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By the Hakham

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Touching Most Muqseh on Shabbath Is Permitted

The concept and rules of Muqseh are not from the Torah, but are Rabbinical in origin. There are different opinions as to why they were instituted. Be that as it may, they all serve to protect the sanctity of the holy Shabbath.

Many people mistakenly think that one is not allowed to touch an object which is Muqseh on Shabbath. This is incorrect. What the Rabbis forbade was Tiltul (moving or carrying an object). With the exception of trees and animals, all items which are Muqseh may be touched on Shabbath. The proviso, however, is that they may not be moved or carried. Therefore, if there is an object that will surely move if it is touched, it may not be touched on Shabbath.

What this means in practical terms is that one may even lean or sit on an object, if one does not move it, such as a boulder, which is Muqseh. One may touch a car. I am told that there was a time that when one opened a car door nothing happened - not even a light came on. Many were of the opinion that you could open the door of the car and just sit in it on Shabbath. Today, however, one should not do so, because even if one were to disconnect the battery before Shabbath, one would give the impression of doing something wrong on Shabbath (Mar-ith Ha'ayin).

(See Shulhan 'Arukh with Rama, 308:3, 42. Kaf Haḥayyim, ibid., Oth 139. Mishnah Berurah, ibid., 82)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

Beha'alothkha: Could Moses Be Displaying a Tinge of Arrogance, ח"ו

וַיֹּאמְרוּ הֲרַק אֱלֹהֵימֶשֶׁה דְּבָר יְהוָה הֲלֹא גַם־בָּנוּ דִּבֶּר
"And they said, did G-d only speak with Moses alone, behold He also spoke with us" (Bamidbar 12:2). This is the famous episode where Miriam the Prophetess and Aharon (Aaron) HaKohen, 'a"h, spoke about their brother Moshe Rabbenu, 'a"h, whom they felt had incorrectly separated from his wife. Even though he did so because he had to be ready to communicate with G-d at any given moment, they felt that since they too were prophets and remained with their spouses, he had overstepped the mark.

Rabbenu Ḥayyim ben Attar, 'a"h, the holy Ohr Haḥayyim, quoting the Sifri, says that Miriam and Aharon HaKohen, 'a"h, also felt that it was a slight against the Aboth (Patriarchs), of blessed memory. After all, they also communicated directly with G-d but felt no need to separate from their wives. Could this possibly be some kind of "holier than thou" attitude on the part of Moses?

Rabbenu Baḥya comments that in the next Pasuk (verse) the Torah says, וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עֲנִי מְאֹד "And the man Moses was very humble". This comes to tell us that it was not on account of any feelings of superiority, even though, clearly, he was on a higher level.

(See Ohr Haḥayyim, Parashath Beha'alothkha. Rabbenu Baḥya on the Torah, ibid.)

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Studying Torah Aloud and Correctly, Part 2

When a person is careless in his reading of Torah or reads silently to himself, he loses out on much good that is due him. However, the Pele Yo'eş tells us that it is much worse than that. By doing so, he fails to bring happiness to G-d and causes harm to himself.

The result of this type of learning is that one forgets what one has learned. This is in keeping with what our Ḥakhamim declared ('Erubin 54a), Open your mouth and read the written Torah. Open your mouth and read the Oral Law, so that your learning will remain in your hand (possession) and your days will be lengthened.

Support for this can be found in Mishley (Proverbs, 4:22), where it says **כי חיים הם למוציאיהם**, "For they are life to those who bring them out", from their mouths. It says further in Shemuel (II, 23:5), **ערוכה**, **בכל ושמורה**, "It is laid out in everything and maintained." If one's learning is laid out in all 248 limbs of one's body, then it will be maintained.

(See Pele Yo'eş, Qol)

Calling Extras to the Torah on Monday and Thursday

At Minh'a time on Shabbath, as well as on Monday and Thursday morning every week, the Torah is taken out and three people are called up to read from it. Maran, Yoseph Qaro, z"l, writes in the Shulḥan 'Arukh, that it must be exactly three. One may not add to the amount nor subtract from it.

The Rama, z"l, in his gloss to the Shulḥan 'Arukh writes, that if there are two bridegrooms in the Synagogue who are both Yisrael (not Kohen or Lewi), it is permissible to add a fourth, since this is a Yom Ṭob (like a festival) for them. He adds further, that it would appear that the same ruling should apply if there are two Milahs (circumcisions) in the Synagogue.

In fact, this opinion is not accepted. The Aḥronim, z"l, state that we should not add to the number of three who are called up on these occasions. Indeed, according to the Qabbalah, as mentioned by Rabbenu the Ari, z"l, no more than three people may be called up to read.

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh with Rama 135:1. Kaf Haḥayyim, ibid., 3. Mishnah Berurah, ibid., 3)

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

After the Darkness Will Come the Light

King David famously said **עבדו את ה' בשמחה...דעו כי ה' הוא א-ל-הים הוא עשנו ולו אנחנו**, Serve G-d with happiness, you should know that G-d is the L-rd, He created us and we are His/belong to Him" (Tehillim 100:1, 2). What message does King David really impart to us through these powerful words?

He says that the very knowledge that G-d is our creator, that we belong to G-d and that we have Him to lean on, is what allows us to serve Him with happiness. In other words, without Emunah (faith), we have no happiness. We must know that we have a loving father and if there is darkness the light will come. When there is darkness in our lives, the light that will illuminate the dark moment has already been prepared beforehand. He creates the remedy before the wound, **רפואה לפני המכה**.

When a person does not have the belief and Emunah, that there is a G-dly plan and that He is the master of the world who takes care of each and everyone of us, what meaning is there to our lives? How can we overcome all of life's challenges? My dear friends let us remember and internalize the words of King David, for that belief and knowledge will enable us to serve G-d with happiness.