Milah Bemilah

Excerpted and adapted from a shiur *by Rav Moshe Yitzchak Weg*
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And Avraham circumcised his son Yitzchak when he was eight days old, as G-d had commanded him.

Bereishis 21:4

Yitzchak was the first person to undergo bris *milah* on his eighth day, but not all of Avraham's descendants were circumcised before *yetzias* Mitzrayim. The Rambam (*Isurei Biah* 13:2) writes that none of the Jews in Egypt had performed a bris *milah* before that time other than *sheivet* Levi. Before departing Mitzrayim, Klal Yisrael required *milah* for the purpose of forming the Jewish people (similar to conversion; see Krisos 9a). Given this, was *sheivet* Levi (or Yitzchak, had he been alive) required to perform an additional bris *milah* at the time of *yetzias* Mitzrayim?

The Ritva (Yevamos 46b) writes that *sheivet* Levi did not require an additional bris or *hatafah* (drawing of blood). It is true that a non-Jew who was already circumcised and then converts requires *hatafas dam* bris according to the Bahag (which is the accepted opinion), but in this case the original bris served as the *geirus.*

The Ramban (Yevamos 46b) explains the Rambam to hold that *hatafah* was performed for *sheivet* Levi as an act of *geirus*, but the Ramban's own view (similar to the Ritva's) is that their original bris was sufficient and *hatafah* was not performed. But he eventually concludes that they had the same status as women, who convert without a bris because it is physically impossible*.* The Imrei Moshe (22:23) explains the Ramban to mean that *hatafah* was not done because the original bris fulfilled the *milah* obligation. Although a bris was still required for *geirus* purposes, *hatafah* could not be used for this because the first bris was valid. For this reason, the Ramban compares *sheivet* Levi to women, who may convert without a bris because having one is impossible.