


**CHABAD**  
  
**RESEARCH UNIT**

שבת..... *for Friday night* ..... קדש

Friday 12 January 2010 - 28 Shevat 5770  
 Sedra Mishpatim

**HEALING AND HOPING**


**M**EDICINE HAS A LONG HISTORY IN THE JEWISH WORLD, WITH MANY FAMOUS doctors among our Sages, such as the Rambam. A point in the Sedra<sup>1</sup> helps us understand why this should be so. Speaking of the compensation that should be paid by an aggressor to his victim, the Torah includes medical expenses<sup>2</sup>. The Sages comment that this verse also gives permission to the doctor to ply his art<sup>3</sup>.

However, are there limits to this permission? How much power is the doctor given?

G-d indeed gave the right and power to professionals to administer medical care. The expert is empowered to offer advice and treatment for any given problem. But at the same time, one should be aware that the healing is ultimately coming from G-d. And G-d is all powerful.

This means that while the doctor is authorized to recommend the best treatment to cure the condition, and the patient is urged to follow that advice, we are not obliged to accept gloomy predictions. G-d is the true healer, and for G-d all things are possible.

Sometimes people do precisely the opposite of the above: they become depressed because of the dismal forecast given by the doctor, perhaps because he or she does not want to raise the patient's hopes, and


 Dedicated by Mrs Tzipora Sufrin ז"ל, to the memory and merit of her father k"z ihætk rgcus hfsrn ז"ל v j"vrv

at the same time refuse to follow his practical advice. Instead of this, our approach should be to focus on G-d the Creator and Guide of all. With full trust in G-d regarding our well-being, we also accept that G-d has given medical knowledge to the doctor, for our benefit.

A further aspect of this trust in G-d is, hopefully, the ability to free one's mind from one's medical condition. Quite apart from anything the doctor might say, we have a tendency to worry or simply to think almost constantly about one's physical state: How is my health today? What was it like yesterday? How will it be tomorrow, and the day after?

The advice of the Lubavitcher Rebbe is that in our actions we should follow the doctor's instructions but in our thoughts we should think about other things. We need the full power of our mind in order to fulfil the task for which we were created. If instead we allow our minds to be preoccupied with worry about our health we are losing important opportunities to achieve our goals in all other areas of our lives, both practical and spiritual<sup>4</sup>.

May G-d grant a *Refuah Shelemah*, a complete healing, to all who are in need!

## HEALING THE SOUL

Jewish teaching often draws parallels between the healing of the body from its physical ailments and the healing of the soul. The soul can be afflicted with all kinds of spiritual illnesses, relating to our lack of study and observance of the Torah and its laws.

In physical health we have two complementary approaches: healing the afflicted limb, and strengthening the rest of the body.

In spiritual health there are also two approaches: Repentance: this concerns putting right those areas of our lives which need attention. This is complemented by active Good Deeds, which strengthen our entire being<sup>5</sup>.

1. Exodus chs.21-24. 2. Exodus 21:19. 3. Bava Kama 85a. 4. See *Likkutei Sichot* vol. 36 p.286. 5. See the Lubavitcher Rebbe's *From Day To Day*, 28 Av.

*With acknowledgements to Rabbi S. Osdoba of the Hull Hebrew Congregation*

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*SEDRA MISHPATIM*

**UNDERSTANDING**

"NO! I don't want to!!" shouted Michael. "I am not interested in tidying up the toys, Yoni made the mess, and not me".

"Listen," said his father "you WILL clean it up!! Yoni made the mess but YOU are going to clean it up!!!...Do as you're told!"

It just went on and on: "Yes you will!!" "No I won't". Mother was looking on, with despair in her eyes. She was quite upset with both of them. It was stressful that her son wouldn't obey his father, and it was even more upsetting that Daddy seemed to be so unreasonable.

"Alright!" said Michael "I will do it! But you know why I am going to do it? Because you are my father and the Torah says I have to listen to you. No other reason!!", and with that Michael slammed the kitchen door shut, and shuffled off to the play room, to tidy up the toys.

"Well, well, well" said Dad. "It is difficult to get them to listen!" "It depends how you ask," said Mother. "What do you mean?" asked Dad.

"If you tell him in a completely unreasonable way that he has to obey you, obviously he'll get upset. Why can't you give him some kind of explanation, so that it makes sense to him?"

“Look dear,” said Dad, sighing, “you do have a point. But aren’t children supposed to listen to their parents whatever they say?”

“You know,” said Mother, “I was reading a discussion of the Sedra by the Lubavitcher Rebbe. You know the Sedra is full of laws. Many of them are very straightforward. You can understand them. Like the law which tells us to pay compensation, if you cause damage to someone’s property. But some of the laws are beyond ordinary understanding. Like not to mix milk and meat.”

“Yes,” said Dad. “We have to obey all of them, whether we understand them or not”.

“You’re right,” said Mother. “But the Rebbe explained that G-d gave us a lot of laws which we can clearly understand, so that it will be easier for us to relate to the laws like not having milk and meat which are beyond our understanding. The goal is to feel comfortable with G-d’s teaching...”

“So you mean that as much as possible we should try to see that everything makes good sense to Michael” said Dad. “It sounds reasonable. In fact, I’m sure you’re right”.

“Good,” said Mother. “So let’s call him in and get him to understand why you wanted him to clean up the mess his little brother made”.

“Michael, Michael” his mother called. “Come into the kitchen for a second.”

“Michael” said Dad “It was very good of you to tidy the toys. You see, the grown-ups have to take responsibility for the children. Yoni is a child, so he makes a mess. You are grown-up, so sometimes you might have to share the job of cleaning up after him”.

Michael’s face lit up. “So, if I’m grown up,” he said, “can I have a bicycle?”

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