

# **JEW'S HAVE FAITH ONLY IN HASHEM**

## **BULLETIN 32**

### **The Ramban on Doctors**

“When the Jewish People are in a state of spiritual perfection, neither their physical bodies nor their country, nor any of their other affairs are governed by nature at all. This applies to the nation as a whole and to each individual Jew. For God ‘will bless their bread and their water, and remove illness from their midst’ (Exodus 23:25). They will have no need of doctors, nor will they have to follow medical procedures even as precautionary measures, ‘For I, God, am your healer’ (Exodus 15:26). In the era of prophecy the tzaddikim acted accordingly. Even if they happened to fall and became sick, they consulted not doctors but prophets, as did King Hezekiah when he was sick (Kings 11,20,2-3). It is said of King Asa that ‘even in his sickness he did not seek out God, but he turned to the doctors’ (Chronicles II, 16:13). If it was common for them to go to doctors, why should the verse mention doctors at all? Asa’s only guilt would have lain in the fact that he did not seek out God. But this phrasing is similar to saying, ‘I did not eat matzah on Pesach but chametz.’ Someone who seeks out God through the priest will not consult doctors.

“What place do doctors have in the house of those who carry out the will of God, after He promised that ‘He will bless their bread and their water, and remove illness from their midst’? The only function of the medical profession should be to give nutritional advice — what to eat and drink and what to avoid. Thus the Rabbis said, ‘For the entire twenty-two years of Rabbah’s leadership, Ray Yosef did not even call a bloodletter to his house’ (Berakhot 64a), They went by the principle that ‘a door that does not open to charity will open to the doctor’ (Bemidbar Rabbah 9:3). It is true that the Rabbis said, ‘because it is not the way of human beings to bring about a cure, but this is the practice’ (Berakhot 60a, see above p. 33). But this merely means that, had they not been in the habit of resorting to medicine, a person who became sick because of his sin could have been healed, through the will of God alone. However, since they resorted to medicines, God abandoned them to the vicissitudes of nature.

“As for the rabbinic comment on the verse, ‘He shall cause him to be thoroughly healed’ (Exodus 21:19) — ‘from here we learn that the physician has been given sanction to heal’ (Berakhot 60a) — they did not say that license has been given to the sick to resort to medicine! What they meant is that if a doctor is approached by a patient who was in the habit of resorting to medicine and was not part of the community of God whose share is life, the doctor should not refrain from treating him, not from fear that the patient might die under his hand — seeing as the doctor is expert in his craft — nor on the grounds that God alone is the healer of all flesh— because this patient already in the habit of resorting to medicine, it is true that if two people quarrel and one hits the other with a stone or his fist, the Torah lays down that the attacker must pay the medical expenses of the injured party (Exodus 21:18). But this is because Torah law does not rely on miracles, for God knew that ‘the needy will not cease from the midst of the earth’

.(Deuteronomy 15:11). But when a person's ways find favor in God's eyes, he has no business with doctors" (Ramban, Commentary on the Torah, Leviticus 26:11).

Rebbe Nachman says:

"When a person fails to focus on the ultimate purpose then what is the point of his life? The soul constantly yearns to do the will of her Maker. When she sees that this person is not carrying out His will, the soul becomes filled with yearning to return to her Source, and she prepares to leave the body. As a result, the person becomes sick, because the power of his soul is weakened., owing to the fact that she is trying to withdraw from his body since he is not carrying out her desire. The soul's only wish is that he should carry out God's will.

"The reason a person's health returns through taking medicines is that his soul sees that he is able to control himself and to act contrary to his physical desires and habits. Perhaps he is accustomed to eating bread and other foods, but now he curbs his desires and submits to a medical regime, taking bitter medicines for the sake of his health. His soul sees that he has the power to control his impulses in order to achieve a certain goal, and she therefore comes back to him in the hope that he will curb his desires for the sake of the true purpose — which is to carry out the will of the Creator" (Likutey Moharan 1, 268)

*IT IS BETTER FOR A PERSON TO BE CONSIDERED A FOOL THROUGHOUT HIS ENTIRE LIFE BY MAN, THAN TO BE CONSIDERED WICKED FOR ONE MOMENT IN THE EYES OF G-D (MISHNA EDUYOT 5:6)*

*DID YOU NOTICE THAT THE FURTHER PEOPLE ARE FROM THE TRUTH THE MORE THEY CONSIDER SOMEONE WHO TURNS AWAY FROM EVIL TO BE A FOOL? REBBE NACHMAN, SEFER HA MIDDOT, EMET*