The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן ש"א סעיף כ"ה

Overview

Siman 301 Seif 25 (a):

One may not go out with an unconfirmed amulet but one may go out if it is confirmed. There is no difference whether the writer is confirmed but not the amulet, for example, someone wrote one incantation on three different letters and the three of them healed three different people in which case this person is confirmed when writing this incantation but not for other incantations and the amulet is not confirmed if written by another person, nor does it matter if the amulet is confirmed but not the person, for example, someone wrote an amulet on a single letter that was effective at healing three people and that amulet is considered effective for all people. Certainly it is permitted if the person and the amulet are confirmed, for example, if an incantation was written on three letters and each one was effective at healing three people or one person three times, the person is confirmed for this incantation any time he writes it and these letters are confirmed for any person.

- It may only be taken out if it is worn as a garment so that it is considered an adornment for the one who is ill but one may not carry it by hand four amos. (M.B. 88)
- A person is confirmed when he healed three people from a single illness with three letters that contained the same incantation. This person may then write other letters with this incantation for people who suffer that same condition but he is not confirmed for other incantations. An incantation is confirmed when it is written on a letter and has healed three different people and anyone suffering from this condition may transport that letter. If that incantation is written on another letter it is unconfirmed and even if written by the original writer it is unconfirmed since he is not yet confirmed. (M.B. 89)
- Other people suffering this condition may take one of the original letters which were written by this expert. (M.B. 91)
- This is true even if it healed the same person three times. (M.B. 92)
- Any person with this condition may transport this letter but if the incantation is written on another letter it may not be transported. (M.B. 93)
- The reason it was necessary to mention that it healed three times was to confirm the amulet. (M.B. 95)

Halacha Highlight

Writing an amulet on Shabbos

Shulchan Aruch Siman 301 Seif 25 (a)
ואם הוא ממחה יוצאין בו
And if it is confirmed one may go out wearing it

Shulchan Aruch rules that one may not go out wearing an amulet that was not confirmed, but if the amulet is confirmed one may go out wearing it. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק פ"ח) emphasizes that even when an amulet has been confirmed one may only go out wearing it as a garment but it is prohibited for one to carry it in his hand. The reason wearing it is permitted is that for the one who is ill it is considered an adornment.

Rav Moshe Feinstein (אג"מ או"ח ח"ה סי' י"ח על סע' כ"ה) writes that one may not write an amulet for someone who is ill even if he is dangerously ill – חולה שיש בו סכנה. On Shabbos it is only permitted to administer treatments that violate Shabbos if the therapy is based on laws of nature – דרך הטבע but one may not perform a melacha to administer a treatment that is a segulah. The reason it is permitted for one who is ill to go out with an amulet is not because it is permitted to override Shabbos in order to preserve the patient's life. It is permitted, as mentioned, because it is considered an adornment and thus does not override any Shabbos prohibitions. For this reason it is permitted for someone whose illness is not even life-threatening to go out wearing an amulet on Shabbos.

Minchas Shabbos (על קצוש"ע סי' פ"ד ס"ק כ"ט) wrote at length about the permissibility of writing a telegram on Shabbos to a tzadik so that he should daven for someone who is dangerously ill as well as the permissibility of writing an amulet on Shabbos. He cites Birkei Yosef who notes that the matter is subject to debate between Rishonim whether it is permitted to violate Shabbos to provide a segulah-type treatment and that there are numerous authorities who maintain that it is permitted. He then references Maharsham who ruled that one should not send a telegram to a tzadik on Shabbos since his tefilos are not always answered and thus it is not considered a "confirmed amulet" that would permit overriding Shabbos prohibitions.