

Deprived and Depraved

Excerpted and adapted from a *shiur* by Dayan Yitzhak Grossman

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https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/BAM82_002_Nasso_Is_t he_Grass_Greener-Marijuana_in_Halacha-1.mp3

And he shall provide him atonement for having sinned regarding the soul...

Bemidbar 6:11

Chazal debate whether a *nazir* is holy or sinful (Ta'anis 10a). According to R' Elazar Hakapar, the sin referenced in this *pasuk* is the *nazir's* depriving himself of wine. The Gemara in Bava Kama cites this as a source for forbidding self-injury. According to Tosafos, self-injury is forbidden even if done for good reason.

R' Moshe Feinstein writes that according to Tosafos, one should not donate blood to a blood bank for possible future use, nor diet for cosmetic reasons absent medical need (because food deprivation to the point of severe hunger or pain is self-injury). In both cases, he says, there may be grounds for leniency, so if the person insists, perhaps one need not protest.

In another *teshuvah*, R' Moshe writes that Tosafos would forbid a woman to undergo cosmetic surgery to improve her appearance, but he concludes that the halacha follows the Rambam, who forbids self-injury only *derech nitzayon* (in a confrontational manner), but not here where he asks the doctor to perform the surgery. It is unclear why R' Moshe follows the Rambam here but doesn't cite him in the other *teshuvos*.