

## **Against Medical Advice**

**Excerpted and adapted from a *shiur* by Dayan Yitzhak Grossman**

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[https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/VAY82\\_010\\_Bechukosai\\_Right\\_to\\_Refuse-Declining\\_Medical\\_Treatment-.mp3](https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/VAY82_010_Bechukosai_Right_to_Refuse-Declining_Medical_Treatment-.mp3)

*If you will follow my decrees and observe my commandments and perform them, then I will provide your rains in their time, and the land will give its produce, and the tree of the field will give its fruit.*

Vayikra 26:3-4

The Ramban explains that when B'nei Yisrael follow the Torah, Hashem will perform hidden miracles for them, including the *brachos* mentioned here and the removal of illnesses (see Shmos 23:25). The Ramban also says that ideally, sick people should seek out prophets, rather than doctors, to discover the spiritual cause of their maladies. The Ibn Ezra (Shmos 21) writes similarly that although Chazal permit doctors to heal (see Bava Kama 85b), this applies only to external illnesses; internal ones are to be left in Hashem's hands.

The Rambam (Peirush HaMishnayos, Pesachim *perek* 4) and Akeidas Yitzchak (Vayishlach) dispute this vehemently and say that one must go to a doctor when he is ill. This is the position of the Bach as well (Y.D. 336). R' Eliyahu Dessler suggests that the Ramban is only addressing people on a high spiritual level. Indeed, many *Acharonim* (including Sheivet Mihudah, Birkei Yosef, and Tzitz Eliezer) assume that the Ramban's approach does not apply to people of our time.

A minority of *Acharonim* (including the Avnei Neizer citing his father) write that if the doctor says one must transgress an *issur* to restore his health, the patient may choose not to listen and rely on the Ramban and the Ibn Ezra. But most *poskim* (Radbaz, Magein Avraham, Mishnah Brurah, R' Ovadia Yosef, and others) hold that he must heed the doctor's advice.