A person is not allowed to injure himself.

It is forbidden for a person to injure himself or his friend.

The Goses (a person expected to die within three days) is considered as living in all aspects. One does not tie his cheeks; anoint him; wash him; plug up his holes; remove the pillow from under him, put him on sand, or put him on pot shards; or put him on earth; and we don't put a bowl, or rake, or bottle of water, or salt crystal; and we don't make any proclamations about him in the town; and we don't hire musicians or professional wailers; and we don't shut his eyes until his soul departs. And anyone who closes his eyes when the soul departs is as if that person killed him. And don't tear clothing and don't take off your leather shoes and don't eulogize him. And don't bring a coffin into the house until the person dies. And don't begin saying Tziduk HaDin until he dies.

And he responded to him that even though we definitely are concerned for chayeish sha'at, even for someone who is already a complete Goses. And it is for this reason that we don't tie his cheeks, etc. In this manner, we learn that it is permissible to desecrate Shabbat for chayeish sha'at (as I explained at length in Shvut Yaakov). Nevertheless, in our discussion, that it is possible that through this treatment the patient will be totally healed. We definitely are not concerned for chayeish sha'at. And there is clear proof, Avoda Zara 27a Tosafot L'Chaye Sha'at. In any case we must be very cautious to consult with expert doctors in the city and to follow the majority of their opinions with the approval of the wise individuals in the city.

We are not concerned for chayeish sha'at- and that which we say in Yoma 85a - One removes the ruins on him on Shabbat out of regard for chayeish sha'at. Consequently, we are concerned that we could say that in our case and in the other case we act for the persons benefit. In the other case if we do not take heed he will die; and in our case if we take heed and he is not healed by the idolatrous doctor he certainly will die. In both cases we abandon the certainty to follow that which is in doubt.
Watch yourselves very carefully, since you did not see any image on the day that God spoke to you out of the fire a Chorev.

Only take heed and watch yourselves very carefully, so that you do not forget the things that your eyes saw and lest they leave your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your children and children's children.

And so it is with every stumbling block which has mortal danger, it is a positive commandment to remove it and to guard against it an to be careful of it as it says, 'Watch yourself and guard your soul.' And if he doesn't remove it, and leaves these obstacles that caused danger, he nullified a positive commandment and transgressed the prohibition of causing bloodshed.

If a man is guilty of a capital offense and is put to death, and you impale him upon a stake, you must not let his corpse remain on the stake overnight, but must bury him the same day, for he that is hanged is a reproach to Hashem, that you should not defile your land that Hashem gave you for an inheritance.

It is forbidden to benefit from the dead.

He said to them—it forbidden to desecrate (the dead).
R. Yochanan said in the name of R. Shimon ben Yehotzedek: "It was...resolved in the upper story of the house of Nitzah in Lud that if one is commanded to "transgress [the Torah] and you will not be killed," he may transgress any prohibition of the Torah in order to escape death, except for [the prohibitions against] idolatry, incest, and murder.

"Keep my laws and be careful to keep My decrees, for I am God your Lord.

If he gets up and can walk under his own power, the one who struck him shall be acquitted. Still, he must pay for [the victim's] loss of work, and must provide for his complete cure.

If your brother is not near you, or if you do not know who [the owner is], you must bring [the animal] home and keep it until your brother identifies it, whereupon you must return it to him.

Loss of his body- from where do we learn it? Scripture teaches "You shall return it."

"To return it to him"...to return his body (physical life) to him.

Do not go around as a gossiper among your people, do not stand idly by when your friend's blood is being spilt, I am Hashem.

Do not stand idly by when your friend's blood is being spilt-to see his death and you could save him. Like, he is drowning in the river or a wild animal or robbers are attacking him.

From where do we learn if one is chasing after his friend to kill him that you have to save him? For it says-Lo ta'amod.

If one carries [ritual impurities] within cavities [of the body] he becomes ritually impure. That even though touching in that area is not considered touching [for ritual impurity], nevertheless, carrying in that area is considered carrying in that area [thereby making a person ritually impure]. Unless the tumah is absorbed within the bowels, since after it enters the stomach it is neither touching or carrying and if the person ritually purifies oneself [in the mikvah], he is purified even though the tumah is absorbed within.
One who "damages" another is obligated to pay him for five things: damages to property, pain, medical care, lost work time, and shame. These five things are paid from the best of his assets; as the law is with all those who cause damage.

And there is a further difference between damages to his body and monetary damages. One who says to his friend, "Blind my eye," or "Amputate my hand" and you will be exempt [from liability] he is still obligated in the five categories [of restitution] because it is known that no individual would really want this. But one says to his friend, "Rip my garment," or "Break my vessel" and you will be exempt, he is exempt. And if he didn't say "And you will be exempt," he is obligated to pay [damages] even though he was given permission to destroy it.

If debris falls on someone [on Shabbat] and it is uncertain whether he is... alive or dead..., one must probe the heap [of debris] for him. If he is found to be alive, one must remove [the debris] for him.

The Rabbis taught: How far does one search [to see whether the person is alive or dead]? Until [one reaches] his nose. Some say: Until [one reaches] his heart. If one checks and finds the upper ones to be dead, he should not say that [surely] the ones underneath must have died. [The Braisa records] There once occurred an incident [where a building collapsed and they searched through the rubble] where they found the upper ones dead and lower ones alive...

Rav Pappa said the dispute [whether one should check up to the heart or up to the nose is only when checking] from the bottom [of the body] to the top [from feet to head]. However from the top towards the bottom, since he already checked up to the nose [and there was no breathing], he does not need to check further. Since it is written "All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life [since breath demonstrates the spirit of life, without breath it shows the cessation of life]."
If debris falls on someone..., if upon examination no sign of breathing can be detected at his nose, the victim must be left where he is [until after Shabbat], for he is already dead.

Even if he is found so severely injured that he cannot live for more than a short while, one must clear and probe [the debris] until one reaches his nose. If no sign of life can be detected at the nose, he is surely dead. It makes no difference whether they had first uncovered his head or his feet.

31. Rabbi J. David Bleich, Tradition, 1973
"Brain death and irreversible coma are not acceptable definitions of death in so far as Halakha is concerned. The sole criterion of death accepted by halakha is total cessation of cardiac and respiratory activity."

32. Isser Yehudah Unterman, Resp. Shevet Mi-Yehudah 313 (1955)
"...It is clear to me that here is no problem when the purpose of the operation is to save a life, as even the strict prohibition of the Torah are set aside when necessary to save a life. There is a problem only in those instances in which life-saving is not involved, such as a nose transplant...In my opinion, there is nothing-not even the personal rights of a Jew-that takes precedence over the saving of life...
When we restore life to an organ by transplanting it into another person, the precept relating to burial no longer applies..."

33. Isser Yehudah Unterman, Resp. Shevet Mi-Yehudah 313 (1955)
"...It is irrelevant that the body from which the organ was taken is still dead, because the prohibition against using the organ rests not on the fact that it came from a dead body, but on the fact that it is itself a dead organ. Once it is implanted into a living person, and life permeates it through the flow of blood and sensation, the prohibition disappears because the basis for the prohibition no longer exists...when an organ is living, no prohibition that relates to a dead organ applies."

34. Tendler and Rosner, 28 Tradition 96 (1994)
In response, the proponents of recognizing brain death as a proper halakhic standard write: "All rabbinic authorities agree that the classic definition of death in Judaism is the absence of spontaneous respiration in a patient with no other signs of life. A brief waiting period of a few minutes to a half-hour after breathing has ceased is also required. Brain death is a criterion for confirming death in a patient who already has irreversible absence of spontaneous respiration...This view is now supported by more and more rabbis.

Sources compiled by Dina Najman-Licht