

Shavuot 5783 Pikuach Nefesh

Source Sheet by Rachel Davidson

Leviticus 18:5

You shall keep My laws and My rules, through doing them a person shall live by them: I am the LORD.

ויקרא י"ח:ה'

וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־חֻקֹּתַי וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי
אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אִתְּם הָאֱלֹהִים וְחִי בָהֶם
אֲנִי יי: (ס)

Yoma 85b:3

Rabbi Shimon ben Menasya said: It is stated: **“And the children of Israel shall keep Shabbat, to observe Shabbat”** (Exodus 31:16). **The Torah said: Desecrate one Shabbat on his behalf so he will observe many Shabbatot. Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said:** If I would have been **there** among those Sages who debated this question, **I would have said that my proof is preferable to theirs,** as it states: **“You shall keep My statutes and My ordinances, which a person shall do and live by them”** (Leviticus 18:5), **and not that he should die by them.**

יומא פ"ה ב:ג'

רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן מִנְסִיָּא אוֹמֵר:
”וּשְׁמַרְוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת”,
אָמְרָה תוֹרָה: חֲלַל עָלֶיךָ שַׁבָּת
אֶחָת כִּדִּי שִׁשְׁמֹר שַׁבָּתוֹת
הַרְבֵּה. אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר
שְׁמוּאֵל: אֵי הוּאֵי הָתָם, הָהֵם
אֲמִינָא דִּידִי עֲדִיפָא מִדִּידֵהוּ: ”וְחִי
בָהֶם” — וְלֹא שְׁיָמוּת בָּהֶם.

Yoma 82a:8

MISHNA: With regard to a **pregnant woman who smelled food** and was overcome by a craving to eat it, **one feeds her until she recovers**. If a person is **ill** and requires food due to potential danger, **one feeds him according to the advice of medical experts**. **And if there are no experts there, one feeds him according to his own instructions, until he says** that he has eaten **enough** and needs no more.

יומא פ"ב א:ח'

מתני' עוברת שהריחה מאכילין אותה עד שתשיב נפשה חולה מאכילין אותו ע"פ בקיאים ואם אין שם בקיאים מאכילין אותו על פי עצמו עד שיאמר די

Yoma 82a:9

GEMARA: The Sages taught in a *baraita*: With regard to a **pregnant woman who smelled consecrated meat or pig meat** and craved those specific foods, **one inserts a thin reed into the juice of that item and places it on her mouth**. If her mind becomes settled with that, **it is well**. And if not, **one feeds her the gravy itself** of that forbidden food. If her mind becomes settled with that, **it is well**. And if not, **one feeds her the fat of the forbidden food itself, as there**

יומא פ"ב א:ט'

גמ' תנו רבנן: עוברת שהריחה בשר קודש או בשר חזיר — תוחבין לה כוש ברוטב, ומניחין לה על פיה, אם נתיישבה דעתה — מוטב, ואם לאו — מאכילין אותה רוטב עצמו, ואם נתיישבה דעתה — מוטב, ואם לאו — מאכילין אותה שומן עצמו. שאין לה דבר שעומד בפני פקוח נפש, חוץ מעבודה זרה וגילוי עריות ושפיכות דמים.

is no *halakha* that stands in the way of saving a life except for the prohibitions against idol worship, and forbidden sexual relationships, and bloodshed.

Sanhedrin 37a:13

The court tells the witnesses:
Therefore, Adam the first man **was created alone, to teach you that** with regard to **anyone who destroys one soul from the Jewish people, the verse ascribes him** blame as if he **destroyed an entire world. And conversely, anyone who sustains one soul from the Jewish people, the verse ascribes him credit as if he sustained an entire world.**

סנהדרין ל"ז א:י"ג

לפיכך נברא אדם יחידי ללמדך
שכל המאבד נפש אחת מישראל
מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו איבד
עולם מלא וכל המקיים נפש
אחת מישראל מעלה עליו
הכתוב כאילו קיים עולם מלא

Rashi on Leviticus 18:5:2

וְחַי בָּהֶם means, THAT HE SHALL LIVE THROUGH THEM in the world to come (eternal life). For if you say it means that he shall live in this world, is it not a fact that in the end he must die! (Sifra, Acharei Mot, Section 8 10; cf. also Targ. Onkelos)

רש"י על ויקרא י"ח:ה:ב'

וְחַי בָּהֶם. לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, שְׁאֵם
תֹּאמַר בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְהֵלֹא סוּפוֹ
הוּא מֵת (שם):

**Mishneh Torah, Murderer and the
Preservation of Life 11:5**

Our Sages forbade many matters because they involve a threat to life. Whenever a person transgresses these guidelines, saying: **"I will risk my life, what does this matter to others,"** or **"I am not careful about these things,"** he should be punished by stripes for rebelliousness.

משנה תורה, הלכות רוצח

ושמירת נפש י"א:ה'

הַרְבֵּה דְּבָרִים אָסְרוּ חֲכָמִים מִפְּנֵי
שֵׁשׁ בָּהֶם סִכַּנְתָּ נַפְשׁוֹת. וְכָל
הָעוֹבֵר עָלֵיהֶן וְאוֹמֵר הֲרִינִי מִסַּכָּן
בְּעֵצָמִי וְיָמָּה לְאַחֲרִים עָלֵי בְּכָךְ אוֹ
אֵינִי מְקַפֵּיד בְּכָךְ מִכֵּין אוֹתוֹ מִכַּת
מִרְדּוּת:

Mishneh Torah, Sabbath 2:1

The [laws of] the Sabbath are suspended in the face of a danger to life, as are [the obligations of] the other mitzvot. Therefore, we may perform - according to the directives of a professional physician of that locale - everything that is necessary for the benefit of a sick person whose life is in danger.

When there is a doubt whether or not the Sabbath laws must be violated on a person's behalf, one should violate the Sabbath laws on his behalf, for the Sabbath laws are suspended even when there is merely a question of

משנה תורה, הלכות שבת ב':א'

דְּחוּיָהּ הִיא שַׁבָּת אֲצֵל סִכַּנְתָּ
נַפְשׁוֹת כְּשֶׁאַרְכָּל הַמִּצְוֹת. לְפִיכָךְ
חוּלָה שֵׁשׁ בּוֹ סִכָּנָה עוֹשִׂין לוֹ כָּל
צָרָכּוֹ בְּשַׁבָּת עַל פִּי רוֹפֵא אֲמֵן
שֶׁל אוֹתוֹ מְקוֹם. סָפֵק שֶׁהוּא צָרִיךְ
לְחַלֵּל עָלָיו אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת סָפֵק
שֶׁאֵינוֹ צָרִיךְ.

danger to a person's life.

Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 328:2

For someone who has a dangerous illness, it is a commandment to break Shabbat for him. One who hurries to do this is praised. One who asks about this is a murderer.

שולחן ערוך, אורח חיים שכ"ח:ב'

מי שיש לו חולי של סכנה מצוה
לחלל עליו את השבת והזריז הרי
זה משובח והשואל הרי זה שופך
דמים:

Starving for Passover - Caroline Rothstein

...I embrace *pikuach nefesh* (the saving of a soul or life) because, even though I am fully recovered, it lets me cut myself slack and ensure that my health takes precedence over Pesach's rigorous demands.

Passover celebrates our Exodus from Egypt, our redemption from slavery, our freedom. Having an eating disorder puts shackles around food- and body-related choices. It is a mental illness that often feels like it holds the sufferer hostage. Recovery is liberation. After the very trying year I experienced in recovery, I realized that not keeping Passover was redemption. However, it is not redemption from the restrictions of going eight days and nights without leavened bread and corn syrup. Rather, I feel redeemed from the eating disorder. I made a choice that trumped tradition in favor of my mental, emotional, and physical balance and prosperity. I made a choice to save my life. I made a choice that prioritized my health and soul above all else — that is liberation, an exodus from my pain.