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By the Hakham

Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h

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5783 פְּרַשְׁתַּי וַיְחִי

Lacing Shoes on Shabbath

If an *existing* shoelace comes out of a shoe on Shabbath, even completely, one may re-lace it through the eyelets, if it can be done so easily. In the case of a *new* shoe, however, one may not add laces because of *Methaqen Manah* (making or fixing a vessel), since it makes the shoe usable. Lacing new laces on previously worn shoes, is likewise forbidden. The prevalent opinion is that this applies equally to modern day shoes as it did in previous times.

In an emergency, such as when a person's laces broke and those are the only shoes he can wear, laces can be threaded by a child. Another method is to do it in a temporary fashion, such as by only threading the top holes or by using a clashing color so that one will be sure to remove them after Shabbath.

All these cases assume that they can be laced easily without any effort. They also assume that the shoes are not of the type that require a knot to be tied on one end of the lace to ensure that they stay in place, since this would also be forbidden.

In view of the fact that this is the opinion of the overwhelming amount of Posqim, one should not be lenient in this matter.

(Shulhan 'Arukh 317:2. Kaf HaYayim, ibid, Oth 33-37. Mishnah Berurah, ibid, 17-20. Maran Mordekhai Eliyahu, Derekh HaTorah, Shabbath, 23:17. Be-er Moshe 2:20. Shulhan Shelomo 317:7. Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata 15:60. Ohr LeShion 2, 29, Oth 4)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

Wayhi: The Name Ya'aqob Testifies to Ya'aqob Abinu's Humility

It says in Parashath Wayhi, הִקְבְּצוּ וְשִׁמְעוּ בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹב "Gather together and listen O sons of Jacob and listen to your father, Israel".

It says in 'Od Yoseph Hai Derashoth, that the word Shema' (hear), means understand. You should understand why Ya'aqob Abinu 'a"h was given this name. The answer is that he was given this name to show us his humility both in the spiritual realm as well as the physical.

The first letter of his name, the Yod, comes to teach us about his spiritual humility. Instead of aggrandizing himself, he would make himself small just like the letter Yod, which is the smallest letter of the entire Hebrew alphabet.

The remaining letters after that first letter, form the word 'Eqeb, which means heel. This shows his humility in physical matters, because the heel is the lowest portion of the body and Ya'aqob Abinu a"h would see himself as a heel and not as the head.

At a time when the world around us emphasizes bragging and putting ourselves before others, this is a very great Mussar (lesson) for all of us, because we are all Bene Ya'aqob (the children of Jacob) and we must learn humility, to be like our father.

(See 'Od Yosef Hai Derashoth, Parashath Wayehi)

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Making an Oath Not to Keep a Commandment

If one makes an oath (Shebu'ah), not to keep a commandment specified in the Torah, such as Şişŕith (עצית), Tefillin (תפילין), or Maşşah (מצה), it is considered a Torah transgression, because it was an oath that was made in vain. As such, one is still obligated to perform the commandment.

This applies in a case where the oath was made only about the specific commandment, such as an oath not to eat Maşşah (מצה), on the night of Pesah. If however, included in the oath were matters that one was permitted to take an oath over, such as taking an oath not to eat Maşşah at all, then it applies also to Pesah. The reason is that since the oath is valid, insofar as eating Maşşah the rest of the year is concerned, it is also valid on Pesah.

(See Sh. 'A. Yoreh De'ah, 136:5. Taz ibid, 11. Ben Ish Hai)

Pronouncing One Letter Like Another in the Shema'

When reading the first words of Shema' Yisrael, one must be particular to pronounce the letter Yod of "Yisrael" correctly. Some people have the tendency to incorrectly pronounce the Yod as an Aleph, or to swallow it, and say "Shema' Issrael". Similarly, the Yod in the word "Wahayu" should be emphasized correctly so that it does not sound like "Wehau".

There are some Hebrew speakers who drop the letter Heh and pronounce it like an Aleph. Care must be taken to avoid this and to say it correctly.

This rule applies across the board when reading the Shema'. One must be careful not to swallow any letter, or to pronounce it like another letter. For instance, those who pronounce the letter Beh (ב) without a Daghes as a "V", must be particular not to pronounce it in "We-Ahabta" as "Ahafta", and instead of "Nafshekha", "Navshekha". Similarly, one must not swallow the Alef in "Me-odekha" say "Modekha", and so on.

(Shulhan 'Arukh 61:18. Mishnah Berurah, ibid., 32)

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

Shabbath Candles and "Shelom Bayith", Part 2

Buying candles for Shabbath takes priority over buying wine for Qiddush, if one is unable to afford both, because the candles affect our Shelom Bayith (peace in the home).

The commandment of lighting the Shabbath candles is one of the three special commandments that were given to us, women. Hakham Yoseph Hayyim, 'a"n, writes in his book "Laws for Women", that as long as the wife is in the home, she is the one to light the candles and recite the blessing.

Why is it that women take precedence in this special commandment of lighting the Shabbath candles? Since the Shabbath candles are deeply connected with peace and harmony in the home, it comes to teach is that we, women, were given the key ensuring peace in our homes and nurturing it.

We, my dear and important friends, are the masters of creating "Shalom", peace, in our homes and were blessed to have within us the tools and talents to solve controversy and be "peace makers". May each and every one of us merit to build such a home, where the Shekhinah (G-d's holy presence) can reside.