

By the Grace of G-d
9th of Marcheshvan, 5726
Brooklyn, N. Y.

M.B., Ch.B.

Greeting and Blessing:

I am in receipt of your letter of October 31st, in which you write about the case of one of your patients who, in your opinion, should avoid pregnancy for a certain period of time at any rate, in view of the fact that this would be a health hazard for her, as evidenced from previous pregnancies. You ask my opinion in this regard, as well as on the kind of contraceptive to be used.

It is surely unnecessary to emphasize to you that our Torah, which is called Toras Chaim, being not only the source of everlasting life in the Hereafter, but also, and especially the source of life on earth, inasmuch as it has been given on Mt. Sinai to be observed in our daily life - also takes a position in regard to such a situation as you describe in your letter. Indeed, the problem is adequately dealt with by various Halacha authorities, who have given definite Piskei Dinim as to practical solutions under various circumstances. However it is not within my province to Paskin Shaaalos. Nevertheless in deference to you, and since you took the trouble to write to me, I will write to you what I expect the Rabbonim would tell you. It is this: When an expert doctor expresses his opinion that it is necessary for a wife to avoid conception for a certain period of time, or even indefinitely, the Rov who is consulted will permit certain contraceptive methods, provided they are undertaken by the wife, and not by the husband.

As indicated above, this is my way of expressing to you my informal opinion. For the actual disposition of this question you should approach one of the Rabbonim in Manchester, giving him all the pertinent factors. It is not even necessary to mention the name of the patient, if you would rather avoid this.

I will take the liberty of expressing an opinion which is actually more in your province. I refer to the conclusion of your letter in which you mention that you would recommend your patient to take a contraceptive pill. I assume you have

Dr. E. J.

M. D., Ch.B.

in mind the pills that are usually taken for a period of twenty days or so. I trust you will not take it amiss if I express my opinion to the effect that I am not at all enthusiastic about this form of contraception, because this method is still comparatively new. A pill of this kind which is taken for twenty days consecutively, and over a period of months, could have certain side effects, especially in view of the cumulative effect of a drug taken over a period of time. I believe that some doctors in the U.S.A. have already expressed reservations about the contraceptive pill because of possible side effects. Under the circumstances, and where a contraception is permitted by the Torah, the preferable method would be to use some mechanical device by the wife, or the method of abstinence, that is postponing intercourse after the days which are considered to have the maximum chance of fertility.

With blessing M. Scherman,