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Health Matters

Rav Huna said to his son Rabbah: Why are you not to be found before Rav Chisda, whose teachings are so keen? He replied: What should I go to him for, seeing that whenever I go to him, he sits me down to talk about secular matters? He once told me that when one enters a latrine, he must not sit down forcefully, nor strain himself excessively, because the rectum rests on three teeth-like muscles, and these teeth-like muscles of the rectum might become dislocated and he is endangered (*for the rectum itself can protrude into the opening*). Rav Huna exclaimed: He is discussing health issues which affect the lives of people, and you call them secular matters! All the more reason for you to go to him!

The *Gemora* rules: If a stone and a shard lie before one (*on Shabbos*), Rav Huna said: He must wipe himself with the stone (*although it is a muktzeh item*), but not with the shard (*which poses a danger*); but Rav Chisda ruled: He must wipe himself with the shard (*for since it is a utensil, it is not regarded as muktzeh*), and not with the stone.

The *Gemora* asks on Rav Huna from a *braisa*: If a stone and a shard lie before one, he must wipe himself with the shard, and not with the stone. This refutes Rav Huna!

Rafram bar Pappa interpreted it before Rav Chisda according to Rav Huna's view as referring to the rims of utensils (*which are smooth and pose no danger*).

The *Gemora* rules: If a stone and grass lie before one (*either during the weekday, according to Rashi's first explanation, or on Shabbos according to his explanation in the name of his teachers*), Rav Chisda and Rav Hamnuna argue: One maintains that he must wipe himself with the stone, but not with the grass (*for the grass may be sharp and will cut into his skin, or because he might detach them from the ground on Shabbos*), while the other ruled that he must wipe himself with the grass, and not with the stone (*for a stone can cause injury to the rectal area, or because the stones are muktzeh*).

The *Gemora* asks on the latter opinion from the following *braisa*: If one wipes himself with inflammable material, his lower teeth will fall out? [*Evidently, grass should not be used!?*]

The *Gemora* answers: There is no difficulty, for one refers to wet grass (*which is not flammable, and may be used*), whereas the other refers to dry grass.

The *Gemora* states: If one needs to relieve himself but does not do so, Rav Chisda and Ravina disagree: One said that he will have an attack of offensive breath (*from his mouth, for the wastes that he did not excrete will rot within his body, and eventually, the smell will exit his body through his mouth*), and the other said that he will be infected by an offensive perspirational smell (*for the smell inside of his body will be absorbed by his tissues, resulting in offensive smelling perspiration*).

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* in accordance with the view



that his entire body will be infected by an offensive smell, for it was taught: One who needs to relieve himself yet eats, is like an oven which is heated up on top of its ashes (*which, on account of the oven not being clean, the fire will not burn cleanly*), and that is the beginning of perspiration odor.

The *Gemora* continues: If one needs to relieve himself but cannot do so, Rav Chisda said: He should repeatedly stand up and sit down. Rav Chanan of Nehardea said: Let him move to different sides (*in his attempt to relieve himself*). [*Both opinions maintain that his movements will stimulate the muscles in his intestine needed to counter his constipation.*] Rav Hamnuna said: Let him manipulate that place with a stone; while the Rabbis advise: Let him not think about it.

Rav Acha the son of Rava said to Rav Ashi: If he does not think about it, he is all the more likely not to be able to relieve himself?

Rav Ashi replied: Let him not think of other things (*and concentrate solely on relieving himself*).

Rav Yirmiyah of Difti observed: I myself saw a certain Arab repeatedly stand up and sit down until he poured forth like a pot (*being emptied*).

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: One who wishes to partake of a formal meal (*and to leave the meal to relieve himself would be impolite*), should walk four *amos* ten times or ten *amos* four times (*and after each time attempt to relieve himself*), and relieve himself and then enter. (82a)

Mishna

If one carries out a shard, the standard is as much as is needed for placing between one board and another (*when they are piled up on the ground; they are separated by shards to prevent them from warping*); these are the words of Rabbi Yehudah. Rabbi Meir said:

Large enough to pick out a fire with it. Rabbi Yosi said: Large enough to contain a *revi'is* (*quarter of a log*). Rabbi Meir observed: Though there is no proof of the matter, yet there is a hint, for it is written: *So that there shall not be found among its pieces a shard to pick up the fire from the hearth*. Rabbi Yosi said to him: You bring proof from there? [*Why, the verse concludes:*] *or to take water from a hole*. (82a)

Greater Standard

[*The Scholars inquired: Is Rabbi Meir's standard greater or Rabbi Yosi's standard greater?*] [*Maharshal deletes this bracketed passage.*] Logically, Rabbi Yosi's standard is greater, whereas the verse cited indicates that Rabbi Meir's standard is greater, for should you think that Rabbi Yosi's standard is greater, does he (*the prophet*) initially curse in respect to (*the lack of*) a small vessel, and then curse in respect to a large one? [*This is raised as a difficulty. Generally speaking, only a very small shard is required for picking up a coal from a stove, certainly not one large enough to contain a revi'is; and on the other hand, the prophet would not curse by first observing that not even a small shard will remain, and then add that a large shard will not remain either?*]

Abaye said: Our *Mishna* means to scrape out a fire from a large bonfire (*where a larger shard would be necessary*).

The *Mishna* had stated: Rabbi Yosi said to him: You bring proof from there?

The *Gemora* asks: Rabbi Yosi's response seems to be sound!?

The *Gemora* answers: Rabbi Meir will maintain that he (*the prophet*) is speaking in a "it is not necessary to be stated" format (*he is proceeding to a climax*): Not only will nothing of significance to people be found, but even that which is of significance to people shall not be found. (82a)

WE SHALL RETURN TO YOU, HAMOTZI YAYIN

Mishna

Rabbi Akiva said: From where do we know that an idol defiles by carrying (*rendering one who carries it tamei*) just like a *niddah*? [If one carries a *niddah*, he becomes *tamei*, even if he did not actually touch her.] It is because it is written: *you shall cast them (the idols) away as a niddah; you shall say to it (the idols), "Get out!"* Therefore: just as a *niddah* defiles through carrying, so does an idol defile by carrying. (82a)

Tumah of an Idol

We learned elsewhere in a *Mishna*: If a person's house shared a wall with an idol (*the people in the adjoining house worshipped this wall*) and the wall then fell down, he must not rebuild it (*in its current location*). What should he do? He should rebuild his own wall within four cubits of his property (*so that he does not rebuild their idol*). If he shares the space on which the wall is built with the idol, the amount of space he must move back includes his area (*if the wall was on one cubit of his space and one of the idol's space, he must move back three additional cubits*). Its stones, wood, and earth cause impurity like a *sheretz*, as the verse says: *you shall surely loath it (i.e. sheretz)*. Rabbi Akiva says: It is like a *niddah* (*menstruant woman*), as the verse says: *you should cast them away like you would do a niddah, you will tell it, "be gone!"*. Just as a *niddah* renders things impure by being carried (*i.e. if she sits atop ten mattresses, all ten are impure, even if she only touches one*), so too idols cause impurity through being carried.

Rabbah said: 'Cast them away' mentioned in the verse, means 'you shall estrange them from you as a stranger.' 'You shall say to it, "Get out,"' but you shall not say to it, "Enter in." [This indicates that a stringent degree of

tumah shall be placed on the idol.]

Rabbah also observed: As for carrying, all agree that it will render *tamei* (*all who carry it*), since it is compared to *niddah*. They differ in respect to a 'placed stone.' [*Even mesama' - a stone set up upon supports, and under it lay garments or utensils; the stone does not come into contact with these things. The issue is whether these utensils are rendered tamei when an idol is placed upon the stone.*] Rabbi Akiva says: It is like a *niddah*: just as a *niddah* renders *tamei* through carrying in a case of a placed stone, so does an idol render *tamei* through carrying in a case of a placed stone; while the Rabbis maintain that it is like a *sheretz*: just as a *sheretz* does not render *tamei* through carrying in a case of a placed stone, so does an idol not render *tamei* through carrying in a case of a placed stone.

The *Gemora* asks: Now, according to Rabbi Akiva, in respect of which law is it (*an idol*) likened to a *sheretz*?

The *Gemora* answers: It is in respect of its service utensils. [*The utensils employed for an idol's service do not render tamei through carrying or through a placed stone; they will generate tumah through contact - just like a sheretz.*]

The *Gemora* asks: And according to the Rabbis, in respect of which law is it likened to *niddah*?

The *Gemora* answers: It is in respect of carrying.

The *Gemora* asks: Then let it be likened to *neveilah* (*the carcass of an animal that was not slaughtered properly; it generates tumah through carrying, but does not generate tumah in a case of a placed stone*).

The *Gemora* answers: That indeed is so, but the analogy with *niddah* teaches the following: just as a *niddah* is not a source of *tumah* through her severed limbs (*if a limb is cut off from a niddah, it generates tumah as the severed*



limb of a living human being in general – corpse *tumah*, but not as *niddah*), so is an idol not a source of *tumah* through its limbs.

The *Gemora* asks: Then when Rav Chama bar Gurya inquired: Does the law of (*tumah from*) an idol operate in respect of its limbs or not? Should this not be resolved for him from this that according to the Rabbis it does not operate in respect of its limbs?

The *Gemora* answers: Rav Chama bar Gurya inquired it according to Rabbi Akiva's view.

But Rabbi Elozar (*disagreeing with Rabbah*) maintained: In respect of a placed stone, all agree that it (*an idol*) does not generate *tumah* through it, since it is likened to a *sheretz*; they differ only in respect of carrying. Rabbi Akiva holds: It is like a *niddah*: just as a *niddah* renders *tamei* through carrying, so does an idol render *tamei* through carrying, while the Rabbis maintain: It is like a *sheretz*: just as a *sheretz* does not render *tamei* through carrying, so does an idol not render *tamei* through carrying.

The *Gemora* asks: Now, according to Rabbi Akiva, in respect of which law is it (*an idol*) likened to a *sheretz*?

The *Gemora* answers: It is in respect of its service utensils. [*The utensils employed for an idol's service do not render tamei through carrying or through a placed stone; they will generate tumah through contact – just like a sheretz.*]

The *Gemora* asks: And according to the Rabbis, in respect of which law is it likened to *niddah*?

The *Gemora* answers: Just as a *niddah* is not a source of *tumah* through her severed limbs, so is an idol not a source of *tumah* through its limbs.

The *Gemora* asks: Now according to Rabbi Akiva, in

respect of what law is it likened to a *niddah*? It is only in respect of carrying! Then let it be likened to *neveilah*?

The *Gemora* answers: That indeed is so, but the analogy with *niddah* teaches the following: just as a *niddah* is not a source of *tumah* through her severed limbs, so is an idol not a source of *tumah* through its limbs.

The *Gemora* asks: Then when Rav Chama bar Gurya inquired: Does the law of (*tumah from*) an idol operate in respect of its limbs or not? Should this not be resolved for him from this that both according to the Rabbis and according to Rabbi Akiva it does not operate in respect of its limbs?

The *Gemora* answers: Rav Chama bar Gurya inquired it according Rabbah, and according to Rabbi Akiva's view. (82a – 83a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

The Existence of Demons and Witchcraft

By: Meoros HaDaf HaYomi

The *Gemora* relates the story of R' Chisda and Rabbah bar R' Huna who embarked on a boat ride together. Before the boat left port, a gentile woman asked to join them in their trip, but they refused. The woman turned out to be a witch, and she angrily hexed the boat, preventing it from traveling. The Amoraim uttered one of the Holy Names of Hashem to negate her spell (see Rashi), and they continued on their trip. As they sailed off, the witch called out after them, "What can I do? My spells have no power over you, since you are careful never to wipe with clay shards, kill bugs on your clothes, or remove garlic cloves from their bundles, without first untying the bundle." (All these things make a person susceptible to



witchcraft).

Our *Gemora* is just one of many places in Shas, in which our Sages discuss sorcery and demonism, apparently affirming their belief in its existence. This article will discuss the heated debate among the Rishonim and Acharonim, some of whom fiercely deny the existence of any such supernatural, dark powers; while others acknowledge that these forces do exist in the world.

The Rambam writes in numerous places that there is no way to circumvent the natural order of creation, except to pray to the Creator Himself to intervene. The Torah forbids us to engage in the necromantic practices of the Canaanites, “You shall not practice augury or omen-reading... do not consult the Ovos or Yidonim. Do not attempt to defile yourselves through them,” “There shall not be among you... a practitioner of divination, a soothsayer, wizard, snake charmer, one who consults Ov or Yidoni, or a necromancer,”. According to the Rambam, this does not mean to imply that these practices have any power. Just the opposite, since they are powerless, the Torah forbids us from practicing these meaningless rituals.

Many Rishonim follow the Rambam’s view. The Smag interprets Yidonim to mean, “Those who believe they know the future,” implying that in fact they have no such knowledge. The Gaonim also agree with the Rambam, and the Ibn Ezra writes, “The empty headed fools believe that if the Ovos did not exist, the Torah would not forbid their use. Yet I say just the opposite; the Torah forbids falsehood, not truth.”

According to these opinions, we must understand the story of R’ Chisda and the witch, and dozens of similar cases in the *Gemora*, as a metaphor not to be taken literally. Alternatively, the Meiri explains that our Sages did not believe in witchcraft, but they realized that most people did believe in it. Taking this into consideration, they wrote stories such as these to belittle the power of

witchcraft, and draw the common populace away from its belief.

The Ramban, on the other hand, and many other Rishonim write that witchcraft does possess supernatural power, and that demons do exist. The Netziv writes, “Witchcraft is a supernatural power, among the secrets of nature. One who implements this power, will necessarily perceive, according to the supernatural forces that the Creator imprinted [in His creation].” In *Derech Hashem*, the Ramchal writes about witchcraft at length, explaining that Hashem created a balance between good and evil. Corresponding to the powers of holiness and prophecy, He created the dark forces of witchcraft.