

# “Running for a Cure”

By Rabbi David Wolpe

In 14th century Marseilles, 5% of the population was Jewish, yet almost half of the doctors were Jews. In the 16th century when French King Francis I was imprisoned, he asked his captor, Charles V, for his finest Jewish physician. When the doctor arrived Francis asked if he was not tired of waiting for the Messiah to come. The doctor replied he was not, since he was a Christian. Francis sent him away and arranged to be treated by a Jew, brought all the way from Constantinople.

Jewish devotion to the practice of medicine is not new. The command to heal is central to Judaism. From the bible onward, Jews have understood that human beings are God's agents in battling illness.

As someone who has survived both a brain tumor and lymphoma, and whose wife has survived cancer as well, I am enormously grateful for the skill of doctors and for my tradition in encouraging that healing art. So I hope you'll forgive my taking this one *Off the Pulpit* for a personal message.

My wife Eliana is running the Leukemia-Lymphoma marathon. The marathon raises money for cancer research. You can view the website [here](#), complete with family picture.

As you can read on the site, the foundation was instrumental in discovering medicine that is helping to prolong my life, and the lives of many others. If you can contribute, we would be grateful. In any case, may the goodness of God and the skill of human beings bless you with health.