slain by the sword,^f [amid those slain by] the sword [Egypt] has been dragged and left with all her masses. (21) From the depths of Sheol the mightiest of warriors speak to him and his allies; the uncircumcised, the slain by the sword, have gone down and lie [there]. (22) Assyria is there with all her company, their

יחזקאל ל"ב:י"ט-ל"ב

(יט) מִמֵּי נַעֲמַת רִצְהָ וְהִשְׁכַּבָּה
אֶת־עַרְלִים: (כ) בְּתוֹךְ חַלְלֵי־חָרָב
יִפְּלוּ חָרָב נִתְּנָה מִשְׁכוֹ אוֹתָהּ
וְכָל־הַמּוֹנִיָּה: (כא) יְדַבְּרוּ־לֹא אֵלַי
גְּבוּרִים מִתּוֹךְ שְׂאוֹל אֶת־עַנְגְּרִיו יַרְדּוּ
שָׁכְבוּ הָעַרְלִים חַלְלֵי־חָרָב: (כב) נָשָׂם
אֲשׁוּר וְכָל־קְהֵלָה סְבִיבוֹתָיו קִבְּרֹתָיו
כָּל־חַלְלִים הַנִּפְּלִים בְּחָרָב: (כג)
אֲשֶׁר נִתְּנוּ קִבְּרֹתֵיהֶם בְּיַרְכְּתֵי־בֹר וַיְהִי
קְהֵלָה סְבִיבוֹת קִבְּרֹתָהּ כָּל־חַלְלִים
נִפְּלִים בְּחָרָב אֲשֶׁר־נִתְּנוּ חַתִּית בְּאַרְץ

graves round about, all of them slain, fallen by the sword. (23) Their graves set in the farthest recesses of the Pit, all her company are round about her tomb, all of them slain, fallen by the sword—they who struck terror in the land of the living. (24) There too is Elam and all her masses round about her tomb, all of them slain, fallen by the sword—they who descended uncircumcised to the lowest part of the netherworld, who struck terror in the land of the living—now they bear their shame with those who have gone down to the Pit. (25) They made a bed for her among the slain, with all her masses; their graves are round about her. They are all uncircumcised, slain by the sword. Though their terror was once spread over the land of the living, they bear their shame with those who have gone into the Pit; they are placed among the slain. (26) Meshech and Tubal and all their masses are there; their graves are round about. They are all uncircumcised, pierced through by the sword—they who once struck terror in the land of the living. (27) And they do not lie with the fallen uncircumcised warriors, who went down to Sheol with their battle gear, who put their swords beneath their heads and their iniquities upon their

חַיִּים: (כד) שָׁם עֵילָם וְכָל־הַמוֹנֶה סְבִיבוֹת קְבֻרָתָהּ כָּלָם חֲלָלִים הַנִּפְלָיִם בְּחָרֵב אֲשֶׁר־יָרְדוּ עָרְלִים | אֶל־אֶרֶץ תַּחְתִּיּוֹת אֲשֶׁר נָתַנּוּ חַתִּיתָם בְּאֶרֶץ חַיִּים וַיִּשְׂאוּ כָל־מַתָּם אֶת־יְוֹרְדֵי בֹר: (כה) בְּתוֹךְ חֲלָלִים נָתַנּוּ מִשְׁכָּב לָהּ בְּכָל־הַמוֹנֶה סְבִיבוֹתֶיהָ קְבֻרָתָהּ כָּלָם עָרְלִים חֲלָלֵי־חָרֵב כִּי־נָתַן חַתִּיתָם בְּאֶרֶץ חַיִּים וַיִּשְׂאוּ כָל־מַתָּם אֶת־יְוֹרְדֵי בֹר בְּתוֹךְ חֲלָלִים נָתַן: (כו) שָׁם מָשָׁךְ תָּבַל וְכָל־הַמוֹנֶה סְבִיבוֹתֶיהָ קְבֻרָתָהּ כָּלָם עָרְלִים מִחֲלָלֵי חָרֵב כִּי־נָתַנּוּ חַתִּיתָם בְּאֶרֶץ חַיִּים: (כז) וְלֹא יִשְׁכְּבוּ אֶת־גְּבוּרִים נִפְלָיִם מֵעָרְלִים אֲשֶׁר יָרְדוּ־שָׂאוֹל בְּכָל־יְמֵי־חַיָּתָם וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת־חַרְבוֹתָם תַּחַת רִאשֵׁיהֶם וַתְּהִי עֹנֹתָם עַל־עַצְמוֹתָם כִּי־חַתִּית גְּבוּרִים בְּאֶרֶץ חַיִּים: (כח) וְאַתָּה בְּתוֹךְ עָרְלִים תִּשְׁבֶּר וְחִשְׁבָּר וְחִשְׁבָּב אֶת־חֲלָלֵי־חָרֵב: (כט) שָׁמָּה אָדוּם מְלָכִיהָ וְכָל־נְשֵׂאֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַנּוּ בְּגִבּוֹרָתָם אֶת־חֲלָלֵי־חָרֵב הִמָּה אֶת־עָרְלִים יִשְׁכְּבוּ וְאֶת־יְוֹרְדֵי בֹר: (ל) שָׁמָּה נְסִיכֵי צָפוֹן כָּלָם וְכָל־צַדִּיקֵי אֲשֶׁר־יָרְדוּ אֶת־חֲלָלִים בְּחַתִּיתָם מִגְּבוּרָתָם בּוֹשִׁים וַיִּשְׁכְּבוּ עָרְלִים אֶת־חֲלָלֵי־חָרֵב וַיִּשְׂאוּ כָל־מַתָּם אֶת־יְוֹרְדֵי בֹר: (לא) אוֹתָם יִרְאֶה פְרָעָה וְנַחֵם עַל־כָּל־הַמוֹנֶה חֲלָלֵי־חָרֵב פְּרָעָה וְכָל־חֵילוֹ נִאֵם אֲדוּשָׁם ה': (לב)

bones—for the terror of the warriors was upon the land of the living. (28) And you too shall be shattered amid the uncircumcised, and lie among those slain by the sword. (29) Edom is there, her kings and all her chieftains, who, for all their might, are laid among those who are slain by the sword; they too lie with the uncircumcised and with those who have gone down to the Pit. (30) All the princes of the north and all the Sidonians are there, who went down in disgrace with the slain, in spite of the terror that their might inspired; and they lie, uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword, and bear their shame with those who have gone down to the Pit. (31) These Pharaoh shall see, and he shall be consoled for all his masses, those of Pharaoh's men slain by the sword and all his army—declares the Lord GOD. (32) I strike terror into the land of the living; Pharaoh^h and all his masses are laid among the uncircumcised, along with those who were slain by the sword—said the Lord GOD.

כִּי־נִתְּתִי אֶת־[חַתִּיתִי] (חַתִּיתוֹ) בְּאַרְצָךְ
 חַיִּים וְהִשְׁפַּבְּ בְּתוֹךְ עַרְלִים
 אֶת־חֲלָלֵי־חֶרֶב פְּרָעָה וְכָל־הַמּוֹנֵה נְאֻם
 אֲדוֹשֶׁם ה': {פ}