

# HALOCHOSCOPE TOPE

Cautionary note regarding last issue: Many cases arise similar to the case discussed. Each family must clarify the Halacha relevant to their own child. The situation discussed had certain specific factors, some of which were touched on, and most of which had to be left vague. This was due to both privacy and to the space limitations of the discussion. A single factor can change the ruling. The main purpose of the discussion was to heighten Halachic awareness.

**May one include the name of a sick gentile in *Mi Shebairach* on *Shabbos*?**

**The issues:**

**(A) Davening for the sick**

**(B) Davening for deliverance from troublesome situations on *Shabbos***

**(C) Davening for a gentile**

**(A) Davening for the sick**

This type of *Tefillah* is actually mentioned in the Torah. Moshe Rabeinu davened for his sister Miriam Haneviah, when she was stricken with *Tzara'as*. The Talmud teaches us that the main purposes of *Bikur Cholim*, visiting the sick, are to make oneself aware of their needs and to be aroused to *Tefilah* for their recovery. The manner in which one is meant to attend the sick, sitting low and in submission, and praying and repenting, is meant to arouse the sick person to *Tefilah*. If he would see his visitors neglecting *Tefilah*, he might give up hope and neglect to daven himself. Hashem wants the *Tefilos* of the person who is sick. [He might have been stricken for this very purpose.] In the wilderness, when the Jewish people were struck with a wild serpent, they were saved when they raised their eyes heavenwards to daven.

King David was informed that his son would die. The son was actually taken ill, yet he davened for him. Though the prospect at that time was that once the sickness had begun, nothing could save him, David fasted and prayed. He showed that the objects of *Teshuva*, repentance, and *Tefilah* stand alone, regardless of the presence or absence of direct results perceived by mankind. King Chizkiyahu was terminally ill, yet maintained that he had a long-standing tradition that one may not give up. With *Tefilah* one can be cured from the most serious Heavenly decree. Furthermore, he instituted the rule that even after the decree has begun taking effect, *Tefilah* can save one from grave and hopeless sickness. He was cured through his *Tefilah*. This came about through a visit by the *Navi Yeshaya*, although he did not directly implore him to daven. He also concealed a book of remedies so that people would not rely on

medicine to the exclusion of Tefilah. He taught the world that one must also always have faith in Tefilah and Teshuva. Even when the desired results of one's Tefilah do not appear to have been fulfilled, one must realize that in the long term each Tefilah helps. Furthermore, one must not stop davening when he sees no results, because often he has not yet davened enough to make a difference, or the Tefilah is with insufficient *Kavanah*, direction of thought. Some Poskim maintain that one does not fulfill the Mitzvah of Bikur Cholim properly if he does not daven for the sick person. It follows that the visit is to bring about the Tefilos of both the patient and the visitor. Saying "*Refuah Sheleimah*" with sincerity is considered Tefilah.

The Scriptural source for Tefilah lists five things to daven for: prosperity, specifically abundance and quality of bread and water; removal of sickness; absence of misadventures; long life; and protection from enemies. Thus we see that health is at least one (if not three) of the main purposes of all Tefilah. The Talmud and commentaries maintain that for the truly righteous, medicine will not cure, only Tefilah. Furthermore, while Hashem places laws of nature to determine natural events, a righteous person will rise above these laws with Tefilah.

Moreover, while the gentiles are governed by Mazal, destiny, Jews are not governed by it. Even a specific decree can be overturned by Teshuva and Tefila. The Poskim debate whether this applies to an individual as well, or only to the people as a whole. There are also indications that though the length of one's life is predetermined, this too can be changed. The main thing that affects Mazal is *Zechus*, merit earned from certain deeds. According to some, these too require Tefilah to make them work. Some Poskim maintain that Tefilah alone can also provide this *Zechus*. *Tzedaka* and acts of kindness atone and save from death.

*Zechus* can help even for other people, especially the *Zechus* of a family member for his relatives. "A prisoner cannot release himself from jail," but needs outside help. The Talmud further relates that it is possible to daven that another person should be aided in repenting to save him. Some Poskim rule that this is an obligation. Though this appears to deny the principle of freewill, the commentaries explain that Hashem does not force one to do Teshuva. Rather, in response to the Tefilah of the person davening Hashem draws near to him, and in his merit to the entire universe. This nearness helps the person being davened for to do Teshuva.

In summary, the object of Tefilah is to bring about a change for the good. It works hand in hand with repentance, acting as a *Zechus*, affecting a Heavenly decree even after the decree has begun being fulfilled. Regardless of medical prognosis, the obligation to daven remains. It is an obligation, both to daven for one's own health and to daven for others. One is even obliged to daven for others' repentance. [See e.g. Bro-

chos 5b 10a 60b Shabbos 12b 156a-b Psachim 56a Rosh Hashana 17b Taanis 25a Moed Katan 28a Nedarim 39b-40a Kidushin 82a Baba Basra 16b, etc., Poskim Tur Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 335: especially 4, commentaries. Sefer Lev Moshe 1-2.]

### **(B) Davening for relief on Shabbos**

On Shabbos one must avoid distress. This includes refraining from prayer that will remind one of distress. The Talmud discusses situations where a city is in trouble or where an individual is in imminent danger. In one opinion while it is permitted to call for help by crying out and blasting the Shofar, one may not do these things in the form of Tefilah. In these situations most Poskim follow the opinion permitting Tefilos that would otherwise seem to display feelings of distress. Most Poskim forbid fasting except when an individual must fast for a bad dream. Some maintain that an individual may also fast for personal distress, and may daven for it. This is based on the reason behind permitting fasting being, in part, to relieve his pressure. The reason one may normally not fast is because he is meant to feel good on Shabbos. If the dream makes him feel bad, and fasting makes him feel more secure, the fast is good for him. He must nonetheless atone for his fasting on Shabbos by fasting another time during the week.

The Talmud makes allows prayer for a person who is possessed and is in imminent danger of killing himself as a result. The Poskim point out that anyone in imminent danger of losing his life may also be davened for. However, for a sick person who is in no imminent danger, one may not daven especially.

Visiting the sick on Shabbos is a Mitzvah, and should not be forbidden. However, it can cause distress to the visitor. The Poskim recommend not visiting specially on Shabbos. Those who would otherwise visit during the week may visit on Shabbos. Those who can not find any time at all during the week may also visit on Shabbos. When visiting someone who is not in imminent danger one may not say the usual "may you have a Refuah Sheleima" but the saying "*Shabbos He Miliz'ok* ... on Shabbos one does not cry out, but a speedy recovery will come." Some permit saying "may Hashem have mercy on you together with the rest of the sick of the Jewish people.

The Poskim discuss the *Mi Shebeirach* commonly recited at *Krias Hatorah* for the sick. While one may not daven for moderately ill patients, they may be included in a Tefilah for all the sick of Israel (thus davening for the dangerously ill as well). Also the phrase *Shabbos He Miliz'ok* is added to the *Mi Shebeirach*. [See Taanis 19a 22b Poskim. Tur Sh. Ar. Orach Chaim 287-288:(9-10) 576:12-13, commentaries.]

### **(C) Praying for a gentile**

The Talmud requires us to visit the sick of the gentiles as a gesture of *Darkei Shalom*, maintaining peaceful relations with them. The Poskim debate whether this applies only when the visitor is anyhow visiting a Jewish patient, or whether he should

go out of his way to visit a gentile. In addition, if there is a chance of *Aiva*, anti-semitism, as a result of not visiting him, one is obliged to do so. One should also offer him sympathy, though offering a greeting type of blessing is normally forbidden. This is considered a free gift, and is part of the Scriptural prohibition, *Lo Sechaneim*. Only to a gentile who observes the seven Mitzvos commanded to Noach may one give such a gift or blessing. However, if one knows that the gentile will offer a blessing himself, requiring a greeting in return, the Jew must greet first.

Gentiles are governed by *Mazal*. Therefore, one can not change the decree through Tefilah. However, as we learn from the story of *Yonah*, repentance is always in order. It is possible that the decree has not been passed, but that the threat is made to induce Teshuva. Gentiles are also required to fulfill their obligations and Mitzvos. Whether one should hope for gentiles to do good is a controversial issue. The question is whether the gentiles' good deeds will serve to lengthen their control of the Jews and delay the coming of Moshiach.

All of this does not take into account two things. First, the Jew's role in showing the world the correct path through life, which is part of the Mitzvah of sanctifying the Name of Hashem. Second, the welfare of gentiles has a direct effect on a Jew or the Jewish population. Thus we pray for the stability of the government. In the same way, the Poskim discuss praying for the welfare of a gentile in the service of a Jew. If anything happens to him, the Jew will suffer. Here, the Mazal of the Jew is also involved. Similarly, the Poskim permit davening for a gentile who has served a Jew well, or one who is in business with him. This involves showing gratitude. However, one can not include the gentile in the Tefilah "in the midst of all the sick of Israel." Therefore, on Shabbos a separate Tefilah would be required. Presumably, if one is praying for a gentile, it is for a reason that one would be distressed to think of him. Accordingly, it would only be permitted if he was in imminent danger. The reasoning permitting praying for those in imminent danger is the same that permits *Chilul Shabbos* to save them. Chilul Shabbos is only permitted for a gentile patient based on *Aivah*, the prevention of antisemitism. [See Brochos 6b Gitin 61a 62a Baba Basra 8b 10b Sanhedrin 27b, Poskim Tur Sh. Ar. Y.D. 151:11-12 Darkei Teshuva 28-29, 132 Taz 14, 151:1, 335:9, O.C. 189 Magen Avraham 1, commentaries.]

*We wish all readers a Ksiva Vachasima Tova!*

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