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CHAPTER XV.

REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE TYING AND UNTYING OF KNOTS ON THE SABBATH.

MISHNA: Following are the knots for the tying of which one becomes culpable. The knot of the camel-drivers (made on the guiding-ring) and the knot of the seamen (made on the bow of a ship); just as one becomes culpable for tying them, so also one becomes culpable for untying them. R. Meir said: "One does not become culpable for any knots that can be untied with one hand."

GEMARA: What is the meaning of a knot of the camel-drivers and a knot of seamen? Shall we assume, that by such a knot is meant the one that is tied in attaching the guiding-line suspended from the nose-ring of a camel to something else, and also the knot made in attaching the hawser of a ship to a capstan on the dock? (Such knots are not permanent, why should the tying of them be prohibited?) Nay; by that knot is meant the one made in attaching the guiding-line to the nose-ring and the hawser to the ship itself (both of which are permanent knots).

MISHNA: There are knots on account of which one does not become culpable, as in the case of a camel-driver's or seaman's knot. A woman may tie the slit of her chemise, the bands of her hood, the bands of her girdle, the straps of her shoes and sandals; also the bands of leather flasks (filled) with wine or oil, and of a pot of meat. R. Eliezer, the son of Jacob, says: "One may tie a rope in front of cattle, in order that they may not escape." One may tie a bucket (over the well) with his girdle, but not with a rope. R. Jehudah permits this to be done with a rope also. For a rule was laid down by R. Jehudah: One is not culpable for any knot which is not permanently fastened.

GEMARA: Is there not a difficulty in understanding the Mishna itself? The first part states, that there are knots on account of which one does not become culpable, etc., implying,

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therefore, that, while one who ties them does not become liable for a sin-offering, at the same time he must not do it to commence with. The latter part, however, says, that a woman *may* tie the slit of her chemise, etc., implying, then, that she may do it in the first place? The Mishna means: There are some knots for the tying of which one does not become culpable, as in the case of the knots of the camel-drivers, etc., and they are: The knots by means of which the guiding-line is attached to the nose-ring, and the knots by means of which the hawsers are attached to the ship itself. For tying such knots one does not become liable for a sin-offering, but he must not make them to commence with (because at times the knot is left on the nose-ring or on the ship for some time), and there are other knots which *may* be tied in the first place, such as the slit of a woman's chemise, etc.; what would he inform us? Is it not self-evident, that a woman must tie the slit in her chemise. The case treated of is where a chemise has two slits, an upper and a

lower, and it can be put on (over the head) even if the lower one is tied. We might assume, then, that only the upper one of the slits would be permitted to be tied; he therefore informs us, that both the upper and the lower may be tied and untied.

"The bands of her hood." Is this not self-evident? The case is, that the bands of the hood are always tied, and the woman slips on the hood without untying or tying the bands, and we might assume that for this reason the knot is considered permanent; he therefore informs us, that if a hair become entangled in the hood, the woman may tie and untie the bands.

"The straps of her shoes and sandals," etc. R. Jehudah, the brother of R. Sala the Pious, had a pair of sandals, which were sometimes worn by him and sometimes by his child. He came to Abayi and asked him whether he might tie and untie them (on Sabbath). Said Abayi: "He who does this unintentionally becomes liable for a sin-offering." Said R. Jehudah to him: "If thou hadst said, that one is not culpable for doing this, but that it must not be done to commence with, it would seem strange to me; thou sayest now, that one is liable for a sin-offering." Asked Abayi: "Why so?" Answered R. Jehudah: "Because on week-days I sometimes also wear the sandals, and (if my child wishes to use them) I untie them and adjust them to the child's foot." Answered Abayi: "If such be the case, they may be tied or untied (on the Sabbath) to commence with."

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R. Jeremiah was walking behind R. Abuha on unclaimed ground, and the band of his sandal having been torn off, he asked R. Abuha what to do. R. Abuha told him to take damp seaweeds, which an animal can eat (and which may therefore be handled on Sabbath), and tie his sandal.

Abayi stood before R. Joseph in private ground, and the band of one of his sandals becoming torn off, he asked R. Joseph what to do. Said R. Joseph: "Leave thy sandal here and walk without it." Asked Abayi: "Wherein does my case differ from that of R. Jeremiah?" Answered R. Joseph: "R. Jeremiah's sandal was torn off in unclaimed ground, where, had he left it, it would have been lost, but thine is in my yard and will be safe." Said Abayi: "But the sandal is a perfect vessel; for I can put it on my other foot and then it will not fall off. Why should I not be permitted to handle it?" R. Joseph answered: "Because we learned elsewhere in regard to Chalitzah that R. Johanan interpreted a Boraitha in accordance with R. Jehudah, who says, that if the band of a sandal was torn off, the sandal cannot be regarded as a vessel. We must assume, therefore, that the ordinance according to R. Jehudah prevails."

"Also the bands of leather flasks filled with oil or wine," etc. Is this not self-evident? The case treated of is where the flasks had two mouths, and lest we assume that only one of them may be tied and untied, he informs us that both may be tied.

"And of a pot of meat." Is this not self-evident? The Mishna means to state, that even if the pot have an opening at the bottom it might be assumed that the knot tied around the mouth of the pot is permanent and should not be untied. We are informed that it may be untied, nevertheless.

"R. Eliezer, the son of Jacob, said," etc. Is *this* not self-evident? The case treated of is where there were two ropes, one tied higher up and the other lower. We might assume, that because the lower one is tied permanently one may not untie it; therefore he informs us that both may be tied

and untied. Said R. Jehudah in the name of Samuel: "The Halakha prevails according to R. Eliezer ben Jacob."

"*One may tie a bucket with his girdle, but not with a rope,*" etc. What kind of a rope is not permitted? Is it an ordinary rope? Why does R. Jehudah permit it? It remains permanently tied? Shall we assume that it refers to the rope of a weaver? Why is it not permitted? It will surely be removed, because the weaver will need it? Or is it prohibited simply as a precautionary

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measure, lest some one tie the bucket with an ordinary rope, and R. Jehudah does not entertain this apprehension? Then it is contradictory to the following Boraitha: "A rope fastened to a bucket which became torn, should not be tied into a firm knot, but simply tied into a loop." R. Jehudah says: "It should be joined together with the owner's girdle, but it must not be tied into a loop." This would be a case of where both the rabbis and R. Jehudah contradict themselves. There is no contradiction at all. As for the rabbis, they hold, that an ordinary rope may be mistaken for the rope of a weaver, because both are called ropes, but a loop cannot be mistaken for a knot, because they have different names. As for R. Jehudah, he prohibits a loop to be made, not because he holds that a loop may be mistaken for a knot, but because the loop in this case is equal to a knot.

R. Aba in the name of R. Hyya b. Ashi, quoting Rabh, said: "One may bring a rope from his house and can tie it to the cow, and then fasten it to the crib."

R. Johanan asked of R. Jehudah bar Levayi: "May weaving utensils, either upper or lower, be handled on the Sabbath?" Answered R. Jehudah: "Nay; they may not." "Why so?" "Because on week-days they are also never used for any other purpose (being too heavy); hence they are always used for weaving alone (and therefore must not be handled on Sabbath)."

MISHNA: One may fold his clothes (just removed) even four or five times (on the Sabbath). On the eve of Sabbath one may prepare his beds for use on the Sabbath, but not at the close of Sabbath for use after the Sabbath is gone. R. Ishmael says: "One may arrange his clothes and prepare his beds on the Day of Atonement for the Sabbath; further, the sacrificial tallow left over from the Sabbath may be offered up on the Day of Atonement (if the two succeed one another, before the Jewish calendar was arranged); but not such as is left over from the Day of Atonement on the Sabbath." R. Aqiba said: "Neither that (tallow) left over from the Sabbath may be offered up on the Day of Atonement, nor that of the Day of Atonement on the Sabbath."

GEMARA: The school of R. Yanai said: The Mishna only permits the folding of clothes by one man, but not by two, and also only in case the clothes are new, but not if they are old (because old clothes are better preserved by folding). New clothes must only be folded if they are white clothes, but not if

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they are colored. White clothes may be folded only if they constitute all the garments possessed by the man; but if he had others, he must not fold even those, as we have learned in a Tosephta: "The family of R. Gamaliel did not even fold white clothes, because they had others for a

change."

R. Huna said: "If one have a change of clothes for the Sabbath, he should change them; if not, he should at least let them down." ¹ R. Saphra opposed this: "If one let down his garments, he will be considered as a vain man." If he does this only on the Sabbath and not on week-days, he will not be considered vain but simply as one desirous of keeping the Sabbath with due respect, as it is written [Isaiah lviii. 13]: "And honor it by not doing thy usual pursuits." "Honor it" is meant to imply that, by wearing different clothes on the Sabbath, the Sabbath should be honored, for R. Johanan calls clothes signs of honor, and through clothes a man is honored. "By not doing thy usual pursuits" means that the walk on the Sabbath should not be as on week-days [ibid. ibid.]: "By not following thy own business," means to say, that only thy own business is not allowed, but heavenly business is. "And speaking (vain) words": the mode of speaking on Sabbath should not be like that on week-days. Speaking is not allowed, but thinking is. (All this is perfectly proper, not to dress as on week-days, nor to speak as on week-days); but what does a different walk on the Sabbath signify? It signifies, that one should not make long strides on the Sabbath, as Rabbi asked of R. Ishmael b. R. Jose: "May one make long strides on the Sabbath?" Answered he: "May one do so even on week-days? For I say, that a long stride deprives a man of a five hundredth part of the light of his eyes. A remedy for this is, however, the drinking of the wine over which the benediction is made on the eve before the Sabbath."

It is written [Ruth iii. 3]: "Therefore bathe and anoint thyself, and put thy garments upon thee," by which, said R. Elazar, is meant the Sabbath garments.

It is written [Proverbs ix. 9]: "Give to the wise (instruction), and he will become yet wiser." Said R. Elazar: By that is meant Ruth the Moabite and the Prophet Samuel of

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[paragraph continues] Ramah. Naomi said to Ruth: "Therefore bathe and anoint thyself, and put thy garments upon thee, and go down to the threshing-floor," but Ruth did as it is written further [ibid. 6]: "And she went down unto the threshing-floor, and did in accordance with all that her mother-in-law had commanded her," which means, that she first went down to the threshing-floor and then dressed herself, in order not to soil her clothes. As for Samuel, when Eli said unto him [I Samuel iii. 9]: "Go, lie down; and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth," he did at the time as it is written [ibid. 10]: "And the Lord came, and placed himself, and called as at previous times, Samuel, Samuel. And Samuel said, Speak, for thy servant heareth, "but did not say, "Speak, Jehovah," as he was told to do by Eli (because, not knowing who was speaking, he did not want to speak the Lord's name in vain).

It is written [Ruth ii. 3]: "And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers." Said R. Elazar: She went and came to and fro until she found such men as were fit company for her. "Then said Boaz unto his young man that was appointed over the reapers, Whose maiden is this?" [ibid. 5]. Was it proper for Boaz to inquire whose maiden she was? We have learned in a Boraitha: He (Boaz) noticed that she was very modest, for when gleaned from the sheaves, she did so standing if the sheaves were also standing, and if the sheaves were on the ground, she did not stoop, lest she reveal some of her form, but sat down and gleaned in that position.

"But keep close company with my own maidens" [ibid. 8]. Was it proper for Boaz to say "my

own maidens"? Was it his custom to mingle with the women? Said R. Elazar: "Because Boaz saw that 'Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth cleaved unto her' [ibid. i. 14] he thought, that if she were such a woman it would be proper for him to associate with her."

"And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come near hither (halom)" [ibid. ii. 14]. Said R. Elazar: "By the word 'halom' (near hither) Boas hinted to her that from her would spring the kingdom of David, who used the expression 'halom,' as it is written in [II Samuel vii. 18]: 'Then went King David in and sat down before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord Eternal? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me as far as hitherward (halom)?"

"And eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar" [Ruth ii. 14].

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[paragraph continues] "From this it can be inferred, that vinegar is good for (relieving excessive) heat," said R. Elazar. But R. Samuel ben Na'hmeni said: "This was also a hint to Ruth, that from her would spring forth a son, whose deeds would be sour as vinegar, and that was King Menasseh."

"And she seated herself beside the reapers" [ibid. ibid.]. Said R. Elazar: "Beside the reapers and not between them, was also a hint that the kingdom of David would eventually be divided."

"And he reached her parched corn, and she ate, and was satisfied, and had some left." Said R. Elazar: (This is a reference to the kingdom of David) "Ate at the time of David, was satisfied in the time of Solomon, and had some left in the time of King Chizkyah." Others say: "Ate during the days of David and Solomon, was satisfied during the days of Chizkyah, and had some left in the time of R. Jehudah Hanassi (a descendant of David), whose coachman even, according to the teaching of the Master, was said to be richer than the Shahur (king, shah) of Persia." In a Boraitha, however, we have learned: (This passage does not refer to the kingdom of David but to Israel in general). It means: "Israel ate in this life, will be satisfied in the times of the Messiah, and shall have some left in the world to come."

R. Hyya bar Aba said in the name of R. Johanan: "Whence do we know that a change of clothes is a biblical prescription?" Because it is written [Lev. vi. 4]: "And he shall take off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry forth the ashes to without the camp, unto a clean place." This was commented upon by the school of R. Ishmael to mean, that the clothes worn while cooking for one's master should not be worn when serving the master at table.

The same teacher said again: A scholar (Talmud-Chacham), upon whose clothes a stain can be found, deserves to be put to death, for it is written [Proverbs viii. 36]: "All those that hate me love death." Do not read, "those that hate me" (mesanai), but "those that cause others to hate me" (masnii) (implying that if a stain is noticed on a scholar's clothes, the whole law is held lightly). Rabhina said: "In the Boraitha was taught not 'upon whose clothes a stain can be found,' but 'upon whose clothes grease (Rebhad) is found.'" They do not differ, however.

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[paragraph continues] The former refers to an over-garment, while the latter to an under-garment.

R. Johanan said: Who can be called a scholar trustworthy enough to be believed when claiming a lost article, without identification, but simply by seeing the article lost and claiming it as his own? A scholar who is so particular that, if he happen to put on his night-robe wrong side out, he will take the trouble to take it off again and adjust it properly.

R. Johanan said again: "Who is the scholar worthy of being made the president of a congregation?" The one who, when asked concerning an ordinance bearing on any subject, knows exactly what to answer, even such ordinances as are contained in the Tract Kalah (Kalah is a supplement to the Talmud, which is not generally read, and treats of a bride).

He said again: "Who is the scholar that is deserving of having his work performed by his fellow-citizens? The one who neglects his own affairs to attend to religious affairs." This refers, however, only to one who has lost his subsistence on account of his congregational duties.

Again, R. Johanan said: "Who can be called a scholar (Talmud-Chacham)? One who can give the interpretation of any ordinance in whichever chapter (or tract) that may be shown him." What difference does that make? The difference is this: If a man is familiar only with the ordinances of a certain tract, he may only be competent to be the presiding officer of one community, but if he understand them all, he may be made the chief of the house of learning in a whole district.

"*R. Ishmael said: 'One may arrange his clothes,'*" etc. The rabbis taught: It is written [Numb. xxviii. 10]: "This is the burnt-offering of the Sabbath." From this we learn, that we may offer up the tallow left over from the Sabbath on the Day of Atonement; but one might say, that the fat left over on the Day of Atonement may be offered up on the Sabbath also; therefore the passage says [ibid. ibid.]: on every Sabbath." So says R. Ishmael, but R. Aqiba says, 'This is the burnt-offering of the Sabbath on every Sabbath,' implies, that the fat left over from the Sabbath may be sacrificed on a biblical feast-day; but one might say, that it may be done also on the day of Atonement; therefore the passage says 'on every Sabbath.'"

The point of difference between R. Ishmael and R. Aqiba is as follows: R. Ishmael contends that vow-offerings and voluntary offerings may be brought on feast-days, and therefore the

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term "every Sabbath" cannot refer to feast-days, but *does* refer to the Day of Atonement, whereas R. Aqiba contends that such offerings must not be brought on feast-days, and hence "every Sabbath" implies that the fat left over from the Sabbath may be offered up on a feast-day.

R. Zera or R. Aba said in the name of R. Huna: "If the Day of Atonement fall on a Sabbath, herbs for cooking must not be selected on that day." Said R. Mana: This we have learned in a Boraitha as follows: "Whence do we know that if the Day of Atonement fall on a Sabbath herbs must not be selected? Because it is written [Exod. xvi. 23]: 'A rest, a holy rest is unto the Lord to-morrow.'" Why is the word "rest" repeated? Shall we assume, that no other labor must be performed? This is ordained (in Chapter xx. 10): "Thou shalt not do any work." It must therefore refer to such work as is not really labor, as "selecting herbs" (and the passage must refer to a Sabbath on which the Day of Atonement happens to fall, because on ordinary Sabbaths no

additional prescription is necessary; but it being the Day of Atonement, on which, were it not also Sabbath, such work would be permissible, on account of alleviating the sufferings caused by fasting, we might assume that it would be allowed also on a Day of Atonement, which occurs on a Sabbath; therefore the passage refers to a Sabbath upon which the Day of Atonement happens to fall). R. Hyya bar Aba, however, in the name of R. Johanan said: Selecting herbs on a Sabbath concurrent with the Day of Atonement is permissible, and the repetition of the word "rest" is on account of the prohibition of actual labor, and as for there being another ordinance to that effect, it is for the purpose of signifying that the transgressor of this commandment will be punished for the violation of both the positive and the negative commandments.

We have learned in a Boraitha in support of R. Johanan: Selecting herbs on a Day of Atonement concurrent with a Sabbath is permissible. Nuts may be cracked and pomegranates cleaned after the afternoon prayer, for the purpose of alleviating the suffering of the fasting. In the house of R. Jehudah, cabbage was prepared, and in Rabba's house, pumpkins were cleaned. Later on Rabba noticed that this was being done even before the afternoon prayer; so he told them that a message was received from R. Johanan of Palestine that this was prohibited.

Footnotes

[234:1](#) The poor of those days, when at work--*i.e.*, on week days--used to roll up their long garments in order not to be hindered by them while at work. The rich used to wear long garments at all times; hence the above decree of R. Huna.

[236:1](#) Rashi interprets the word Rebhad to mean "semen."

[Next: Chapter XVI: Regulations Concerning Articles Which May be Saved From a Conflagration on Sabbath](#)