



RABBI GIDEON

Machon Puah for Fertility and
Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha

WEITZMAN

Supervision

Last time we discussed the way that halacha approaches new realities and the Poskim have to investigate how to utilize new technologies. One example of this is the way that these halachic experts examined and accepted reproductive treatment.

When in-vitro fertilization (IVF) was first developed and the first IVF baby, Louise Brown, was born on July 25th, 1979, the entire world had to re-examine the definition of conception, relationships between parents and children and many related issues.

For observant Jewish couples, who wanted to use reproductive technology and undergo IVF, the questions and dilemmas were amplified. The Poskim were required to investigate the specifics of the activities inside the clinic, recognize the problems and suggest solutions.

PUAH spearheaded the efforts to ensure that all couples would have access to this technology and that no couple would say that the reason that they did not have children was because the halacha served as a barrier to their utilizing reproductive treatment.

One of the major contributions to this was the development of the system of supervision. PUAH places highly trained supervisors in fertility laboratories who very closely monitor all activity to ensure that there is no possibility of human error. The recent tragic case of the girl born to a couple in Israel who were

not the genetic parents illustrates the need for such supervision.

We have discussed in the past the rationale behind such supervision and the exact role of the supervisor. We have also highlighted the incredible dedication that they have, and how essential they are in overseeing the entire process and providing the couple with the confidence that they can proceed with treatment, in the knowledge that there is close supervision throughout the entire process.

PUAH has been supervising fertility treatments worldwide for over 30 years, developing a rapport with the embryologists and laboratory directors, and working together to create the best working environment and highest medical and halachic standards.

All of this was altered by the Covid 19 pandemic. The labs became much more sensitive about enabling supervisors to enter the lab which needed to be preserved in a sterile environment. The initial thinking was that the least number of people entering the laboratory the better and the less likelihood of infection.

There were calls to limit the supervisor's access and mobility. Using our good connections and positive relationships, PUAH was able to continue to supply supervision at the highest standard, while giving very specific guidelines as to how to adapt to the new reality.

More on this next time. ■