

Triage & End of Life Care

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Presenter Disclosure

Presenter Name: Rabbi Aaron E. Glatt, MD

Affiliations: Mount Sinai South Nassau &
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Conflict of interest: None

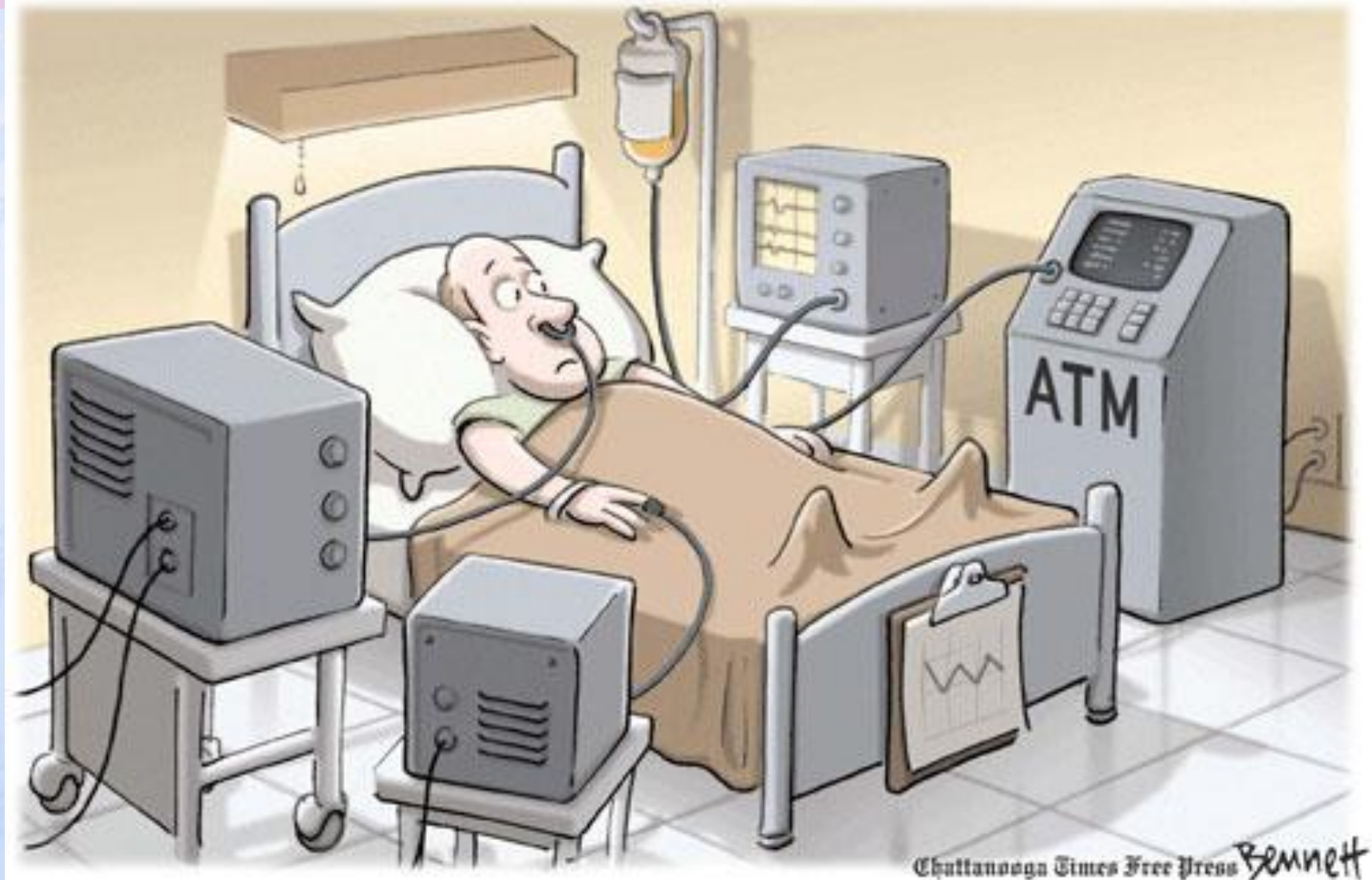
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to appreciate complexity of medical & clinical issues influencing end of life care
2. At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to understand end of life medical considerations
3. At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to understand end of life halachic considerations

Religion & Medicine Can Co-exist; *but it is not always simple and easy*



Primum non nocere



Chattanooga Times Free Press Bennett

THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE, zt"l

Never called
hospitals
“Beis Cholim”
- Houses of
the Sick...
instead,
called them
“Beis Refuah”
Houses of
Healing



Primum non nocere

- * Latin phrase meaning "***first, do no harm***"
- * Attributed to *Englishman* Thomas Sydenham (1624-1689) or *Parisian* pathologist Auguste Chomel (1788-1858)
- * **Non-maleficence** is a fundamental medical ethics precept derived from this maxim
- * **Focus today will be on caring for the terminal patient**
- * Some principles may be applicable across all setting;
some may not
- * Some principles may be applicable to all patients;
some only to selected patients
- * Common sense must always prevail
- * ***Secundum non nocere*** ("***second, do no harm***"; Glatt)

Jewish History: Healing

- * **G-d as first surgeon - created Eve from Adam (Genesis 2:18-24)**
- * **G-d visited Abraham post-op (circumcision) (Genesis 18:1)**
- * **Biblical injunction to heal (Exodus 21:19)**
- * **Talmudic injunction to emulate G-d (e.g. care for / visit the sick)**
- * **Numerous references in Bible and Talmud to the importance of these precepts, and how to perform them properly**

Poor Choices



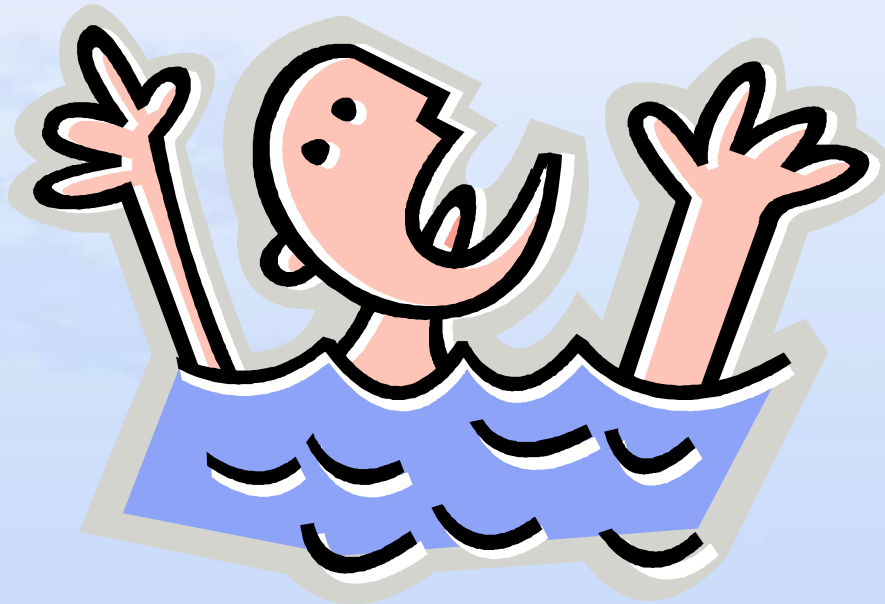
Practical Ethics For All

- ★ Always treat *everyone* with respect
- ★ Always treat *everyone* compassionately
- ★ Never compromise *your* beliefs
- ★ Never do what *you* think is wrong
- ★ Disagree with patient practices, but...
- ★ Never disagree with their humanity

What is the definition of swimming?

Not drowning!

Woody Allen



End of Life:

Knowing when to let go...



What is Quality of Life?

- ✿ **What factors are included?**
- ✿ **Who decides?**
- ✿ **What about pain / suffering?**
- ✿ **What is “dying with dignity”?**
- ✿ **Define DEATH**

Why Did Hashem Create Illness?



Critical Ideas & Definitions

Death of a Person

- * Soul leaves the body
- * Exempt from performance of *mitzvot*
- * Laws of ritual impurity (*tumas meis*) start
- * Requirement for burial
- * Prohibition against benefiting from dead
- * Formal mourning process (“*shiva*”)
- * Removal of organs permissible

When Does Death Occur?

According to Primary Jewish Sources

- * Cessation of Breathing (Yoma, 85a)
- * Cessation of Respiration (Yoma, 85a)
- * Decapitation (Ohalot 1:6)
- * **Brain Stem Death** (BSD, “*Brain Death*”) ???

According to NYS (US) Law

- * BSD is accepted (*throughout U.S. as well*)
- * ***However - religious accommodation***

Euthanasia

- ✧ **Active** (*e.g.* physician assisted suicide)
- ✧ **Passive**
 - ✧ **Withholding “high tech” Rx**
 - ✧ **Withholding “low tech” Rx**
 - ✧ **Withholding food and water**
 - ✧ **Withholding oxygen**

Practical Jewish Medical Ethics



Active Euthanasia

Mercy Killing: Difference Jewish vs Secular Law

Secular Law: Physician Assisted Suicide is Humane

*Legal in Oregon, Washington, Montana,
Vermont and California...*

Up for discussion in many others.

Jewish Law: Physician Assisted Suicide is Murder

Is there a middle ground?

Should there be?

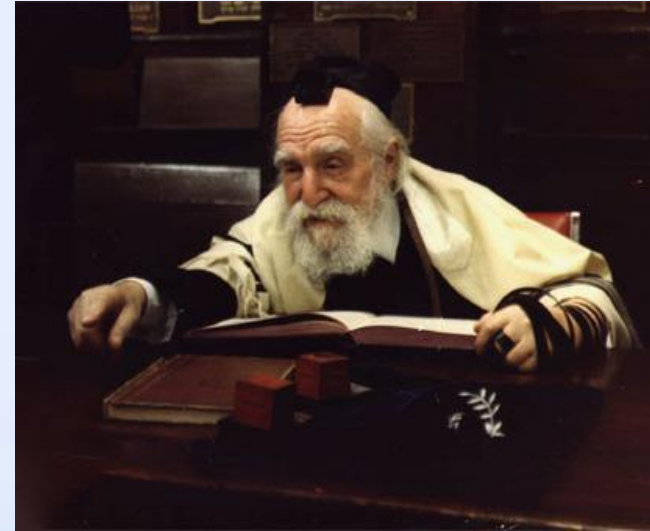
The Approach of HaRav Eliezer Waldenberg (1915-2006)

- ✿ Life is of the utmost value
- ✿ Even if great suffering,
heaven forbid
- ✿ One hour in this world,
even with pain, is of
infinite value
- ✿ Must prolong life even if
it is very difficult
- ✿ Reward in World to Come



The Approach of HaRav Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986)

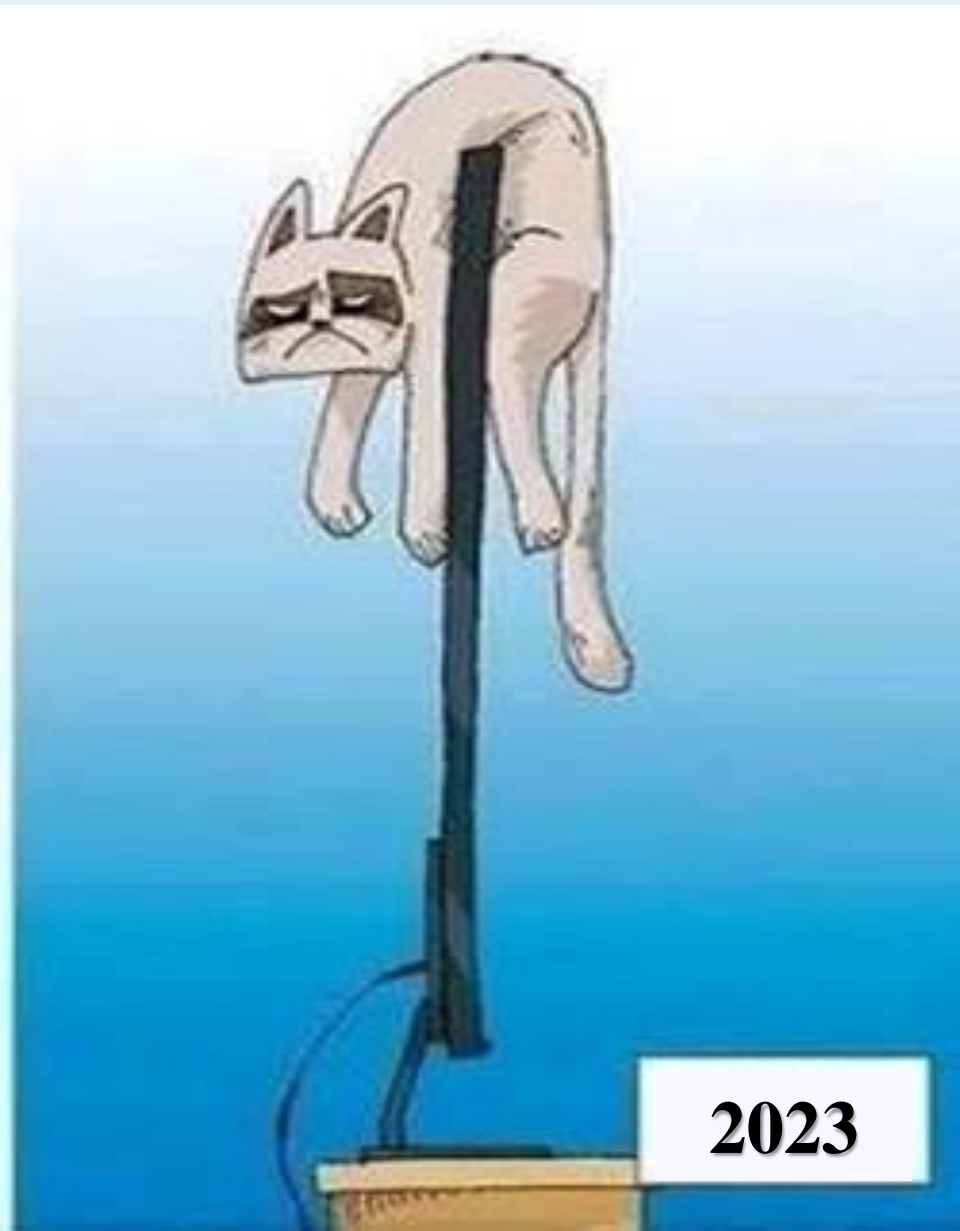
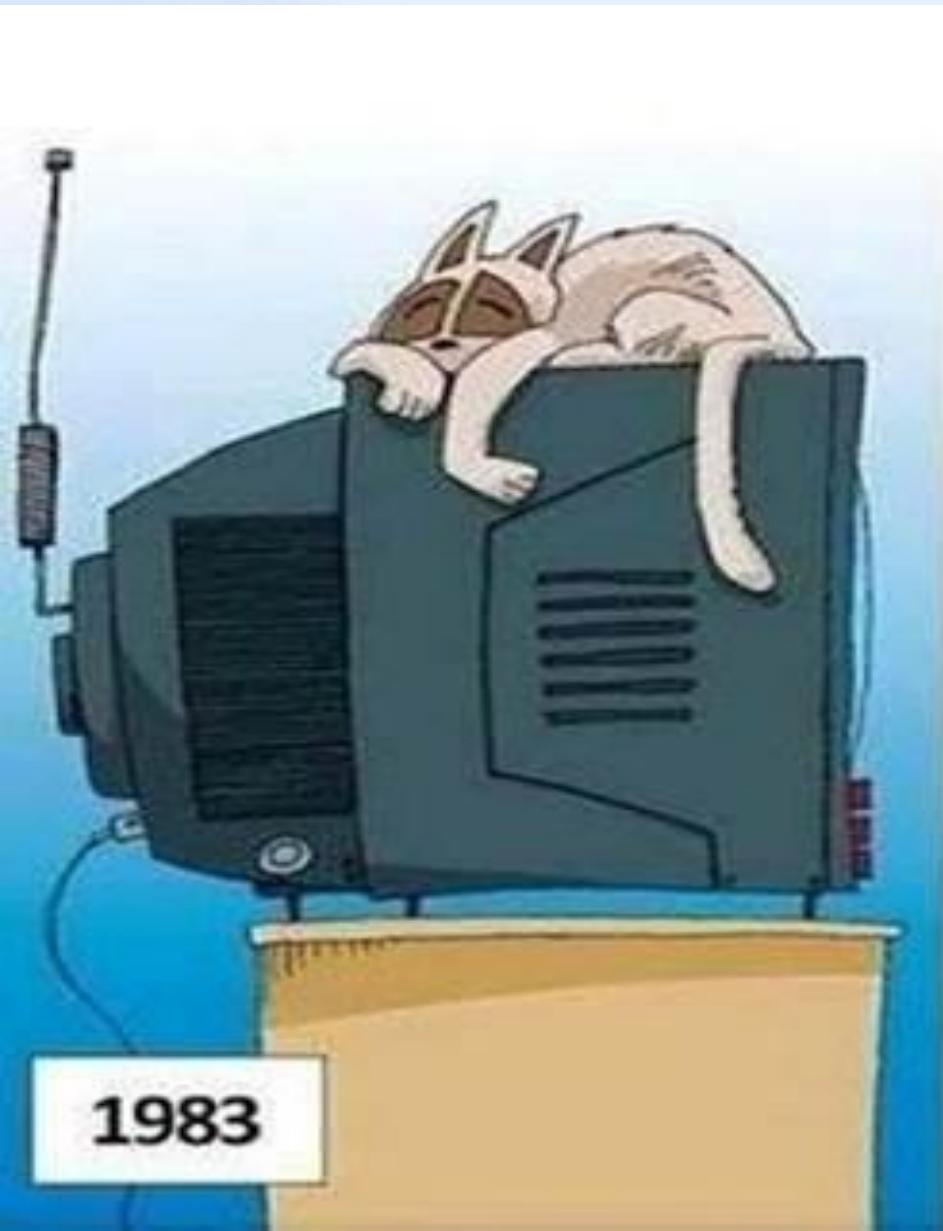
- ✿ If someone is suffering, with no way to heal the patient, only prolonging life - there is NO obligation to prolong life
- ✿ The obligation of *lo sa'amod* (*don't stand idle while someone is dying*) doesn't apply to the incurable / suffering
- ✿ Food and oxygen are natural needs and can't be withheld even if they don't come naturally



“Pain & Suffering”

- ✱ **Physical *or* psychological pain**
- ✱ **While “beneficial for the soul”, and we**
- ✱ **Accept such “*yisurim*” with love, ... *yet* -**
- ✱ **Required (permitted) to alleviate it**
- ✱ **Not required to prolong life with aggressive *Rx* in setting of intractable pain**

Things Never Stay the Same!



“High Tech Rx”

- * Surgery**
- * Chemotherapy**
- * Radiotherapy**
- * Experimental Rx with risk**
- * Painful treatments**
- * CPR / ECMO / intubation /dialysis**

Withholding “high tech” Rx

- ✿ No obligation to suffer, *yet* -
- ✿ Patient can choose to “suffer”
- ✿ Patient can take risks
- ✿ **Rabbinic advice essential**
- ✿ **Palliative care**
- ✿ **Hospice**

“Lower Tech Rx”

- * Antibiotics**
- * IV medications**
- * Intravenous lines, catheters**
- * Diagnostic testing**
- * Maintenance testing**

Withholding “low tech” Rx

- ✿ Generally less acceptable, *but...*
- ✿ Depends on circumstances
(*i.e.* suffering)
- ✿ **Rabbinic advice essential**
- ✿ **Palliative care**
- ✿ **Hospice**

Withholding food and water

- ✿ *Usually not acceptable*
- ✿ **Extenuating circumstances
(i.e. suffering)**
- ✿ **Rabbinic advice essential**
- ✿ **Palliative care**
- ✿ **Hospice**

Withholding oxygen

- * Usually not acceptable, yet...
- * DNI /DNR are acceptable under appropriate conditions
- * Delaying death vs prolonging life
- * Rabbinic advice essential
- * Palliative care
- * Hospice

Halachic Healthcare Proxy

- ✿ **Essential for (observant) Jewish patient**
- ✿ **Guarantees religious views are followed and accommodated**
- ✿ **Decide carefully who is your proxy!!**
- ✿ ***Makes sure YOUR wishes are followed***

Don't wait till it's too late...
Plan before the crisis



THANK YOU



*If you are not
part of the
solution,
You are part
of the
problem!*