

Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Shabbath

Folio 133a

is [a controversy between] Tannaim. For it was taught: 'Flesh', and even if a bahereth is there, 'it shall be circumcised': the words of R. Josiah. R. Jonathan said: This is unnecessary: if it supersedes the Sabbath [which is more] Stringent, how much more so leprosy.¹

The Master said: "'Flesh", and even if a bahereth is there, "it shall be circumcised": the words of R. Josiah.' Why is a verse required for this: it is an unintentional act,² and an unintentional act is permitted? — Said Abaye, This is only necessary according to R. Judah, who maintains: An unintentional act is forbidden. Raba said, You may even say [according to] R. Simeon: R. Simeon admits in the case of 'cut off his head but let him not die.'³ Now, does not Abaye accept this reasoning? Surely Abaye and Raba both said, R. Simeon admits in the case of, 'cut off his head but let him not die'? — After hearing it from Raba he accepted its logic.

Others recite this [dictum] of Abaye and Raba in reference to the following: Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, to do [etc.]:⁴ 'to do' thou art forbidden,⁵ but thou mayest effect it by means of bast on the foot or a pole on the shoulder, and if it goes it goes.⁶ But what need of a verse for this: it is an unintentional act, and an unintentional act is permitted? — Said Abaye: It is only necessary according to R. Judah, who maintained: An unintentional act is forbidden. But Raba said: You may even say [that it agrees with] R. Simeon, yet R. Simeon admits in the case of 'cut off his head but let him not die.' Now, does not Abaye accept this reasoning? Surely Abaye and Raba both said, R. Simeon admits in the case of 'cut off his head but let him not die'? After hearing it from Raba, he accepted its logic.

Now Abaye on R. Simeon's view,⁷ how does he utilize this [word] 'flesh'? — Said R. Amram: As referring to one who asserts that it is his intention to cut off his bahereth.⁸ That is well of an adult: what can be said of an infant?⁹ Said R. Mesharsheya: It refers to the infant's father who asserts that it is his [specific] intention to cut off his son's bahereth. Then if there is another,¹⁰ let another perform it; for R. Simeon b. Lakish said: Wherever you find a positive command and a negative command [in opposition], if you can fulfil both of them, it is preferable;¹¹ but if not, let the positive command come and supersede the negative command?¹² — This is where there is no stranger.

The Master said, 'It supersedes Festivals only [when performed] at its [proper] time.' Hezekiah said, and the School of Hezekiah taught likewise: And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning [but that which remaineth of it] until the morning [ye shall burn with fire]:¹³ now [the second] until the morning need not

be stated: What then is the teaching of, until the morning? Scripture comes to appoint the second morning for its burning. Abaye said: Scripture saith, the burnt-offering of the Sabbath [shall be burnt] on its Sabbath,¹⁴ but not the burnt-offering of weekdays on the Sabbath, nor the burnt-offering of weekdays on Festivals. Raba said: Scripture saith, [no manner of work shall be done in them save that which every man must eat], that only may be done of you:¹⁵ 'that', but not its preliminaries; 'only', but not circumcision out of its proper time, which might [otherwise] be inferred a minori. R. Ashi said: [On the seventh day is a Sabbath of] holy rest [sabbathon]¹⁶ is an affirmative precept, thus there is an affirmative and a negative precept in respect of Festivals, and an affirmative precept cannot supersede a negative plus an affirmative precept.¹⁷

R. AKIBA STATED A GENERAL PRINCIPLE, etc. Rab Judah said in Rab's name: The *halachah* is as R. Akiba. And we learnt similarly in respect to the Passover sacrifice: R. Akiba stated a general principle: Any labour which can be performed on the eve of the Sabbath does not supersede the Sabbath; slaughtering [the Passover sacrifice], which can not be done on the eve of the Sabbath,¹⁸ supersedes the Sabbath; and Rab Judah said in Rab's name: The *halachah* is as R. Akiba. And these are necessary. For if he informed us [of the *halachah*] in connection with circumcision, — It is only there that the preparatory requirements which could be done the previous day do not supersede the Sabbath, since there is no *kareth*,¹⁹ but as for the Passover sacrifice, where there is *kareth*,²⁰ you might argue, Let them [the preliminaries] supersede the Sabbath. And if he told us [the *halachah*] about the Passover sacrifice, — that is because thirteen covenants were not made in connection therewith; but as for circumcision, seeing that thirteen covenants were made in connection therewith²¹ I would say, Let them [the preliminaries] supersede the Sabbath — Thus they are necessary.²²

MISHNAH. WE PERFORM ALL THE REQUIREMENTS OF CIRCUMCISION ON THE SABBATH. WE CIRCUMCISE,²³ UNCOVER [THE CORONA],²⁴ SUCK [THE WOUND],²⁵ AND PLACE A COMPRESS AND CUMMIN UPON IT.²⁶ IF ONE DID NOT CRUSH [THE CUMMIN] ON THE EVE OF THE SABBATH, HE MUST CHEW [IT] WITH HIS TEETH AND APPLY [IT TO THE WOUND]; IF HE DID NOT BEAT UP WINE AND OIL ON THE EVE OF THE SABBATH,²⁷ EACH MUST BE APPLIED SEPARATELY. WE MAY NOT MAKE A HALUK²⁸ FOR IT IN THE FIRST PLACE, BUT MUST WRAP A RAG ABOUT IT. IF THIS WAS NOT PREPARED FROM THE EVE OF THE SABBATH, ONE WINDS IT ABOUT HIS FINGER²⁹ AND BRINGS IT, AND EVEN THROUGH ANOTHER COURTYARD.

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Original footnotes renumbered. See [Structure of the Talmud Files](#)

1. Thus R. Josiah learns that circumcision at the proper time supersedes leprosy from 'flesh', whilst the same for circumcision after the eighth day must be inferred from the common feature (v. *supra* 132b), this agreeing with R. Safra's rejection of Raba's argument. Whereas R. Jonathan infers the former a minori, so that 'flesh' may be applied to the other case, as Raba.
2. Sc. the cutting away of the bahereth.
3. V. p. 357, n. 8.
4. Deut. XXIV, 8.
5. Lit., 'thou mayest not do'. I.e., one may not intentionally cut off a bahereth.
6. I.e., one need not refrain from wearing a tight shoe of bast or carrying a heavy burden on his shoulder, though these may remove the bahereth.
7. Before he accepted Raba's dictum.
8. In order to be rendered clean. Yet even so it is permitted for the sake of circumcision.
9. Eight days old. He has no intention, yet 'flesh' is written in his case too (v. *supra* 132b, p. 665 n. 1).

10. Available to perform the circumcision — the prohibition concerning the bahereth will not apply to him, since he has no interest in the child's ritual cleanness.
11. Thus, if a stranger performs it, the positive command of circumcision is fulfilled without violating the injunction of leprosy, since the stranger has no such intention.
12. And thus the question remains: what need is there for the word 'flesh' in the case of the infant?
13. Ex. XII, 10.
14. Num. XXVIII, 10.
15. Ex. XII, 16.
16. Lev. XXIII, 3.
17. V. *supra* 24b and 25a for notes. From all the foregoing we see that labour which can be done on weekdays or which belongs primarily to weekdays does not supersede Festivals even in the fulfilment of a precept, and the same applies here.
18. If the fourteenth of Nisan falls on the Sabbath.
19. When circumcision is postponed.
20. For not offering it.
21. V. *supra* 132a top.
22. V. Pes. 66a.
23. Cut off the foreskin.
24. Peri'ah. By splitting the membrane and pulling it down.
25. Mezizah. Nowadays the suction is accomplished by means of a glass cylinder.
26. To make the wound heal.
27. This too was applied to the wound.
28. A kind of shirt-shaped bandage placed over the membrum and tied at the corona, to prevent the flesh from growing back and recovering the membrum.
29. As though it were a garment, so that it shall not be carried just like on weekdays.

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Shabbath 133b

GEMARA. Consider: He [the Tanna] states them all [separately]: what is ALL THE REQUIREMENTS OF CIRCUMCISION to include? — It is to include that which our Rabbis taught: He who circumcises,¹ as long as he is engaged in the circumcision, he returns both for the shreds [of the corona] which invalidate the circumcision and for those which do not invalidate the circumcision.² Once he has withdrawn,³ he returns on account of the shreds which invalidate the circumcision, but not for the shreds which do not invalidate the circumcision.

Who teaches: Once he has withdrawn, he must not return? Said Rabbah b. Bar Hanah in R. Johanan's name: It is R. Ishmael the son of R. Johanan b. Berokah. For it was taught: If the fourteenth [of Nisan] falls on the Sabbath, the passover sacrifice is flayed as far as the breast: this is the view of R. Ishmael the son of R. Johanan b. Berokah. But the Sages maintain: We flay the whole of it.⁴ But how so? R. Johanan may rule [thus] only there, because we do not require [the application of the verse,] This is my God, and I will adorn him,⁵ but here that we require, 'This is my God, and I will adorn him',⁶ that indeed is so!⁷ (For it was taught: This is my God, and I will adorn him: [i.e.,] adorn thyself before Him in [the fulfilment of] precepts. [Thus:] make a beautiful *sukkah* in His honour,⁸ a beautiful lulab, a beautiful *shofar*, beautiful fringes, and a beautiful Scroll of the Law, and write it with fine ink, a fine reed [-pen], and a skilled penman, and wrap it about with beautiful silks. Abba Saul interpreted, and I will be like him:⁹ be thou like Him: just as He is gracious and compassionate, so be thou gracious and compassionate.) — Rather said R. Ashi, Which [Tanna] is this? It is R. Jose. For we learnt: Whether it is clearly visible or it is not clearly visible,¹⁰ the Sabbath is desecrated on its account.¹¹ R. Jose ruled: If it is clearly visible, they must not desecrate the Sabbath for it.¹² But how so? Perhaps R. Jose rules [thus] only there, because the Sabbath was not given to be superseded;¹³ but here that the Sabbath was given to be superseded,¹⁴ it indeed is so?¹⁵ — Rather said the

scholars of Nehardea: It is the Rabbis who disagree with R. Jose. For we learnt: Four priests entered:¹⁶ two held two courses [of loaves] in their hands, and two held two censers,¹⁷ and four preceded them, two in order to remove the two courses,¹⁸ and two to remove the two censers. Those who brought in [the new loaves and frankincense] stood in the north facing the south,¹⁹ while those who carried [them] out stood in the south facing the north:²⁰ these withdrew [the old] and these laid down [the new], the handbreadth of one at the side of the handbreadth of the other,²¹ because it is said, [And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread] before me alway.²² R. Jose said: Even if these remove and the other replace [it later], that too constitutes 'alway'.²³

Our Rabbis taught: The membrum must be trimmed,²⁴ and if one does not trim it, he is punished with *kareth*. Who? R. Kahana said: The surgeon.²⁵ R. Papa demurred 'The surgeon!' he can say to them, 'I have performed half of the precept: do you perform half of the precept.'²⁶ Rather said R. Papa: An adult.²⁷ R. Ashi demurred: Of an adult it is explicitly stated, and the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, [that soul shall be cut off from his people]?²⁸ Rather said R. Ashi: In truth it means the surgeon: e.g., if he came at twilight on the Sabbath, and they warned him, 'you have no time',²⁹ but he insisted, 'I have time: So he performed it but had not time [to complete it]. Thus the net result is³⁰ that he [merely] made a wound,³¹ hence he is punished with *kareth*.³²

WE SUCK OUT, etc. R. Papa said: If a surgeon does not suck [the WOUND], it is dangerous and he is dismissed. It is obvious? Since we desecrate the Sabbath for it, it is dangerous?³³ — You might say that this blood is stored up, therefore he informs us that it is the result of a wound, and it is like a bandage and cummin: just as when one does not apply a bandage and cummin there is danger, so here too if one does not do it there is danger.³⁴

WE PLACE A COMPRESS UPON IT. Abaye said: Mother told me,³⁵ A salve [compress] for all pains [is made of] seven parts of fat and one of wax. Raba said: Wax and resin.³⁶ Raba taught this publicly at Mahoza, [whereupon] the family of Benjamin the doctor tore up their [bandage] cloths.³⁷ Said he to them. Yet I have left you one [cure unrevealed]. For Samuel said: He who washes his face and does not dry it well, scabs will break out on him.

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Original footnotes renumbered. See [Structure of the Talmud Files](#)

1. On the Sabbath.
2. This is what the Mishnah includes.
3. From circumcising, thinking it finished.
4. v. *Supra* 116b. When one reaches the breast he temporarily ceases flaying in order to remove the fats; this cessation is analogous to withdrawing in the case of circumcision, and R. Ishmael rules that he must not return to complete the flaying.
5. Ex. XV, 2. Or perhaps, and I will adorn myself for His sake. Once the fats are removed for sacrificial purposes there is no adornment of the precept in trimming the flesh and making it look presentable.
6. The cutting away even of the shreds which does not invalidate circumcision is nevertheless an adornment thereof.
7. And may be permitted even by R. Ishmael.
8. Lit., 'before Him'.
9. Reading [H] as a combination [H] and He (have to act alike).
10. Viz., the crescent of the New Moon, which had to be seen and attested by two witnesses before the *Beth din* could sanctify the beginning of the month, v. R.H. 21b.
11. By the two witnesses appointed to look out for it. They must come to the *Beth din* to testify, even if it is the Sabbath and they are without the *tehum* (q.v. [Glos.](#)), though since it is clearly visible the *Beth din* is in any case aware of its presence.

12. Because it is unnecessary. The same applies to the shreds which do not invalidate the circumcision.
13. From the very outset there was no need to desecrate the Sabbath, since the new moon is clearly visible to all.
14. On account of the circumcision.
15. That one must cut away all shreds.
16. The Temple on the Sabbath to set the shewbread.
17. Of frankincense for the loaves, v. Lev. XXIV, 7.
18. Of the previous week's loaves.
19. Because the Table was placed east to west, and the priests stood at its side facing its breadths.
20. I.e., opposite the other priests across the Table.
21. I.e., the withdrawing and the replacing were almost simultaneous.
22. Ex. XXV, 30.
23. I.e., 'always' merely indicates that a night must not pass without shewbread lying upon the table. But the Rabbis hold that an interval would mark a new placing, not a continuation of the old, and so 'always' would be unfulfilled. Similarly, when one withdraws from circumcision, to return for the shreds is a new act, hence not permitted unless these invalidate circumcision.
24. I.e., the shreds which invalidate the circumcision must be removed; this appears to be the interpretation of Rashi and R. Han. Jast.: (One may) trim the preputium by splitting and drawing it upwards so as to form a pouch around the denuded cone. v. R. Han. second interpretation.
25. Because he violated the Sabbath without completely fulfilling the precept. On this interpretation the reference is to the Sabbath.
26. I.e., his labour was certainly permitted as far as it went.
27. It refers to an adult who circumcises himself on weekdays, and he is punished by *kareth* because he remains uncircumcised on account of these shreds.
28. Gen. XVII, 14; v. p. 665, n. 1. Why then state it here?
29. To perform the whole (if the circumcision before the day ends).
30. Lit., 'it is found'.
31. It is not regarded as circumcision.
32. Because he had no right even to start.
33. Otherwise it would not be permitted, as it is not actually part of circumcision.
34. If the blood were held to be stored up in a separate receptacle, as it were, there would be no desecration of the Sabbath in sucking it out, and therefore the fact that it is done on the Sabbath would not prove that its omission is dangerous. But since it comes out as a result of a wound, i.e., the pressing causes a wound and thus forces out the blood, it is permitted only because its omission is dangerous.
35. She was really his foster-mother, v. Kid. 31b.
36. [H] is a commentator's Gloss; v. Jast.
37. They had not more need for them, the secret now being known to all. The phrase may also mean: they tore their garments (in despair and vexation).

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