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Yevamos Daf 72

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Rabbah bar Yitzchak said in the name of Rav: The commandment of uncovering the circumcision (uncovering the corona by splitting the membrane that covers it and drawing it towards its base) was not given to our forefather Avraham; for it is said [Yehoshua 5:2]: At that time Hashem said to Yehoshua: *“Make sharp knives of flint for yourself (and circumcise the Children of Israel again, a second time).”* (This is referring to mitzvah of uncovering the circumcision.)

The Gemora asks: Perhaps this applied to those who were not previously circumcised; for it is written [Yehoshua 5:5]: *For all the people that came out were circumcised, but all the people that were born in the Wilderness were not circumcised.*

The Gemora answers: If so, what is the meaning of *“and circumcise the Children of Israel again”*? Rather, it must apply to the uncovering the circumcision.

The Gemora asks: What is the meaning of the last words of the verse: *“and circumcise the Children of Israel again, a second time”*?

The Gemora answers: It is to compare the end of the circumcision with its commencement. Just as the commencement of the circumcision is essential (*and if a majority of the thick upper part of the foreskin is not cut off, the circumcision is invalid*), so too, the end of the circumcision essential (*failure to remove strands that cover the corona can invalidate the circumcision*); for we learned in a Mishna: These are the shreds which render circumcision invalid: Flesh which covers the greater part of the corona. A

Kohen whose circumcision was so defective is not permitted to eat *terumah*.

Ravina said, or it might be said, Rabbi Yirmiyah bar Abba said in the name of Rav: Flesh which covers the greater part of only the height of the corona. (71b)

The Gemora asks: Why weren't they circumcised in the Wilderness?

You can answer that it was due to the fatigue of the journey (*this would have threatened their lives*).

Alternatively, you can answer that it was because the north wind did not blow for them (*the north wind is neither hot nor cold, and it usually scatters the clouds which enable the sun to shine through and heal the circumcision wound.*)

The Gemora asks: Why didn't the north wind blow?

The Gemora answers: They were being rebuked by Hashem (*on account of the sin of the golden calf or because of the spies*).

Alternatively, you can say that the northern wind didn't blow in order that the Clouds of Glory should not scatter.

Rav Pappa said: Therefore, circumcision should not be performed on a cloudy day or on a day when the south wind blows; nor should one let blood on such a day. At the present time, however, since many people are in the habit of disregarding these precautions, we apply the verse [Tehillim 116:6]: Hashem protects the simple. (71b – 72a)



The Rabbis taught in a braisa: All forty years that the Jews were in the Wilderness, there was never a day that the north wind did not blow at midnight, as it is stated [Shmos 12:29]: *And it came to pass at midnight, that Hashem smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt.*

The Gemora asks: How do we derive that from this verse?

The Gemora answers: We see from that verse that a time of favor is a significant thing. (72a)

Rav Huna said: A *mashuch* (one who is properly circumcised, but the remaining skin of his member has been drawn forward to cover up the corona) is Biblically permitted to eat *terumah* but has been forbidden to do so by Rabbinical ordinance, because he appears to be like one uncircumcised.

The Gemora asks from the following braisa: It is necessary for the *mashuch* to be circumcised again.

The Gemora answers: That is only by Rabbinical ordinance.

The Gemora asks: Why did the one who asked this question assume that the braisa meant that he is Biblically required to circumcise himself again? By the fact the braisa uses the term 'necessary,' it is clearly a mere Rabbinic requirement!?

The Gemora answers: He made a mistake because of the latter part of the braisa, which stated: Rabbi Yehudah said: A *mashuch* should not circumcise himself because it is dangerous for him. They said to him: Surely many were circumcised in the days of Ben Koziba (or *Bar Kochba*, the leader of the Judean revolt against Rome in 132 C.E. In the course of the persecutions that preceded the revolt, the Romans forced many Jews to draw the skin forward in order to obliterate the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, and when liberation came they were again circumcised), and yet, they gave birth to sons and daughters. They were required to circumcise themselves again, as it is said [Breishis 17:13]: *Circumcise, you shall circumcise*, and the repetition teaches

us even a hundred times. And it also states in that verse: *He has violated my covenant*. This includes one who is *mashuch*.

The Gemora interjects: What is the purpose of the second verse?

The Gemora answers: In case you might argue that *circumcise, you shall circumcise* comes to include only the shreds which render a circumcision invalid (and that a second circumcision would be required when such shreds remained, but it would not be including the case of the *mashuch*), so he added: *He has violated my covenant*, which includes the *mashuch*.

The Gemora now returns to answer its question: The one who asked this question consequently thought that, since the Gemora cited a Scriptural text, the law must be Biblical; but the fact is that it is only Rabbinical, and the Scriptural text is a merely supporting the Rabbinical law. (72a)

The Gemora challenges Rav Huna from the following braisa: A *tumtum* may not eat *terumah* (for perhaps he is a male and uncircumcised), but his women and slaves may eat *terumah*. A *mashuch* and one born circumcised may eat of it. The hermaphrodite (androgynous) may eat *terumah*, but not sacred offerings (for those can only be eaten by a male Kohen), while the *tumtum* may eat neither *terumah* nor sacred offerings.

The braisa had stated: The *mashuch* and one born circumcised may eat *terumah*; is not this a refutation against Rav Huna?

The Gemora notes: It is indeed a refutation. (72a)

The braisa had stated: A *Kohen tumtum* may not eat *terumah*. His women and slaves may eat *terumah*.

The Gemora asks: How can a *tumtum* (regarding whom we are uncertain if he is a male or a female) have a wife? If you want to say that the *tumtum* betrothed a woman, as was

taught in the following braisa: If a *tumtum* betrothed a woman, the *kiddushin* takes effect; if a *tumtum* is betrothed by a male, the *kiddushin* takes effect. However, this is only for a stringency (*that a get would be required*), but not for a leniency (*we do not regard a tumtum as a certain male, and allow his wife to eat terumah*). A *tumtum* might be a woman, and a woman cannot marry another woman.

Abaye answers: We are referring to a case when his testicles are outside the membrane (*he is definitely a male, but nevertheless classified as a tumtum because his member is concealed*).

Rava answers: The braisa is not referring to his wife; rather, "his women" means his mother. (*If an Israelite woman is married to a Kohen, and she gives birth to a tumtum, and the husband dies; she is permitted to eat terumah on account of her son.*)

The Gemora asks: Isn't this halachah obvious?

The Gemora answers: One might think that one who can have children can entitle his mother to eat *terumah*, but one who cannot have children, cannot entitle his mother to eat *terumah*. The braisa teaches us that he can in fact entitle his mother to eat *terumah*.

The Gemora provides support to Abaye's interpretation from the braisa itself: A *tumtum* may eat neither *terumah* nor sacred offerings. According to Abaye, this (that the braisa repeats the ruling) is quite correct, since the first clause speaks of the certainly non-circumcised *tumtum*, while the latter clause speaks of the doubtful one; but according to Rava, however, what need was there for the mention of the *tumtum* in the final clause?

The Gemora answers: The meaning of *tumtum* (in the latter case) is someone who is uncircumcised.

The Gemora asks: If, however, one whose status as a non-circumcised person is in doubt is not permitted to eat

*terumah*, would someone who is definitely an uncircumcised person be permitted to eat it?

The Gemora answers: The latter clause is an interpretation of the first: What is the reason that a *tumtum* may not eat *terumah*? It is because he might have the status of an uncircumcised person, and a man who is uncircumcised may eat neither *terumah* nor sacred offerings. (72a)

The Gemora states: Let us say that Rav Huna's halachah (*that a mashuch is Biblically permitted to eat terumah but has been forbidden to do so by Rabbinical ordinance, because he appears to be like one uncircumcised*) is actually a matter of Tannaic dispute, for it was taught in the following braisa: A *mashuch*, or a convert that was born circumcised, or a child who is older than eight days old, or others who are to be circumcised... the Gemora explains this to include one who has two foreskins. The braisa continues: [All of the above] can be circumcised only by day. Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon rules: If the circumcision is performed on the eighth day, it must be performed by day, but if it is performed after the eighth day, it can be performed either by day or at night.

Ostensibly, their argument would depend on the following point: The Tanna Kamma maintains that one is Biblically obligated to circumcise one who is *mashuch*, and the circumcision must be performed by day. Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon would hold that it is only a Rabbinical obligation (*like Rav Huna*), and therefore the circumcision can be performed even at night.

The Gemora objects to this logic: Would you think that anyone holds that a circumcision of a child who is more than eight days old would only be a Rabbinic requirement (*of course, not*)?

Rather, everyone agrees that the requirement to circumcise a *mashuch* is merely Rabbinic, and the requirement to circumcise a child who is more than eight days old is Biblical. The Tannaim argue regarding the following point: The Tanna Kamma maintains that we expound the extra letter "vav" in

the verse *And on the eighth day* to teach us that all circumcisions must be performed by day. Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon does not expound the extra “vav,” and thus holds that any circumcision which is not performed on the eighth day can be performed at night.

The Gemora notes: The exposition here is of the same nature as the following: When Rabbi Yochanan was once sitting at his studies and expounding that ‘nossar’ (*sacrificial meat that has been leftover beyond the time that the Torah designated for its consumption*) at its proper time (on the day it became nossar) may be burned in the daytime only, and if not at its proper time, it may be burned either in the day or in the night. And Rabbi Elozar raised an objection: I only know that a child whose circumcision takes place on the eighth day must be circumcised in the daytime only; from where, however, is it derived that the case of a child whose circumcision takes place on the ninth, tenth, eleventh or twelfth<sup>1</sup> is also included? It is because it was stated: And on the (eighth) day (and the ‘and’ is superfluous); and even the one who

bases no expositions on a ‘vav’ (and) does base his exposition on the basis of a ‘vav’ and a ‘hey’ (the). [Therefore, nossar should have the same halachah – that no matter when it is burned, it must be burned by daytime only!?] Rabbi Yochanan remained silent. After he went out, Rabbi Yochanan said to Rish Lakish: I saw that the son of Pedas was sitting and making expositions like Moses in the name of the Almighty. Rish Lakish said to him: Was this his? It is really a braisa! Rabbi Yochanan asked him: Where was it taught? Rish Lakish replied: In Toras Kohanim. He (R’

<sup>1</sup> The Mishna in Shabbos 137a states: An infant (*because of a doubt whether the Shabbos was the infant’s eighth day*) is sometimes circumcised on the eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth days (*since his birth*); not earlier nor later. How so? In the normal course, it is on the eighth day; if he is born at twilight (*bein hashemashos – a time that is questionable if it belongs to the end of the preceding day, or to the beginning of the following day*) - on the ninth (*as it may have been night already, and circumcision must not take place before the*

Yochanan) went out and learned it in three days; and understood it completely in three months. (72a – 72b)

Rabbi Elozar said: An uncircumcised person who sprinkled the *mei chatas* (*waters of purification*) upon one who was *tamei* from corpse *tumah*, the sprinkling is valid, for he is similar to a *tevul yom* (*one who has immersed in a mikvah but still has tumah on him until nightfall*), who even though he is prohibited from eating or touching *terumah*, he would be qualified to sprinkle the *mei chatas*.

The Gemora asks on this comparison: Perhaps a *tevul yom* can sprinkle the *mei chatas* because we find another leniency by him; namely, that he is permitted to eat *maaser sheini* (*one brings one tenth of his produce to Yerushalayim to be eaten there*), and one who is uncircumcised cannot eat *maaser sheini*.

The Gemora answers: We are not discussing the permissibility of eating the *mei chatas*; we are discussing the eligibility of touching it. Just as a *tevul yom* is prohibited from touching *terumah*, yet, he is permitted to sprinkle the *mei chatas*; so too, an uncircumcised person, who is permitted to touch *terumah* should certainly be permitted to sprinkle the *mei chatas*.

The Gemora cites a braisa supporting Rabbi Elozar’s opinion. An uncircumcised person who sprinkled the *mei chatas* (*waters of purification*) upon one who was *tamei* from corpse *tumah*, the sprinkling is valid, and an incident once occurred like this, and the Sages ruled that the sprinkling was valid. (72b)

*eighth*); at twilight on *Shabbos* eve - on the tenth (*for the circumcision cannot be on Friday, for perhaps the child was born on Shabbos; he cannot be circumcised on Shabbos, for perhaps the child was born on Friday, and only an “eight-day-circumcision” can override Shabbos*); if a festival follows the *Shabbos* - on the eleventh; if the two days of *Rosh Hashanah* (*follow the Shabbos*) - on the twelfth.

The Gemora asks from a different braisa which states the following: If a *tumtum* performed the sanctification of the *mei chatas*, his sanctification is invalid, because he might not be circumcised, and such a person is ineligible to perform sanctification. If an androgynous (*hermaphrodite*) performed the sanctification, his sanctification is valid. Rabbi Yehudah said: Even if an androgynous performed the sanctification, it is invalid because he might be a woman, and a

This braisa explicitly teaches us that the uncircumcised person or the person whose circumcision is a matter of doubt is forbidden to perform sanctification.

Rav Yosef replied: This Tanna is one from the academy of Rabbi Akiva who include the uncircumcised in the same prohibition as that of the *tamei*; as it was taught: Rabbi Akiva said: “A man, a man” includes the uncircumcised in the prohibition of eating *terumah*.

Rava related: I was once sitting before Rav Yosef when I raised the following difficulty: Then the Tanna should not have omitted to state: the uncircumcised and the *tamei*, and one would at once say that the author was Rabbi Akiva (for he equates the two; since, however, the uncircumcised is always omitted, it follows that, with the exception of the case of the red heifer which is particularly stringent, he does not have the same status as the *tamei*; how then could it be said that according to Rabbi Akiva the uncircumcised may not touch *terumah*)?

The Gemora disagrees: But does he not? Surely it was taught in a braisa: The uncircumcised and the *tamei* are exempt from (the mitzvah of) appearing at the Temple Courtyard (on the three pilgrimage festivals)?

The Gemora answers: There, the case is different, because he (the uncircumcised) is a repulsive person (and therefore regarded as *tamei*). (72b)

## INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

### *Yisro's Circumcision*

The Gemora in Sanhedrin (94a) states regarding Yisro that he circumcised himself in the Wilderness when he came to convert.

The question can be asked from our Gemora which states that the Jews not circumcise themselves while wandering in the Wilderness for one of two reasons. Either it was due to the fatigue of the journey (*this would have threatened their lives*), or alternatively, you can say that it was because the north wind did not blow for them (*the north wind is neither hot nor cold, and it usually scatters the clouds which enable the sun to shine through and heal the circumcision wound.*)

Accordingly, how could Yisro circumcise himself in the Wilderness if this posed a threat; doesn't the Torah say “v'chay ba-hem” – we are to ‘live’ by the mitzvos!?

The Chasam Sofer (Teshuvos Orach Chaim, 208) answers by explaining that the reason the Jews in the Wilderness did not circumcise themselves was because they were constantly travelling and they never knew when they were going to have to pick up and journey again since it was solely based on when the pillar of fire or clouds of glory would move. All this was only when they lacked the northern wind, however, regarding Yisro, he was not commanded to travel with them and he therefore had no danger in his circumcision because he was able to stay in his place until he healed. Another reason why there is no proof from Yisro is his arrival was before the sin of the golden calf, and until that time, the northern wind did indeed blow.

## DAILY MASHAL

### *Harp and the Wind*

The Gemora in Brochos (3b) asks: And did David actually know when midnight was? If Moshe didn't know, is it

possible that David knew? [Although it is possible that David had some type of clock, and we know that such things existed in those times as is evident by the Zohar in Lech Lecho, where he mentions a type of alarm clock, which functioned through water, nevertheless, the Zohar states that it was impossible to determine the precise moment of midnight through the use of those man-made items!?!]

The *Gemora* answers: David knew when it was midnight, for he had a sign which notified him, as Rav Acha bar Bizna said in the name of Rabbi Shimon Chasida: There was a harp hanging over David's bed and when it reached midnight, the north wind would blow on the harp and it played by itself. At that point, David would get up and study Torah until the break of dawn.

The *Mefarshim* ask: If so, why couldn't Moshe make use of a harp as well?

The Satmar Rebbe answers based on the following Yonasan ben Uziel in Parshas Yisro: On the night that the Jewish people were about to leave Egypt, the clouds lifted them up and brought them to the place where the Beis Hamikdash would be built in order for them to offer the *korban pesach*.

The *Gemora* in Yevamos (72a) states that for all forty years that the Jewish people were in the Wilderness, the northern wind did not blow for them. One of the reasons cited was because the wind would cause the Clouds of Honor to scatter.

Accordingly, it can be explained that the night of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, the northern wind could not blow, for if it would have, it would have scattered the Clouds of Honor, and they would not have been able to "fly" to Yerushalayim. It was for this reason that Moshe could not determine the precise time for midnight on that night through the usage of a harp, for the harp would begin to play when the northern wind blew on it, and that night, the northern wind did not blow at all.