

A Practical Guide to Shabbos – Class #5

Tochen / Grinding

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יפה שעה אחת בתשובה ומעשים טובים בעולם הזה מכל חיי העולם הבא, יפה שעה אחת של קורת רוח בעולם הבא מכל חיי העולם הזה. העולם הזה דומה לערב שבת, והעולם הבא דומה לשבת, אם אדם מתקין לו מערב שבת, יש לו מה יאכל בשבת, ואם לאו אין לו מה יאכל בשבת

One hour spent in *teshuva* and good deeds in this world is greater than all of the next world; one hour of satisfaction in the next world is greater than all of life in this world. This world is like *Erev Shabbos* and the next world is like *Shabbos*: one who prepares on *Erev Shabbos* eats on Shabbos; one who doesn't prepare, what will he eat?

-- *Smachot d'Rebbi Chiya 2:3*

Grinding (טוּחֵן)

Av Malacha – Grinding grains into flour.

Principle – breaking something down into smaller pieces that have a new function.

Conditions – the smaller pieces are different in use or type from the original. Grinding is a *malacha* only with things that grow from the ground. Using a utensil generally used for grinding or that results in professional results is always forbidden.

Tochen does not apply to things that have previously been ground and are now "reconstituted."

Tochen is permissible if:

- it is done immediately prior to eating
- it is done with two *shinui*m (changes) from the normal way of grinding or chopping (i.e., the handle of a fork, the bottom of a plate)
- it is cut into larger than normal pieces

Possible Toldot

Chopping wood

Using a pepper mill

Shaking pepper from a pepper mill

Grinding rock salt

Chopping raw vegetables

Chopping tuna / making tuna salad

Making egg salad

Making Israeli salad

Grinding coffee beans

Cutting chicken into small pieces for a baby or elderly person

Crumbling bread into bread crumbs

Mashing a banana or avocado

Making hummus

Making mashed potatoes

Grating cheese
Breaking up toast into croutons
Breaking up chunks of confectioner sugar / powdered sugar
Crushing sugar cubes into granular sugar
Breaking up clumps of salt
Mixing and mashing cholent
Making chocolate shavings

Gezeira – healing

Origin – grinding up herbs for medicinal use.

Treating a life-threatening condition is always permissible. Don't ask, act! If you aren't sure, get help until the situation has been clarified, including making phone calls, calling an ambulance, paging your doctor, driving to the Emergency Room, etc.

Common conditions that are considered life-threatening for *Shabbos* purposes (I'm not listing the obvious like heart attacks):

- pregnancy
- any broken bone
- any eye injury
- any internal injury
- any internal ear injury
- strep throat
- any injury where you can't stop the bleeding
- high fever
- any head injury
- any severe allergic reaction
- food poisoning (uncontrolled diarrhea, vomiting, etc.)
- dehydration
- any wheezing, severe cough, whooping cough, chest constriction, severe chest congestion
- any second- or third-degree burn
- substantial first-degree burns
- less serious conditions may be considered life threatening for young children

Rules and guidelines

Serious illness -- see above.

Less serious illness -- medications are permissible for any condition for which you ought to stay in bed. For children, you may be more lenient.

Minor sickness for which medications alleviate symptoms, like colds, headaches, etc. -- no medications are permissible unless you ought to be confined to bed.

These prohibitions only apply to medications and remedies used only for medicinal purposes.

Actions taken to maintain health or strength or preventing illness is permissible.

Any "continuous use" medication is permissible -- heart medications, blood pressure, cholesterol, antibiotics, psychotropics (anti-depressants, anti-anxiety, etc.)

Any condition not treatable by medication may be treated -- for example, braces and associated rubber bands, etc.

- A Jew may do a *d'oraita* act for any potentially life threatening condition, even if the act is not in direct treatment of the condition.
- A non-Jew may be asked to do any act to treat any less serious illness.
- A Jew may do a *d'rabbanan* act to treat a less serious illness.
- If not treating will result in a permanent condition, a Jew may do a *d'rabbanan* or a gentile may do any act to treat the condition.

- Even a non-Jew may not violate a *d'rabbanan* for minor sickness.

Examples

Taking Tylenol for mild headache

Taking Tylenol (or prescription medication) for a migraine

Eating lots of oranges for someone with a cold

Vitamin C for someone with a cold

Vitamins

Insulin for a diabetic

Monitoring blood tests or urine tests, such as blood sugar

Monitoring blood pressure

Pacemaker

Putting ice on a bump or bruise

Cleaning a skinned knee

Putting a hot water bottle on a sore neck

Gargling with warm salt water

Putting anti-biotic cream on new stitches

A deep cut

An adult with a fever of 100

A 6-month-old with a fever of 100

A 6-year-old with a fever of 100

Using a retainer

Stopping a nose bleed

Repetitive nose bleed

Removing a splinter

Unexplained pain when bending your arm

Pain so severe that you cannot bend your arm

A twisted ankle

Anti-biotic cream or ointment

Dry skin or chapped lips

Bleeding from the ear

Bleeding from stitches that were put in on Tuesday

Treating the *bris* area

Severely bloodshot eyes

Chicken-pox-like rash

Red splotches on the chest and back and swelling hands and feet

Chest pain

Wheezing for a known asthmatic

Wheezing for anyone else

Diarrhea for an adult

Diarrhea for a 1-year-old

Red urine

Spotting for a pregnant woman

Engorgement for a nursing woman

Extreme nursing tenderness with a fever

Seizure

An adult wakes up with back pain so severe that s/he can't get out of bed

Handling a first-degree burn

A child steps on a rusty nail

A child has an injury serious enough to go to the hospital and asks that both parents go with him for comfort. Can both parents go?

A child has a first-degree burn that has been treated with cream and cold compresses. The child asks to watch

a TV show to distract him. Can an adult turn on the TV? The child? A non-Jew?

A child wakes up with a high fever and severe sore throat. The parent drives the child to the doctor who diagnoses strep and calls in a prescription for antibiotics. The parent drives the child home. Can the parent drive to the store to get the antibiotic? Once at the store, can the parent pay?

A non-Jew has been asked to heat water for tea to sooth the throat of someone who woke up with strep (and is now on antibiotics). Another family member would like a hot cup of coffee. Can he have one?

In an emergency, is it better to:

- Call 911.
- Run next door to get the Jewish doctor.
- Run three houses down to get the non-Jewish doctor.
- Immediately drive to the hospital.