



Inducing Labour - What do the Poskim say?

In Australia there is a growing rate of elective caesarean deliveries and labour induction.

Come and learn the Torah's perspective on the Halacha and Hashkafa of this issue as addressed by the contemporary Poskim.

The weekly Shaalos Uteshuvos shiur. Sunday morning 9:30-10:15am in the Kollel Beis Medrash with Rabbi Yonason Johnson.

DOR L'DOR WINTER

Dor L'dor has resumed after the Pesach break for our winter zman. All fathers and sons are invited to join this fantastic program under the leadership of Rabbi Lebenholz.

Enjoy great learning, raffles, a story and delicious hot soup.

Motzai Shabbos in the ORZ Mezzanine. See flyers for times and more details.

Tikkun Leil Shavuot

The Kollel is putting together an amazing line-up of speakers and topics for an engaging night of study on a variety of topics in Chassidus, contemporary Halachic issues and more.

Stay tuned for details.

KOLLEL REFRESH

Plans are well underway for a Kollel makeover, including new carpets, a new kitchenette and new furniture.

If you would like to be part of this project, please contact Rabbi Shlomo Barber.



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On Lag Baomer and building mounds

After 20 years living in Charan with his father-in-law Lavan, Yaakov took his wives and children and left in secret to return to Eretz Yisroel. When Lavan found out that Yaakov had fled, he rallied his sons, chasing after them in hot pursuit.

When Lavan caught up with Yaakov he accused him of stealing his children and grandchildren and depriving of the opportunity of saying goodbye. After arguing out their issues, Yaakov told his kinsmen to gather stones and build a mound. Yaakov and Lavan ate together at the mound and then made the following pact;

This mound will be a witness that I will not cross-over this mound to you and you will not cross-over this mound to me to do evil. The Midrash explains that this oath would still allow them to cross over the mound for the purpose of trade and commerce.

Chassidus explains the deeper significance of this mound. Yaakov represents the G-dly world of Atzilus. Lavan represents the lower created worlds of Briah, Yetzirah and Asiya. Unlike the world of Atzilus, in the lower world exist forces of Kelipah (unholiness). These forces try to latch on to the side of Kedusha and cause harm and spiritual downfall.

The building of the mound between them represents the Mechtzah which separates the territory of Yakov from Lavan to prevent the forces of Kelipah from being able to cross-over and cause spiritual harm.

The Neshama, coming from the world of Atzilus descends down into the physical world, where it is enclothed in a physical body. This descent is for the purpose of *Avodas Habirurim*; to refine the body and our animalistic drives and elevate the physical world to become a vessel for Hashem's presence.

To engage in *Avodas Habirurim* and bring holiness into the physicality of the world, you need to get involved in the material world and less holy activities. In doing so, there is always the risk of the forces of negativity and temptation rubbing-off and affecting the holiness of the Neshama. Instead of being successful in elevating the world, the materiality of the world can harm the Neshama.

Hence the need for the mound. This separation allows us to engage with the world of "Lavan" for the "commerce" of refining and extracting the hidden G-dly sparks that lie trapped within it. But it creates a buffer that our involvement with physicality does not become a source of spiritual descent as we become immersed in physicality for its own sake and lose sensitivity to Holiness.

The Alter Rebbe explains that in this passage we find an allusion in the Torah to the day of Lag Baomer, the Hilula of the Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. The Hebrew word for mound, גל, has the same gematria (and same letters) as ג"ל, 33.

On the day of his passing, the Rashbi revealed to his students deeper secrets of the inner dimension of Torah than he had ever previously been allowed to share. Lag Baomer is synonymous with the revelation of the inner dimension of the Torah, so much so, that the Rebbeim referred to this day as the Matan Torah of *Penimius Hatorah*.

The study of *Penimius Hatorah* enables us to build this mound. The fundamental core of the inner dimension of Torah is *Ein Od Milvado*, that nothing else exists other than Hashem. The worlds and created reality are completely nullified and like nought before Him and He alone is truth.

With this perspective, we understand that the world is purely a manifestation of G-dliness and cannot be in opposition to the will of Hashem who created it. We are strengthened in our mission of refining the world and revealing this reality within it. When seen through this lens, there is no worry that the material world can cause us spiritual harm.

Every day and for the bulk of the day, we are in the world of Lavan. This is certainly true when we go to our workplaces and business but is also true of all of our physical activities; eating, drinking and exercise.

By starting each day with a shiur or few moments studying Chassidus, we lift ourselves up to a higher reality and perspective. We are then fortified with the protection of the mound against any harm and we can focus on being successful in our commerce as agents of Hashem.

Taking Pills and medication on Shabbos

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

One of the Rabbinic prohibitions on Shabbos is the prohibition on acts of Refuah. This includes medical treatments, other types of healing and the use of medication. Chaza"l forbade acts of Refuah on Shabbos because of a concern that it may lead to the Torah prohibition of crushing or grinding herbs, which was a standard in making medications at the time¹.

Whilst this concern does not apply to most medications today which are bought in ready-made tablet or liquid form, Rabbinic Gezeiros remain in force even if the reason behind them is no longer applicable. Further even today there are a variety of natural remedies are still made in this fashion².

The scope of this Gezeira can apply to all forms of healing treatments including; medications, ointments, massage and compresses. This article will focus specifically on the taking of oral medication.

In cases of Pikuach Nefesh, life-threatening situations or illness, the laws of Shabbos are overridden. Medication may be obtained however necessary and taken without question. This is true even in possible or doubtful (*safek*) life-threatening situations.

If not medicating now will potentially lead to a life-threatening situation later (e.g. risk of spreading infection), all treatments are also permitted as above.

What about non-life-threatening conditions?

Incapacitating Illness

Chaza"l did not apply their Gezeira for someone who is in the category of *חולה שאין בו סכנה*. This is defined as an incapacitating illness that affects the entire body and the sufferer would normally have to go lie down. Weakness of the entire body is also included. Severe pain even when localised which would necessitate lying down likewise falls into this category.

Even if the person remains active but would in normal circumstances go and lie down they are considered a *חולה שאין בו סכנה*. Examples would include; Migraine headache, severe cramps or severe muscular pain.

Generally, the Shulchan Aruch rules that treatments for a *חולה שאין בו סכנה* must be done either by a non-Jew or with a *Shinui*⁴. Rav Moshe Feinstein applies this requirement

of employing a *Shinui* even when taking medication. However based on the Alter Rebbe a *Shinui* is not required when taking oral medication⁵. If medication is not available, one may send a non-Jew to travel to acquire it being that this too is only Rabbinically forbidden.

Ailments

A person who has pain which is localised and not so intense as to weaken the entire body, or if they suffer from *מיחוש בעלמא* (discomfort or ailment) may not take medication. This is where Chaza"l applied their Gezeira. Examples would include a runny nose, headache or stomach ache, stiff neck, muscle pain, hay-fever.

Note: If the pain or ailment is significant enough then it can fall under the category of *חולה שאין בו סכנה* and medication will be permitted as above.

Whether one's condition is classified as *חולה שאין בו סכנה* or *מיחוש בעלמא* is personal and subjective and will vary from person to person. One need not be overly-strict in assessing their condition.

Children are always considered in the category of *חולה שאין בו סכנה* and medication may be taken even for minor ailments. Many Poskim apply this leniency only up to the age of 3. Others extend it until the age of 6 or 9.

A woman within 30 days of childbirth is also automatically considered in the category of *חולה שאין בו סכנה* and medication may be taken as necessary.

Other

When medication is permitted and for when it is prohibited, there is no difference between liquid medication or tablet or capsule form.

If necessary, pills may be cut or crushed. This is because the medication has been previously crushed and אין טוחן אחר טוחן. Care must still be used when removing the pills from their packaging so as not to tear writing. No Torah prohibition may be violated unless in case of Pikuach Nefesh.

Vitamins and Sleeping Pills

There is much discussion in Poskim whether vitamins fall under the Gezeira against Refuah on Shabbos or not. Rav Moshe Feinstein maintains that since their use is not to heal but rather to increase or enhance nutrients, they are not subject to the Gezeira⁶ unless taken specifically

for healing. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach argues and classifies vitamins as medication⁷. One can be lenient with children especially since the tablets are flavoured and can be eaten as a "candy".

Sleeping Pills:

Tzitz Eliezer⁸ considers sleeping pills to be a Refuah for a medical condition. This view is also held by Rav Moshe Feinstein⁹. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach maintains that since they do not actually treat any illness, they are not subject to the Gezeira. If a person suffers greatly from insomnia to the extent that they would be categorised as a *חולה שאין בו סכנה* all authorities would permit their use. The same argument would apply to diet pills.

Oral contraceptives (being used with the permission of a competent Rav) may be taken on Shabbos.

Ongoing Treatment

If a condition requires ongoing medicating and treatment began on a weekday, some Poskim permit the continuing on Shabbos¹⁰. Many Poskim take a stricter approach and do not allow this for a *מיחוש בעלמא*¹¹.

A Practical Tip

Medication or pills may be mixed into food or drink before Shabbos and then taken on Shabbos in all cases even for a *מיחוש בעלמא*. This is because it is not recognisable as being done for the purpose of Refuah¹² but rather looks like eating or drinking.

¹ Shabbos 53b. Shulchan Aruch OC 328:1

² There is a minority view that the Gezeira no longer applies today. See Ketzos Hashulchan. This is used as another factor to rule more leniently in certain cases.

³ OC 328:17

⁴ ibid

⁵ Shulchan Aruch Harav 328:19

⁶ OC 3:54

⁷ Shulchan Shlomo 328:1

⁸ 9:17:2:40

⁹ See Ketzos Hashulchan who is lenient based also on the fact that nowadays household medication would not lead to crushing.

¹⁰ Rav Shlomo Kluger, Chazon Ish and Rav Elyashiv

¹¹ Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasa in the name of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rav Moshe Feinstein and Tzitz Eliezer

¹² Ketzos Hashulchan 338:30 and Shulchan Shlomo 328:36