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Preparing a Bag in Case a Woman Gives Birth on Shabbath

If a woman has a bag containing Muqseh items such as lipstick, money and the like, but also has permitted items in the bag, such as a scarf, the bag nevertheless remains forbidden to be carried on Shabbath. However, if she ordinarily puts food items and other delicacies in it, including cakes and chocolates, then it is considered to be a base for forbidden as well as permitted items (Basis Ledabar Ha-asur Wehammutar), and can be carried. However, the correct thing to do is to empty all Muqseh from it before Shabbath, or to set aside another bag specifically for Shabbath.

As such, if a woman is waiting to give birth at any time, she will need to prepare all the items she requires to take to the hospital. This will include documents and other forms and even money if a taxi driver has to be paid. (It should be pointed out that she should simply open her bag and let the taxi driver take the money out by himself). It is good, therefore, if she places food items, as mentioned above, in a bag, together with all the documents and items she requires, from before Shabbath.

(See Derekh HaTorah, 33:102, 103)



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Qorah: Unity and diligence are key

"It brought forth a blossom, sprouted a bud, and almonds ripened" (Bamidbar 17:23).

It says in Ben Ish Hai Derashoth that the reason that these three miracles happened to Aharon HaKohen's staff - it blossomed, sprouted a bud and bore fruit - is because the Jewish people have three aspects to them, Kohanim (priests), Lewiim (Levites) and Yisraelim, which form an acronym in Hebrew of the word Keli (כלי - vessel).

If there is unity and a connection among the Jewish people, then we have a complete vessel to receive the blessings from Heaven in, as it says, the only vessel that Haqqadosh Barukh Hu (the Holy One Blessed Be He) found fit for the purpose of receiving blessings for the Jewish people is Shalom (peace). Controversy and argument break the vessel into separate segments, and it will be unfit to hold the abundance and blessings.

Rabbenu the Hid"a, 'a"h, explains that a fruit tree has either the blossom or the fruit on it at any given time, but in this case they were both present together, and this was a miracle. The reason why there were almonds on it is because the people were diligent in the study of the Torah. The Hebrew word for almond (Shaged) is similar to the word Shoqed which means showing diligence.

We see from this that unity amongst each other and diligence in Torah study bring much blessing to the Jewish people.

(See Parashath Qorah, Ben Ish Hai Derashoth. Hid"a, Homath Anakh)

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Growing Old Oneself

Our Rabbis blessed memory said that a person should pray that G-d will have mercy on him throughout his elder years, that he will be healthy and without the blemishes of the elderly. One should pray for this when one is still young, and perhaps not even thinking about it, because we are told that one must always pray before the trouble comes (Sanhedrin 44b).

If a person, Heaven forbid, does suffer the negative consequences of old age, which we pray that we will all be spared, and it becomes difficult for others in the household, they should still deal with it calmly and with respect. According to the amount of pain that one undergoes, that is the degree of one's reward. And one must be concerned that, G-d forbid, he may one day be in the same position and he will receive in return what he did, which, hopefully was only good.

It is our earnest prayer that we will all be blessed with long and happy lives, and that we will always be healthy in soul, mind and body, Amen.

(See Pele Yo'eş, Zaqen)

Standing and Using the Same Wording on the Tallyth Gadol and Qattan

When blessing and wrapping oneself in one's Şişşith (ציצית), one should do so standing. This applies both to the Tallyth Gadol as well as the Tallyth Qattan. Nevertheless, if one recited the blessing while sitting, one fulfills one's obligation and does not repeat the blessing. Obviously, one who is unable to stand, recites the blessing and wraps oneself while seated.

The custom of Rabbenu the Ari, z"l, was to wrap his head in the Tallyth Qattan and then recite the blessing on it before wearing it. As such, he would recite the blessing of "Lehith'Attef BeŞişşith" (להתעטף בעיצית) on both the Tallyth Qattan as well as the Tallyth Gadol.

Those who follow the custom of the Ari, z"l, should do likewise. However, since the majority custom is not to wrap one's head in the Tallyth Qattan, the blessing of "Al Miswath Şişşith" (על מצות ציצית), should be recited instead, on the occasions where one recites a blessing on the Tallyth Qattan.

(Shulhan 'Arukh, 8:1. Ben Ish Hai, 1st year, Parashath Bereshith, Oth 6. Kaf Haşayyim, ibid, Oth 4,5. Mishnah Berurah, ibid, 2. Sha'ar HaKawwanoth, Derush Şişşith, Derush 6)

Women's Corner - by Rabbanith Ruth Menashe 'a"n

Lighting the Shabbath Candles: A Special Moment (Part 2)

(continued from last week)

Candle lighting time is considered to be an עת רצון, a time when our prayers are accepted. It is a special time of connecting with our Father in Heaven, asking Him for what every Jewish woman should pray for: to merit to see her children become Torah scholars and illuminate the world with their Torah knowledge. Obviously, even if a woman does not have children, she must still light the candles for Shabbath, because it does other Tiqqunim (rectifications).

While during the week there is a constant struggle between the physical and spiritual, the profane and the holy, Shabbath exemplifies that which is holy and spiritual. What better time is there to experience this elated feeling than when we stand in front of the candles?

I know that for many women it is a weekly challenge to change into a beautiful Shabbath outfit, knowing that all the work is complete, and stand in front of the candles, on time, with calmness and inner peace. I would not like any one of us to be deprived of these very special moments. I believe that with a bit of planning and early preparation you can be the queen welcoming Shabbath the Queen into your home.

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