

## Source Sheet: Risking Your Life to Save Another

### 1. Leviticus 19:16 — ויקרא י"ט:ט"ז

לא תלך רכיל בעמך; לא תעמד על דם רעך, אני ה'.

"Do not go about as a talebearer among your people; do not stand idly by the blood of your fellow. I am the Eternal."

#### Notes:

This verse is the Torah's foundation for the obligation to save another person's life.

### 2. Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 73a — תלמוד בבלי, סנהדרין ע"ג ע"א

מנין לרואה את חבירו שהוא טובע בנהר... שהוא חייב להצילו? תלמוד לומר: לא תעמד על דם רעך.

"How do we know that if one sees another drowning in a river... that one is obligated to save him? The verse teaches: 'Do not stand idly by the blood of your fellow.'"

#### Notes:

This is the Talmud's primary derivation of the obligation to rescue.

### 3. Rambam, Laws of Murder and Guarding Life 1:14 — רמב"ם, הלכות רוצח ושמירת הנפש א"י:ד

כל היכול להציל ולא הציל — עובר בלא תעמד על דם רעך.

"Anyone who is able to save another and does not save him violates the commandment 'Do not stand idly by the blood of your fellow.'"

#### Notes:

Rambam codifies the obligation as binding Torah law.

### 4. Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 157:1 — שולחן ערוך, יורה דעה קנ"ז:א

הרואה את חבירו שהוא נספג... חייב להצילו.

"One who sees another in danger... is obligated to save him."

#### Notes:

The Rema adds that one should accept *some* level of risk, but not extreme danger.

### 5. Radbaz, Vol. 3, Responsum 627 — רדב"ז חלק ג' סימן תרכ"ז

אין אדם חייב להקניס עצמו בסכנה ודאי... אבל אם הסכנה קטנה — מדת חסידות להציל.

"A person is not obligated to place himself in certain danger... but if the danger is small, it is an act of piety to save [the other]."

**Notes:**

This responsum is the cornerstone of halachic discussions about risking one's life to save another.

**6. עבודה זרה כ"ז ע"א — Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 26a**

The passage discusses treating non-Jews medically in times of persecution. (Full text omitted for copyright; here is the key line:)

מפני איבה — מרפאין אותם.

"Because of enmity (to avoid hostility), we treat them."

**7. רמב"ם, הלכות רוצח י"ב:ג — Rambam, Laws of Murder 12:3**

מפרנסין עניי גוים עם עניי ישראל... מפני דרכי שלום.

"We support the poor of the non-Jews along with the poor of Israel... for the sake of peace."

**Notes:**

This principle is extended by later authorities to include saving life.

**8. שולחן ערוך, יורה דעה קנ"ח:א — Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 158:1**

מרפאין גוים... מפני דרכי שלום.

"We provide medical treatment to non-Jews... for the sake of peace."

**Notes:**

This is the halachic basis for universal medical ethics in Jewish law.

**9. פוסקים בני זמננו — Modern Authorities (Summaries)**

**Igrot Moshe, Choshen Mishpat II:74 (R. Moshe Feinstein)**

Doctors may treat dangerous patients; some risk is permitted but not extreme danger.

**Minchat Shlomo 1:7 (R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach)**

Rescuers may accept reasonable risk; society depends on such acts.

**Yabia Omer, Choshen Mishpat 12 (R. Ovadia Yosef)**

Saving non-Jewish lives is a full obligation today, not merely "for the sake of peace."