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## Not Feeling the Need to Fast on a Public Fast Day

On a fast day, a person must examine his or her deeds closely. The purpose of a fast day is not the fast itself, but to change one's ways. When a person wishes to change his ways and repent from his sins, he can achieve this in different ways. Sometimes a fast is necessary to break his bad habits and desires. Other times he can achieve his goal by the study of Torah, or in some other way.

On a public fast, however, one is not permitted to say that since the purpose is to make Teshubah (repentance) he will find some other way of achieving that goal without fasting like the rest of the congregation are doing.

Our Rabbis of blessed memory tell us that one who separates himself from the congregation, does not share in their distress, and does not fast their fasts, even if he does many *Miṣwoth* and good deeds, will not have a portion in the world to come. We learn this from Moshe Rabbeinu, 'a"h, about whom it is written, that when his hands were heavy they put a stone under him to sit on (Shemoth 17:12). He did not sit on something comfortable because he wished to share in the distress of the Jewish people.

(See Ta'anith 11a. Maamar Mordekhai [Eliyahu],  
Hilkhoth Ḥaggim 24:10-11)



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## Wayyiggash: Yisrael or Ya'aqob?

וַתְּחַי רוּחַ יַעֲקֹב אָבִיהֶם .. וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל רֵב עוֹד־יוֹסֵף בְּנִי חַי

"The spirit of Ya'aqob (Jacob) their father revived; and Yisrael (Israel) said, "It is enough for me, my son Joseph is still alive". (Bereshith 45:27-28).

In verse 27 Ya'aqob Abinu, 'a"h, is referred to as Ya'aqob, and in the very next verse he is referred to as Yisrael. When Ya'aqob Abinu, 'a"h, was informed that his son Yoseph was apparently torn by wild beasts, he lost his spirit of prophecy and was referred to as "Ya'aqob". Now that his spirit was revived, having been informed that his son was still alive (and ruling over Egypt), he is referred to by the name "Yisrael".

Later on (Bereshith 46:2), during his journey to Egypt, G-d appeared to him and in the same verse the Torah refers to him as Yisrael, but G-d calls him Ya'aqob. The explanation for why G-d uses the name Ya'aqob is that since he was going into exile in Egypt, the name Yisrael, which denotes "Serarah" (governing), was not compatible with the status of one in exile, and so he is referred to again as Ya'aqob.

A few verses later (46:5), both names are used again in the same verse, where it says "Benei Yisrael" (the Children of Israel) and "Ya'aqob". Rabbeinu Baḥya explains that this comes to show that even though Ya'aqob Abinu, 'a"h, was going to exile and thus the name Ya'aqob is used, nevertheless, in the future the Children of Israel would be redeemed, and have the upper hand and would return to their position of "Serarah". That is why the the term Benei "Yisrael" is used.

(See Rabbeinu Baḥya, Parashath Wayyiggash)

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## Brotherly Love

הֵיחָד מֵה־טוֹב וּמֵה־נָּעִים שָׁבֵת אֲחִים גַּם־יָחִד How good and pleasant is it for brothers to live in unity together (Tehillim 133:1).

The Pele Yo'eş adds to the above line: with love, peace and friendship. He says further, that if one is obligated to help the other even when there is no familial connection, how much more so is this true among actual brothers.

If brothers fight among themselves it is considered shameful, both in the eyes of G-d as well as human beings. If there is any source for controversy or argument, they should immediately remove that reason. For instance, if they are partners in a business and they find that a disagreement or argument is about to take place, they should immediately separate.

This is a general rule about peace, that one should uproot any argument before it can grow. In the Gemara (Sanhedrin 7a) it states that strife is like a river; once it has overflowed its banks, the damage is done. Making peace after the fact, therefore, is not the same as avoiding strife altogether, because remnants of bad feelings always linger.

(See Pele Yo'eş, Aḥim)

## Should Ashrei Be Said Before All Tashlumin (Make Up) Prayers?

The Shulḥan 'Arukh states that if one inadvertently omitted to say 'Arbith, one has to pray the Shaḥrith 'Amidah twice. He adds that one should say the verses of Ashrei before saying the Tashlumin (make up) 'Amidah. The Rama adds that when one prays the 'Arbith 'Amidah twice because one missed Minḥa, one should say also Ashrei between the two 'Amidah prayers.

The Mishnah Berurah adds that it is good to say a (second) Ashrei between the two 'Amidah prayers when praying Minḥa twice also (in a case where one did not pray Shaḥrith). He adds that this is not an absolute requirement but one must, at least, wait the time it takes to walk four cubits before starting the second 'Amidah.

The Ben Ish Ḥai states that one recites Ashrei between the two 'Amidah prayers during Shaḥrith. However, according to the Qabbalah, Ashrei may not be recited during Minḥa and 'Arbith as an obligation as part of the liturgy. Therefore, he adds, one who has to pray two 'Amidah prayers at Minḥa or 'Arbith, must not say Ashrei between them, but should only wait the time it takes to walk four cubits.

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh, 108:2. Mishnah Berurah ibid, 13. Ben Ish Ḥai, 1st year, Parashath Mishpaṭim, Oth 9)

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

### How to Light the Shabbath Candles?

Why is it so important to be particular about this special commandment of lighting the Shabbath candles, to the extent that when the woman takes the match to the candle, she should make sure that she applies the match to the bottom of the wick and continues to light the wick until the flame comes in contact with the wax?

We are told that in preparing the Shabbath candles (which, in general, is done by the husband) and lighting them, we merit to have children who are Torah scholars – children who will illuminate the world with their Torah and *Miṣwoth*.

In the Gemara (Shabbath: 23b), we are told about two Ḥakhamim, who in fact, merited to have children who became Torah scholars. Rab Hisda, whose wife was involved in this precious *Miṣwah* had one such son. However, Rab Huna, who prepared the candles for his wife to light, had two sons who both grew up to be Talmidei Ḥakhamim!

Just as the Menorah in the Temple brought down an abundance of wisdom to the Jewish people, so too, the Shabbath candles which a Jewish woman lights, can draw the wisdom of our holy Torah to her children.