

Q&A From the Bais HaVaad Halacha Hotline

A Family Operation

Rav Aryeh Finkel

February 3, 2022

Q My elderly father requires periodic finger-stick blood tests. Often his aide is not available to administer the test. May I do it myself?

A Wounding a parent is a capital offense in the Torah: “One who strikes his father or mother shall be put to death (Shmos 21:15).” Chazal (Sanhedrin 84b) say a “strike” means even a minor wound or shedding of blood.



Even if the parent asks the child to wound him or her, almost all *poskim* still consider it a violation. But the Minchas Chinuch (*Asei* 48) and several other *Acharonim* maintain that an invited wound is not forbidden. In practice, we follow the former view, which is that of the majority (Minchas Shlomo 1:32). Wounding a parent for medical purposes (e.g., a finger-stick or surgery) is discussed in the Gemara (*ibid*). According to the Rif’s understanding of the Gemara’s conclusion, it is forbidden, and the Shulchan Aruch follows this view. The Rambam understands the conclusion to be that it’s permitted. The Rama rules this way, and contemporary *poskim* follow. Still, the Gemara only permits a child to inflict a medical wound when there is no one else available (Rama *ibid*.). If it’s time sensitive, the child need not wait (even against the parent’s will).

If others are present but the child is more qualified, he may do it by request of the parent (Aruch Hashulchan *ibid*. 6). If the others are equally qualified, but the parent feels more comfortable with the child doing it, the *Acharonim* disagree: Chelkas Yaakov (Y.D. 131) permits it (he combines the view of the Minchas Chinuch above), but Minchas Yitzchak (1:28) does not.