

Violating Shabbos to Save a Life

Adapted from a shiur by Rav Yechiel

Biberfeld on *Parshas*

Ki Sisa

ושמרו בני ישראל את השבת לעשות את השבת לדורותם לברית עולם

The Gemara cites eight *pesukim*, including the *pasuk* above, to prove that one may violate Shabbos to save a life. But the Gemara says *v'chai bahem* is the best, since it includes even cases of *safek sakanah*, while the others only allow for definite danger.

Is the permission to
violate Shabbos *hutra*
or *dechuya*?

- Rosh/Maharam: It is *hutra* like cooking on Yom Tov, and better than violating other mitzvos.
- Chasam Sofer: This is because *v'shamru* teaches that Shabbos is *hutra*, but *v'chai bahem* teaches that other mitzvos are only *dechuya*.
- Vyaan Yosef and Emes Lyaakov: They explain based on the Rambam that *v'chai bahem* is based on *oness* (with no choice), while *v'shamru* is the preferred choice – *hutra* to violate Shabbos to keep Shabbos again in the future.

There are a number
of other *nafka*

minos between these two derivations:

- *Beur Halacha* 329:1 — *V'shamru* applies if he can continue to keep mitzvos (even not Shabbos), but *v'chai bahem* shows we violate Shabbos even if he won't live long enough to keep more mitzvos.
- *Shulchan Aruch* 330:5 – If a woman dies during childbirth before the baby emerges, we may violate Shabbos to save the baby.
 - *Mishna Berura* (8) – Even if the baby is not yet alive, we still violate Shabbos. This is based on *v'shamru*, because *v'chai bahem* applies only if it's alive.
- Tosafos — Eliyahu was allowed to approach a dead child in *Sefer Melachim* even though he was a Kohen because he was sure he could resurrect him, so it was *pikuach nefesh*. Although *v'chai bahem* applies only to a live person, *v'shamru* allows violating mitzvos for the potential to do future mitzvos even for one currently dead.

