

The Puah Institute

Fertility & Medicine according to Halacha

It is the natural order of things that human beings wish to see the continuation of mankind and this is also the first commandment in the Torah, as is written, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth...” When one is not able to bring children into the world he feels like his life is not worth living, as Rachel our matriarch said, “Give me children, or else I die.” (Genesis 30) and in the words of our sages, “Who could not bring children is considered dead.”

Modern medicine has found solutions to a lot of the common fertility problems in men and women, and people who just a generation ago would have had no choice but to remain childless, merit to hug their own children today-sometimes with ease and sometimes after difficult, exhausting treatments. Many of the observant Jewish community who could not bring children into the world stood on the sidelines and watched developments unfolding with a yearning- they could not partake of the developments due to restrictions of Jewish law and emotional barriers. Decisors and teachers of Jewish law who were asked by their followers about such developments were nervous to show their support due to serious Halachic doubts and lack of faith in the public medical system.

The Halachic problems in such processes are many: the status of the woman according to family purity laws, the emission of male seed that is not for the sake of conception, doubts of the switching of the husband's seed with someone else's, and many other complicated problems that we won't elaborate here.

Rabbi Menachem Borenstein, a vivacious, multifarious personality, became aware of the subject over twenty years ago, and after consulting with some of the top doctors and being guided by Halachic decisors, he began to learn the subject in depth and to search for solutions which would provide answers for the Halachic difficulties, thereby allowing observant couples to bring children to the world.

Little by little, Rabbi Borenstein managed to create a trusting relationship between the Rabbinical and medical bodies and started building the framework that was to answer all the required needs for fertility according to Jewish law. It was with this goal in mind that the Puah Institute was established by Rabbi Borenstein, which at the very beginning was entirely run and managed by him and today has tens of Rabbis and staff members working there.

For no charge the institute provides emotional support for each person that turns to it, Halachic guidance and information on how it is possible to carry out in vitro fertilization and intrauterine insemination according to Halachic guidelines. The institute provides supervision of fertility treatments so as to ensure that the seed of the husband is not mixed up with someone else's. All of their services are provided in full cooperation and with the help of hospitals

and the biggest medical centers in Israel. As a result of their work, thousands of observant couples have merited to be blessed with children.

Apart from their center in Israel, the institute also has branches in the largest Jewish communities around the world. Rabbis working at the institute answer each person that approaches them with pleasantness and in the language that is most comfortable for them as they provide advice, guidance and recommendations of specialized doctors in the required fields.

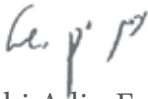
The institute holds seminars, courses and lectures on the subject of fertility and Jewish law and offers lessons for grooms and brides on the laws of family purity and on the subject of intimacy. Dozens of books and booklets have been released by the institute in order to clarify these subjects. Every year a symposium is held for the general public who come in droves to hear decisors and teachers of Jewish law as well as experts in specific medical fields.

Our sages said, “Whoever saves one soul, is considered as having saved an entire world.” The Puah Institute, with Rabbi Menachem Borenstein at its head, has merited to bring many souls into this world and to breathe new life into the many souls of parents who would otherwise have remained childless, unhappy and lifeless.

The Puah Institute proved to the world that also in the subjects of fertility, insemination and intimacy it is possible

to make use of the most modern medical services without having to compromise on Jewish law, the holiness of the Jewish nation or the sanctity of the Jewish home. The institute is a shining example of the implementation of Jewish law in modern-day life in the most practical way.

In consideration of the above, the selection committee has decided to bestow upon the Puah Institute, headed by Rabbi Menachem Borenstein, the Katz Award for 5775 (2015).



Rabbi Adin Even
Israel (Steinsaltz)



Professor Menahem
Ben-Sasson



Rabbi Yaakov Ariel