



RABBI GIDEON WEITZMAN

Machon Puah for Fertility and
Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha

Peace of Mind

Last time we started discussing whether a husband can be present during childbirth. We saw that the Talmud (Shabbat 128b) permits lighting a candle if the woman giving birth requests it. This is even if she cannot see and requires the candle for the benefit of the midwife. This is due to a concept called *ituvei daata*, the peace of mind of the woman giving birth.

Our Sages recognized that the process of birth was a dangerous one and that the woman's psychological welfare can have an impact on the outcome. If she is frightened and pressured there is a more present danger. Therefore, the Talmud permits and obligates performing all tasks that can alleviate her concern and fear.

It should be pointed out that this is the halacha; the woman giving birth is considered to be in danger, both physical and psychological, and we must alleviate her fear and give her the best medical treatment available. This is the case even if it involves compromising other halachic principles, such as the observation of the laws of Shabbat. Even if modern medicine claims that childbirth is not dangerous, or that there is no medical reason to illuminate the room, the halacha would still permit it. Of course, if medicine promoted a particular act as being conducive to a healthy birth, the halacha would permit and even encourage it.

The psychological needs of the woman are determined by her and her alone. Even though another woman does not need the lighting or her husband's presence, if the woman in question says that she does need it, we must comply with her request. Obviously, there are limitations to what can be permitted and what the halacha requires and what requests are granted, but if the woman asks for something that is logical, acceptable and normative, the halacha would permit it.

In Rabbi Henkin's responsa, *Bnei Banim*, that is now being published in English, he states that the woman giving birth is a special case, unlike other ill individuals. While we are obligated to alleviate the pain and anguish of all sick patients, the woman giving birth is unique. We must take into account her psychological state, more than any other ailing person. Even a simple and basic request must be honored.

This obviously has ramifications on our question of the permissibility of the husband being present during the birth.

More on this next time. ■

LIFE SETTLEMENTS

Do you have a life insurance policy you:

- No longer want?
- No longer need?
- Can no longer afford the premium?
 - Could you use extra money instead of keeping your policy?

I can guarantee that if you qualify with the underwriting process I can get you more money than if you cash it in with the company.

Please contact Moshe Russell at:
Buymypolicy32@gmail.com