



*Letters of the Rebbe*

# **On Medications and Healing**

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*What Torah sources have to say*

## **On Physicians and Healing**

### Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Dei'ah Chapter 336, Laws Concerning a Doctor

The Torah has given permission to a doctor to heal (Talmud, Baba Kama 85a), and this is included in (the obligation of) saving life. If someone (is capable of healing, yet) withholds from doing so, he thereby sheds blood (is considered a murderer), even if (the patient) has someone else who can heal him, for (a patient) does not (necessarily) have the merit to be healed by everyone (and perhaps specifically this doctor can be the one who succeeds).

Nevertheless, one should not be involved in medical treatment unless he is an expert, and no one (else available) there is greater than he (in medical expertise), for otherwise he sheds blood (is considered a murderer). If he administers medical treatment without permission of the (Halachic) court, he is liable for payment (for any harm caused), even if he is an expert. (On the other hand) if he administers medical treatment with court permission and makes a mistake, he is exempt (from payment) by law as administered by the human (court) but is (potentially) liable by the laws of Heaven.

#### *Comments of the SbaCh (Sifsei Kobein), quoted by Ba'er Heiteiv:*

- A** “He makes a mistake”: But if he deliberately causes harm (through negligence, etc.), even if he administers medical treatment with court permission, he is liable by law as administered by the human (court).
- B** Nevertheless, one should not withhold (treatment) out of concern that he may make a mistake, for it is a duty (to heal).

#### WHAT WE LEARN FROM THIS HALACHA

- 1** Only someone expert in the required field of medicine may administer medical treatment.
- 2** Even those qualified by proper training bear responsibility for ensuring the best outcome.
- 3** Even those exempt from legal responsibility for a mistake may be liable before Heaven.
- 4** It is a sacred duty to preserve life and seek the benefit of others, so those with proper training who are capable of healing others should not refrain from practicing medicine for fear of making a mistake but, while recognizing their great responsibility, should continue the practice of healing.

**Beis Lechem Yehuda (Commentary  
on Yoreh Dei'a, chapter 336:2)**

”יש חרם שאסור ליקח רפואה לחלל הגוף אא”כ מרופא מומחה וכל העובר  
על זה הרי זה כמאבד עצמו לדעת” (בית לחם יהודא בסי’ של”ו סק”ב).

It is severely prohibited to take any medication internally in the body unless it is from an expert doctor, and whoever transgresses this is considered as if he is knowingly committing suicide.

**WHAT WE LEARN FROM THIS HALACHA**

- 1** One should be extremely hesitant to allow medications to enter one’s body unless an expert doctor directs it.
- 2** Regarding the present Covid-19 injections, few if any doctors can claim to be experts on it, for they are unaware of its precise ingredients, and little research exists on its present side-effects or long-term effects on all aspects of health, including on reproductive capabilities for younger people.

### Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, The Abbreviated Code of Torah Law (Summarizing classic Halachic authorities)

Chapter 192:3: The Torah has given permission to a doctor to heal (the sick), as it states (Sh'mos-Exodus 21:19), "And he shall take care to heal (the person harmed)." Therefore someone who is sick should not rely on a miracle but is obligated (by the Torah) to follow the commonly accepted procedure to call upon a doctor to heal him. Many of the world's pious (who might be worthy of relying on miracles) have already been healed by doctors. Someone who withholds from calling upon a doctor commits two wrongs: For one, it is forbidden to rely on a miracle in a life-threatening situation, which can cause one's sins to be remembered (in Heaven) when one is sick. Moreover, it is presumptuous and arrogant to rely on one's righteousness that he should be healed in a miraculous way.

One should call upon the most expert doctor. Nevertheless, one's heart should be towards Heaven, and he should ask for mercy from (G-d), the Reliable Healer (may His Name be blessed), and his heart should trust only in Him.

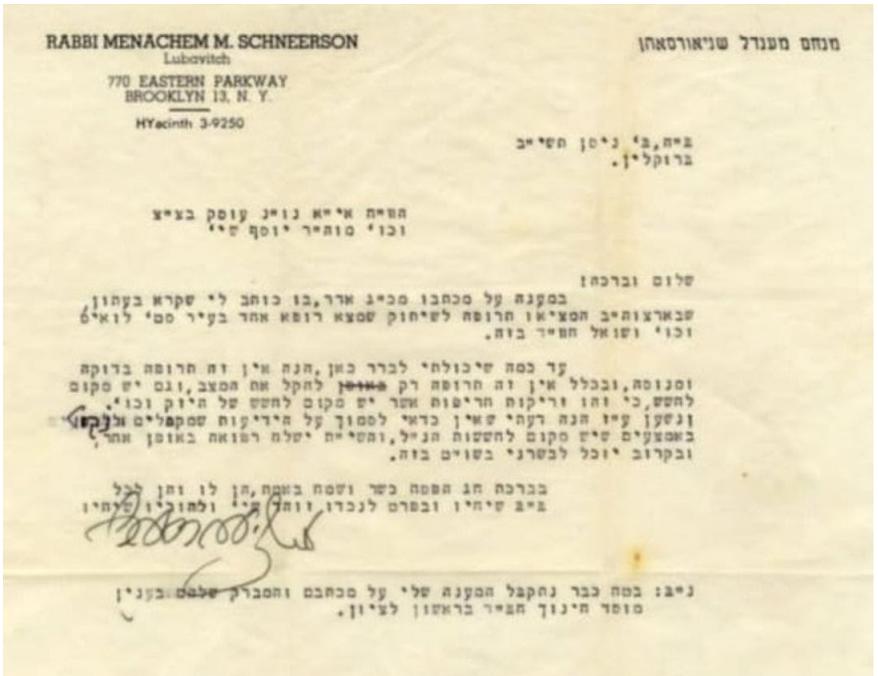
#### WHAT WE LEARN FROM THIS HALACHA

- 1 In life-threatening situations, the Torah obligates us to seek the services of doctors to heal us.
- 2 Although healing ultimately comes only from G-d, the Torah permits doctors to use their expertise to administer the powers G-d has granted them to heal the sick.
- 3 The Torah permits a doctor to heal patients, but no permission is granted to force them.
- 4 The Torah gives permission to doctors but not to governments, and certainly not to force citizens to follow what the government decides to be the way to heal or prevent sickness.
- 5 Medicine and doctors are only a means to bring about healing or prevention of sickness, but G-d, the ultimate Healer, can bring about that end through multiple means.

*Letters of the Rebbe*

**On Medications  
and Injections**

Letter from the Rebbe,  
5712 (1951)



**MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON**

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*Translation  
 from the  
 original  
 Hebrew*

By the grace of G-d, 2nd Nissan, 5712 (1951)

**Greeting and blessing:**

In reply to your letter of 23rd Adar in which you write to me that you read in a newspaper that in the United States a medication for paralysis has been invented, which one doctor in the city of St. Louis has discovered, etc., and you are asking my opinion about it.

As far as I have been able to clarify here, this is not a proven and tested medication, and in general this is a medication only for alleviating the situation, (but) there is also a possibility for concern, because these are harsh injections that can possibly cause harm, etc. Based on this, it is my opinion that one should not rely on the information being received by utilizing means that have a possibility for the above concerns, and G-d will send a cure in another way, and soon you will be able to announce to me good news...

*(Signed) M. Schneerson*

**WHAT WE LEARN FROM THIS LETTER FROM THE REBBE****We need to ask:**

- 1** Is a new medication proven and tested, and has there been extensive experience with it?
- 2** Does it heal or prevent infection or the disease or malady, or does it only reduce or alleviate the symptoms.
- 3** Is there any possible harm to someone who receives an injection, particularly if it is known to be harsh, with possibly dangerous side-effects?
- 4** One cannot rely on information received about medications until they are proven and tested.
- 5** G-d can and will send a cure through other ways.
- 6** These guidelines drawn from the above letter of the Rebbe seem to apply to the current situation regarding injections for Covid-19.

*Igros Kodesh,*  
vol. 19, p. 104

## אגרות קודש (ז'קכט)

קד

### ז'קכט

ב"ה, כ"ח כסלו, תשי"ב  
ברוקלין.

שלום וברכה!

. . . ועל אחרון אחרון, במ"ש אודות בנו שי, ומסיים שקבל ומקבל גם עתה בכל יום גלולי אנטיבייטיקה.

— בודאי ידוע לו שבארצוה"ב כבר פנה הלהיטות אחרי גלולות אלו, ומתחילים להסתייג משימוש „מופרז" מהם, ומה שנוגע עוד יותר — התחילו להבחין בתוצאות צדדיות בלתי רצויות, מובן שהערה זו היא רק בדרך כלל, ולא באה אלא לעורר, שכדאי לדבר עם הרופא המטפל על שימת לב ועיון הראוי, — הרצוי המשך השימוש בגלולות האמורות וכו'. ומה טוב לעוררו שיחקור בזה אצל אלו שעסקו במיוחד **בחקר** בשטח זה, אחרי שעי"פ רוב — רופאים המטפלים אין זמנם פנוי כ"כ לחקירות, ובפרט אשר בתי חרושת המיצרים הגלולות, כמובן, אין דעתם נוחה מחקירות הנ"ל.

*Translation  
from the  
original  
Hebrew*

By the grace of G-d, 28th Kislev, 5720 (1959) Brooklyn

**Greeting and blessing:**

...Concerning what you write about your son, you conclude that he has received and is also now receiving antibiotic pills daily.

Surely you are aware that in the United States the enthusiasm for giving these (antibiotic) pills has already faded, and (the medical community) is starting to have reservations about their “excessive” use. Even more relevant (is that) they have started to detect undesirable side-effects. Obviously, this is only a general observation, intended just to alert (you) that it is worthwhile speaking to the attending doctor regarding appropriate attention and careful thought about whether it is desirable to continue using these pills, etc. It would be especially beneficial to alert him to investigate this with those who have been specifically involved in researching this subject, since most practicing doctors do not have so much time for research, and particularly since the manufacturing plants that produce these pills are obviously not pleased with the above-mentioned research (which could lower their sales)...

*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 19, p. 104

**WHAT WE LEARN FROM THIS LETTER FROM THE REBBE**

- 1** Even doctors who are expert in evaluating and treating patients often do not have time to keep up to date with the latest research on whether medications considered to be tried and proven have no undesirable side-effects.
- 2** Drug companies that produce medications may desire to bring healing for sickness, but are motivated by profits and therefore cannot be relied upon for totally impartial information.