



Communal Avos U'bonim

This Motzai Shabbos, Kollel is honoured to be participating in the Communal Avos U'bonim event.

Last year over 600 fathers and sons participated from across the community. This year will be even bigger.

Learning, Tehillim, Raffles, Nush and a special prize for each boy.

Motzai Shabbos Elul 8, August 22.
8:00-9:00pm in the Werdiger Hall.

Fathers & Sons Sunday Morning Program

מקלט מקלט For all boys from Grades 5,6 and High School with their fathers. Prepare for Tishrei together with your son!

Join us this Sunday morning, Elul 8 - August 23 in the Mezzanine. Chassidus 8:00-8:50am followed by davening and breakfast.

This program is run together with Yeshivah College.

Beyond Teshuvah

All ladies are invited to join Rabbi Levi Gourarie for a special Chassidus-based shiur which will completely redefine your Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur experience.

Tuesday, Elul 10, August 25.
8:00pm in the Mezzanine.

Kollel Evening with Young Yeshivah

On Elul 19 - September 3, Kollel and Young Yeshivah will be joining together for a special Elul Beis Medrash evening of learning. Stay tuned for details.



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The Shofar Approach to Criticism

In life we often have to give criticism. Criticism is never really pleasant to receive and usually uncomfortable to give. But as parents, employers, teachers, supervisors, Rabbis and general members of society it is often unavoidable. On the contrary, well-meant and carefully thought out and delivered criticism can be a powerful tool to achieve desired outcomes and improved behaviours.

Contemporary psychology discusses different strategies which may be employed to make criticism more palpable and effective. One such model is referred to as the "Sandwich Method".

Like the filling in a sandwich, this method suggests that the criticism be cushioned between two positive statements or praises. Opening up with a genuine compliment or highlighting positive behaviour creates goodwill and softens the interaction. This allows the recipient of the criticism to be open to hear it without putting up their defences. The follow-up compliment will ensure that they don't leave on a negative note and will feel encouraged to take the criticism on board.

Elul is a time of Teshuvah and self-correction. The time of year calls on us to better ourselves and improve. This is the message of the Shofar which we blow each day. The Rambam describes the shofar as a spiritual wake-up call crying out "wake up sleepers from your sleep". Our sages connect the word Shofar to its call of *Shapru Maaseichem*, a directive to beautify and correct your behaviour.

Rebuke was one of the standard clauses in a Novi's job description. When Hashem tells the Novi Yishayahu to rebuke the Jewish people He says "Cry out, do not hold back. Lift up your voice like a Shofar and tell My people of their transgression and to the House of Jacob their sins." He must chastise the people like the call of the Shofar.

On this posuk, the Gemora explains "My people" refers to the Talmidei Chachamim whose inadvertent sins are treated severely like intentional ones. Therefore their transgressions are described as **פשע**, referring to deliberate sins. In contrast, "The

House of Jacob" refers to the simple people whose deliberate sins are considered like unintentional ones due to their ignorance. Their wrongdoings are described as **חטאתם**, unintentional sins.

The way in which one rebukes will depend on who the intended recipient is. For the Talmidei Chachamim who are expected to hold a higher standard, one may speak more harshly. They should know better and have no excuse for their wrongdoings. However for the simple people, who may not be aware of any wrongs, the reproach must be softer.

The Chasam Sofer gives a fascinating explanation on this Posuk and the parallel between rebuke and the Shofar; long pre-dating modern-day psychology.

During Elul, the custom in Ashkenaz is to sound 4 notes *Tekiyah, Shevarim-Teruah, Tekiyah*. The "straight" sound *Tekiyah* is connected to Chessed. The broken notes *Shevarim* and *Teruah* are both connected to Gevurah. The inner chastisement of the Shofar urging us to improve is one of Gevurah, but it is wedged between two *Tekiyos*, the sandwich of Chessed and positive words.

Within the reproach itself there are two types; The *Shevarim* (literally breaking) represents a harsher form of criticism. The *Teruah* on the other hand represents a lighter form of judgement. One needs to know who one is addressing and whether a softer approach is more suitable or whether a more firm approach is required.

The Chasam Sofer imparts a timely message to the Rabbis and Darshanim who at this time of year traditionally urge their communities to grow. They should open with pleasant words which draw the heart of the listener. They may then go on to call for improvement, *Shapru Maaseichem*. But the conclusion should always be positive so that the listeners leave happy and uplifted.

This is Hashem's message to the Novi and to each one of us. We may need to rebuke and be critical from time to time; but do it like the sounds of the Shofar. With sensitivity and words from the heart, a *Tekiyah* at the start and a *Tekiyah* at the end.

Taking Pills on Shabbos



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

Whilst this concern does not apply to most medications today, as a halachic principle, Rabbinic Gezeiros remain in force even if the reason behind them is no longer applicable. Further 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 medications.

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 on someone who is in the category of חולה שאין בו סכנה³ and medication is permissible. This is defined as an incapacitating illness that affects the entire body and the sufferer would normally go to 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.

Ailments

A person who has pain which is localised and not so intense as to weaken the entire body, or if they suffer from מוחש 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 מוחש 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 vita-

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mins 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 specially since the tablets are flavoured.

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 מוחש בעלמא¹¹.

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 מוחש בעלמא. This is because it is not recognisable as being done for the purpose of Refuah¹² but rather looks like eating or drinking.

In the zechus of Shemiras Shabbos may we all be blessed with good health and Refuah for all of those in need. ■

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 328:7

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