



This month's Daf Digest is dedicated
לע"נ Mr. Israel Gotlib of Antwerp and Petach Tikva, Yisrael Tzvi ben Zev ע"ה (23 Av).
Family Weiss, London

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Eye ailments

The Gemara enumerates three different eye ailments and the remedy for each one.

2) Nose and mouth ailments

Four remedies for nosebleeds are offered.

The Gemara explains how to determine the source of blood that is found in the mouth.

Tangentially the Gemara discusses which is more serious, blood from the liver or blood from the lungs.

The treatment for a bleeding mouth is recorded.

The remedies for aching teeth and the removal of sores from the throat are presented.

Three treatments are suggested for someone who has an illness that causes fluid to come out the nose.

3) Heart conditions

The Gemara identifies different conditions and their treatments.

4) Afflictions of the abdomen

Different abdomen-related ailments are identified and their respective treatments are explained.

5) Fevers

The treatment for an external fever is recorded.

The Gemara begins to describe the remedy for an internal fever. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. What are the remedies for curing a nosebleed?

2. What is the treatment for aching molars?

3. What is the cure for fainting?

4. What is the treatment for an external fever?

Distinctive INSIGHT

Can one derive medicinal benefit from a corpse?

ואי לא, ליבקי שכבא דשכיב בשבתא ונישקליה לידיה

The Gemara is in the middle of a presentation of remedies to cure different types of abdominal ailments. Among them is a bloated spleen, which can be cured with drinking dried leeches with wine. If this is not available, other alternatives are given, such as finding someone who had died on Shabbos, taking the hand of the corpse and placing it on his bloated spleen area. He then says, "Just as this hand dries up, so too should the spleen of so-and-so dry up (shriveled up to its normal size)."

It seems that the Gemara condones using a corpse for medicinal purposes. שו"ת באר משה (52) notes that this is in direct violation of the Gemara in Avoda Zara (29b) which teaches that it is prohibited to derive any benefit from the dead (Ramban holds that it is rabbinic prohibition, while Rashba holds that it is prohibited by the Torah. Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 369:1 rules according to Rashba).

באר משה suggests several approaches to resolve this issue. Our Gemara, where a person has a bloated spleen, is dealing with a person with a serious abdominal condition, which might be life threatening. The rule is that פיקוח נפש supersedes the prohibition of benefiting from a corpse. Nevertheless, this answer is not tenable, as the Gemara poses several other alternate cures for this condition. Even if it is a life threatening condition, a corpse may not be used when other solutions are available.

We can also say that placing the hand of the corpse near one's spleen is not actual benefit from the corpse. This is allowed for medicinal gain. We can also say that this is not a bona-fide cure, but rather a סגולה (remedy), where the cure comes only later. This is not considered a direct benefit from the corpse, and it is permitted.

אשל אברהם explains that the intent of the Gemara is that one should take the hand of a non-Jewish corpse to cure the bloated spleen. This is permitted for benefit. ■

HALACHAH Highlight

Utilizing the remedies of Chazal

לברוקתי ליתי עקרבתא דשב חומרי

For cataracts he should bring a scorpion that is spotted with seven colors

Rav Sherira Gaon¹ writes that one should not rely on the remedies recorded in the Gemara. The reason is that Chazal were presenting the remedies that were in use during their times but in our times we must check with expert physicians to determine whether these remedies are dangerous and could put a person's life at risk. Tosafos² writes more emphatically that the remedies enumerated by Chazal will not be beneficial in our times. Similarly, Rav Yosef Karo, in his Kesef Mishnah³, asserts that the remedies mentioned by Chazal were beneficial for the people who lived in Bavel but even in those times they were not beneficial for people who lived outside of Bavel.

The Yam Shel Shlomo⁴ writes that earlier generations issued a ban punishable with חרם for anyone who makes use of the remedies of Chazal. The reason for the enactment was the concern that someone would

attempt to use one of the remedies and if it would not work it would lead him to look pessimistically at Chazal. He would claim that Chazal did not know what they were talking about regarding medicine and in reality, the reason the remedies do not work is that treatments need to be adjusted for different places and times. Chavos Yair⁵ suggests that Chazal did not intend that a person should follow the remedy exactly as presented in the Gemara; rather their intent was that it should be mixed with other ingredients. Furthermore, since we cannot identify many of the plants mentioned by Chazal and since they did not indicate the quantity of each ingredient in the remedy these remedies should not be used. Sdei Chemed⁶ notes that according to Tosafos and Kesef Mishnah it would be permitted nowadays to experiment with the remedies of Chazal to see if they are effective whereas according to Yam Shel Shlomo it would be prohibited to experiment with these remedies since it could lead a person to mock the words of Chazal. ■

1. אוצר הגאונים סי' שע"ו.
2. תוס' מועד קטן י"א. ד"ה כוורא.
3. כסף משנה פ"ד מהל' דעות הי"ח.
4. ים של שלמה חולין פרק כל בשר סי' י"ב.
5. שו"ת חות יאיר סי' רל"ד.
6. שדי חמד מערכת ר' כלל נ"ד. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

The morning meal

"בפת שחרית דמעליא לכולי גופיה"

The Rashba writes that Jewish custom is like law.¹ Very often we can derive the proper way to observe halachos by watching how Jews, especially prominent Rabbanim, fulfill them. This is why it came as a surprise to a certain scholar who, when learning the halachos of eating פת שחרית – morning bread – each day, stumbled upon a very enigmatic Bach:

"The Mordechai writes that our rabbis were not careful to eat פת שחרית since they bring the grain from abroad..." In learning this sugya, the

scholar had not encountered any such qualification and wondered at the Talmudic source of this custom.

He asked the Chacham Tzvi, zt"l, who replied, "You are quite right; it is very enigmatic. Especially since we find in Gittin 69 that Rav Acha advises one to eat פת שחרית as it is a remedy for many maladies. It seems highly unlikely from the context that this only means bread baked from local grain which may be harder to come by than wine! At the very least, if that is what is meant it should have said so. Presumably the source of this practice is in Shabbos 66... But you should pay this no heed since the words of the sages stand. Do not deviate from them."²

When the Eshel Avraham, zt"l,

was asked why many are not careful to have bread in the morning—and some get along on only coffee—he replied, "It is possible to find a limud zechus for them since the Gemara may merely mean to eat something nourishing in the morning. Just as the type of bread is not discussed, implying that any kind will do, it is plausible that any nourishing food will suffice.

He concluded, "As for those who only have coffee... Well, coffee is nourishing [they used to mix in grains like roasted barley and chicory root] as is the milk in the coffee. Perhaps that is enough!"³ ■

1. תורת הבית הארוך, דף ל"ד, מובא בב"י, יו"ד, סימן ל"ט
2. שו"ת חכם צבי סי' ט"ו, עיי' מג"א קנ"ה: גי
3. אשל אברהם (בוטאשוטש) סי' קנ"ה