**Noach**

Naos Deshe quotes the  Midrash Tanchuma 8:

And God spoke to Noah, saying: “Go forth from the ark” (Gen. 8:15).
May our master instruct us whether one is permitted to place saliva
upon an ailing eye on the Sabbath. R. Hiyya the son of Abba stated in
the name of R. Levi: It is forbidden to place saliva on an ailing eye
on the Sabbath, for that would be equivalent to healing on the
Sabbath.14Cf. Shabbat 10b, Buber Tanhuma, Noah 13. Come and see that
there is no ailment in all the world for which there is no cure. What
is the cure for an act resulting from the evil inclination?
Repentance.

R. Judah the son of R. Shalum explained in the name of R. Eleazar that
three things abrogate a harsh decree: repentance, prayer, and charity.
R. Yosé added: Changing one’s name and the performance of good deeds.
The Holy One, blessed be He, had hoped that the generation of the
flood would repent, but when they failed to do so, He extinguished all
living beings. Only Noah survived in the ark. When the waters ceased
to flow, and the time arrived for Noah to leave the ark, he declared:
I entered at the bidding of the Holy One, blessed be He, when He told
me, “Come, you and your household, into the ark,” and I shall not
depart except at His bidding. Thereupon God revealed Himself unto
Noah, as it is said: And God spoke to Noah, saying, “Go forth from the
ark.”

He asks:

How do we understand this Midrash Why does the Midrash ask about
placing saliva on an eye on Shabbos?  It’s such an insignificant act
that it should not be under the halacha of refuah. Why is this how the
midrash introduces us to Hashem’s commandment “Leave the ark.”

The Midrash Tanchuma 9 explains the difficulty which Noach had during
his time in the Ark.

“Go forth from the ark (Gen. 8:16). Scripture says elsewhere in
allusion to this verse: Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give
thanks to Thy name; the righteous shall crown themselves because of
me; for Thou wilt deal bountifully with me (Ps. 142:8). Bring my soul
out of prison refers to Noah, who was imprisoned in the ark. R. Levi
said: Neither Noah nor his sons were able to sleep during the entire
twelve months (in the ark) because they were obliged to feed the
animals, the beasts, and the birds. R. Akiba stated that they even
brought into the ark tree branches for the elephants and glass beads
for the ostriches. Some of the animals had to be fed at the second
hour in the night and others at the third hour of the night.”

He did not leave the ark before he was commanded.

Chazal say it’s incredibly praiseworthy that Noach waited for Hashm to
tell him to leave the ark, instead of leaving at the first
opportunity. Why is that so praise worthy? Wasn’t it enough that Noach
was in the Ark for more than a year?

He stresses to us that we believe in power of small actions!

Therefore, Noachs “small acts of restraint” were very large.

The same concept helps us  to understand the halachic question of the
Midrash. This act is not a full act of medical intervention. We don’t
use medicines, lest we come to grind them into powder. This would seem
insignificant, and not subject to the restriction. However, it still
has curative power, and therefore it is.  It's not just medicine that
has curative powers, also teshuva, and good deeds. Even changing one’s
name. This seems to be an insignificant change. But the midrash is
teaching us that even the smallest action has healing power.

We believe in the power of small acts!

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