

# THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

## HALACHA SERIES ON HILCHOS SHABBOS

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*In what instances may a person ingest tablets on Shabbos?*

In the previous shiur we established that the *halacha* is in accordance with the opinion that holds that an ill person may only violate an *issur d'rabanan* (a rabbinical prohibition) *b'shinui* (in a backhanded manner) and it may be violated in a regular manner when a limb is endangered.<sup>1</sup> Is it correct that even if the *halacha* was to permit the taking of tablets or pills on Shabbos, is it necessary to be taken *b'shinui*?

Not necessarily. The *Mishna Berura*<sup>2</sup> was also bothered by this and said that a *shinui* is required when doing something that is similar to a *melacha*. However taking tablets and syrups is not at all similar to a *melacha* and a *shinui* is not required. In other words therefore, when tablets and syrups can be ingested on Shabbos, they may be taken without a *shinui*.

The *Chaye Adam* writes<sup>3</sup> that when something cannot be done *b'shinui* and it cannot be done with the aid of a gentile, one may do it in the regular manner. This would apply to the consumption of tablets as well.

*But when is this basic heter of taking tablets applicable?*

Anyone who is defined as an ill person, i.e. is bedridden or who has an ache that effects his entire body may take tablets to treat that particular condition.

<sup>1</sup> *Simon* 328:17, the 3<sup>rd</sup> opinion in the *Mechaber*.

<sup>2</sup> *Simon* 328:121. See the *SS"K* 33:4 and footnote 25\*.

<sup>3</sup> *Chaye Adam k'lal* 69:12.

We find various opinions from the *poskim*, as follows. One opinion holds that when a person is not considered an ill person (see definition above) one may only consume tablets when they must be taken for longer than 7 days, i.e. they **must** be taken on Shabbos, or if not taking them on Shabbos might cause harm **and** one has been taking them before the onset of Shabbos.<sup>4</sup> Another opinion is that unless a person will become ill one may not take medication on Shabbos.<sup>5</sup> Another opinion is that whenever medication was begun before Shabbos one may continue with it on Shabbos.<sup>6</sup> Apparently it appears that the last opinion is the accepted custom today.

*Is there such a thing as dissolving a tablet into water before Shabbos, which would permit its ingestion on Shabbos?*

Indeed there is, but we will begin at the source. The *Shulchan Aruch*<sup>7</sup> says the following: **One may soak *kilorin* before Shabbos and place it on one's eye on Shabbos because it appears as if one is washing. This is provided that**

<sup>4</sup> Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach in the *SS"K* 34 footnote 76 with the supplements of the 3<sup>rd</sup> volume.

<sup>5</sup> *Iggros Moshe* vol. III *simon* 53. It appears from R' Moshe that even if one will not be able to cure one's illness one may not administer this medication unless one will have a nervous breakdown from knowing that one's illness is otherwise incurable.

<sup>6</sup> *Minchas Shabbos* *simon* 91:9 and the *Imrei Yosher* in the name of the *Chazon Ish*.

<sup>7</sup> *Simon* 328:21.

**one does not open and close the eye. We are not concerned on account of 'grinding herbs' as one must soak it before Shabbos, and that acts as a reminder.** We see that by soaking the *kilorin* before Shabbos one may administer it on Shabbos.

*Does that mean that if one knows that one will have a headache on Shabbos (which will not permit taking a pain killer when not defined as ill) that one may dissolve a pain killer in water before Shabbos and drink the liquid on Shabbos?*

We find a *machlokes* in the matter.

Rav Mosher Feinstein *ztz"l*<sup>8</sup> explains the *heter* of *kilorin* as such that since it must be soaked before use, by soaking it before Shabbos one has "begun" to administer the medication before Shabbos and one may continue on Shabbos. In other words, it is not because one has performed a "shinui" to the medicine. As such it will not help to dissolve a pain killer in water before Shabbos and drink it on Shabbos because there must be a *shinui* in the normal procedure of taking the medication and dissolving is not a part of the normal procedure.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *ztz"l* understands<sup>9</sup> that it is sufficient to implement a *shinui* in such a way that it is not noticeable to others that one is taking medication and the *shinui* was done before Shabbos. Accordingly, one may mix drops or dissolve a tablet in water before Shabbos and drink the water on Shabbos. According to Rav Shlomo Zalman, even one who is not ill may dissolve a tablet in water before Shabbos and drink the water on Shabbos. Rav Sternbuch *shlita* says that those who rely on this *heter* may only do so under special circumstances.

## Vort for Chanukah

We recite in the "Al HaNissim" the phrase **טמאים ביד טהורים** (defiled in the hands of the pure), which seems to be out of context, being that it has nothing to do with might and force.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *ztz"l* explains that the Greeks were very knowledgeable and their war against Israel was an ideological one - their mundane "wisdom" against our holy Torah. One of the core differences between the two is that while in Greek philosophy a wise person does not have to practice what he preaches as it is merely a philosophical concept, the Torah is the Book Of Life and the Torah requires us not only to be wise but to live accordingly as well.

As a result of this thinking the Greeks purposely defiled the pure oil in the *Beis HaMikdash* upon entering it. For this very reason the Jews lit the pure Menorah oil, which represents the Torah, to show that our Torah is eternal and as a result of this ideology we won the battle.

Accordingly, the phrase **טמאים ביד טהורים** is the center piece of "Al HaNissim", because it is our faith against theirs.

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## Food For Thought

*What is the halacha with regards to taking vitamins on Shabbos?*

*What about the use of creams and lotions on rashes etc?*

*May a doctor turn on his otoscope on Shabbos?*

*What about taking sleeping tablets on Shabbos?*

Answers coming next week.

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<sup>8</sup> אגרות משה או"ח ח"ב ס"י פ"ג.

<sup>9</sup> SS"K 34:5 and footnotes 23-27.