

The following is a translation of the Hatam Sofer's answer regarding mezizah be-peh. See Hakirah, Volume 3, pp. 61-62 for the original Hebrew text.

I am ever mindful of Hashem's presence (Psalms 16:8), Pressburg, Evening before Thursday, 20th Shevat [5]597 (=1837).

Peace, goodness, long days and years of life to my friend, my student, the Rav etc., R. Eleazar S.G.L. Horowitz, may his light shine, Head of *Beit Din* in the capital city Vienna.

Your valuable [letter] has reached me. You write correctly that we find no requirement to do *mezizah* specifically with the mouth. Only the *mekubalim* require this for they say that Divine judgment is softened through mouth and lips. We do not reckon, however, with the “hidden” when there is even a minute danger. The root מִיץ or מִצֵּץ are the same as in (Proverbs 30:32): [*So*] *patience under pressure [produces strife]* and in Judges (6:38) regarding Gideon: *and wrung out the dew from the fleece*. Rashi explains these as “squeezing out,” to remove forcefully. So also do Radak and R. Ibn Ezra explain, *ibid*. If so, we need to draw the blood from the distant points by whatever method, and one may trust the experts regarding which method is as effective as drawing with the lips. Furthermore, I declare that even if it had been stated explicitly in the Gemara “Draw with the mouth,” nevertheless this is not part of what validates the circumcision, it is rather for the purpose of medical danger. If one circumcised and uncovered the corona but did not squeeze out the blood, he has already completed performing the commandment; the child may eat Terumah, and his father may arrange the Pascal sacrifice. It is just that the child remains in danger until one takes measures to extract the blood from distant points. In the Chapter R. *Eliezer de-Milah* (Shabbat 134b) R. Pappa deduces similarly that a bandage and cumin are necessary to prevent danger. This applies to *mezizah* as well. Now as to the bandage and the cumin—we do not use cumin at all, nor the particular bandage mentioned in the Gemara by Abaya and Rava. Thus we see that since it is only for therapeutic purposes we need not be concerned if doctors devise other methods in their stead. The same applies to *mezizah*. Even if the Mishnah had mentioned that *mezizah* is performed with the mouth we would still be able to substitute something similar. However, they should exhort the expert doctors to testify truthfully whether the sponge has the same effect as *mezizah* with the mouth. More than this, according to my humble opinion, we need not be concerned. May Hashem heal you and strengthen you—in accordance with the wishes of your precious soul and the wishes of your devoted friend who desires your constant well-being.

Moshe ha-Katan Sofer of Frankfort-on-the-Main