

Bringing the Farbrengen Home

STANDING ON ONE FOOT

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

The story is well known: A potential convert to Judaism approached the great sages Shammai and Hillel, requesting, "teach me the entire Torah on one foot."

Shammai kicks him out. Hillel responds, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim Luntshitz (1550-1619, Prague), best known for his commentary *Kli Yakar*, writes that this soon-to-be convert was sincere in his request. He did not mean, "teach me the entire Torah while I'm standing on one foot" (which would perhaps be viewed as rude or impatient), but rather, "teach me the Torah on one foot."

That is, what is the "one foot," the foundation of Torah?

Hillel responds, "love your neighbor as yourself" is the pillar of the entire Torah.

However we find that the prophet Chavakuk was said to have distilled the Torah to a single mitzvah pillar: *Emunah*.


So which one is it?

Kli Yakar writes that the mitzvot can be divided into two general categories, those between man and man, and those between man and G-d.

When Chavakuk said that the entire Torah can be distilled to one core idea he was referring to the mitzvot between man and G-d, whose foundation is *Emunah*. And when Hillel said that the "one foot" of Torah is "love your neighbor as yourself," he mean the mitzvot between man and man.



This also explains the Torah's description of the cherubs on top of the Ark of the Covenant; their "wings spread upwards" represents mitzvot between man and G-d, while their "faces turned towards each other" represents mitzvot between man and man.

The verse in the Torah "Love your neighbor as yourself," concludes, "I am G-d," thus merging both categories of mitzvot, one inseparable from the other. (Based on *Kli Yakar* to *Vayikra* 19:18) 

ואהבת לרעך כמוך

There were three Tzaddikim who were renowned for their Ahavas Yisrael.

The first was **Reb Zushe of Anipoli**, who simply didn't see the bad in others. The second was **Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev**, who saw the bad, but focused on the good, always finding a way to point out the merits of even the greatest sinner.

Some say the third sage was Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the **Alter Rebbe**. He saw the faults in another, but loved them anyway, even without looking for merits.

How did he do this? He loved them simply because they were a fellow Jew.

JUST שו"ת ME A QUESTION

Q: I forgot to turn the light in my fridge off before Shabbos and all my food is inside. May I ask a gentile to open the fridge for me?

A: Yes, you may ask a gentile to open the door for you. The reason is because you don't have a need, per se, for the light in the fridge (i.e., you can see just fine without it). Even though the light will definitely be activated by opening the door (*p'sik reisha*), it is permitted for a gentile to do such an action.

Source: Magen Avraham O.C. 277:7.

Q: Is it permissible to measure liquid medicine (such as antibiotics) on Shabbos?

A: Although the general rule is that measuring is not permitted on Shabbos, some say that measuring for health is permitted, since it is a mitzvah to take care of one's health and measuring for a mitzvah is permitted on Shabbos. See *Mishneh Berurah* 306:36.

However, others maintain that this only applies if the measurement itself is a mitzvah, and therefore it would be preferable to approximate the measurement for antibiotics. See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 306:18.

א גוט שבת!

The Darkness Lets the Light In

DON'T EAT FOR THREE YEARS

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

Don't eat from the tree for three hours.

That's what Hashem told Adam and Eve.

Just three hours.

But the temptation was too great. Enticed by the snake, Adam touches the tree, proceeding to eat from it.

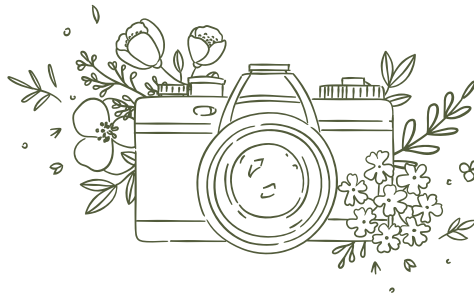
The snake could easily have said that he was not to blame, as the Talmud states, "When there is a contradiction between the statement of the teacher and the statement of the student, whose statement should one listen to? Surely one should listen to the statement of the teacher."

Since Hashem instructed Adam and Even not to eat from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, they should have heeded His words and not those of the snake.

Additionally, the snake could have also claimed that Eve was at fault for her transgression by adding to the prohibition. (According to some, she added that in addition to not eating the fruit, Hashem had also instructed them not to touch it.)

There is a Kabbalistic concept of *Tikkun*, which posits that for every sin, there must be some cosmic rectification.

The Tikkun for eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is the Torah prohibition of **orlah**, not eating the fruit of a tree for its first three years, appearing in this week's parsha, Kedoshim.



Since Adam and Eve didn't wait three hours as instructed, we must wait three years in order to rectify their misdeed.

The fourth year, the Torah tells us, "all its fruits shall be holy, a praise to G-d."

The fruits of the fourth year of a tree grown in Israel were brought to Jerusalem, where they could be eaten; from the fifth year and on, the owner could do as he pleased.

Chassidus explains that in addition to the straightforward halakha, orlah contains a mystical message.

The first three years of the tree correspond to the concept of bowing (Modim), which indicates acknowledgement and suspension of self. The only thing one can do with Orlah, is to acknowledge that it exists. Other than that, it is off limits.

Spiritually, this represents a state of being in which one is not "doing;" one can only create an empty space which sets the tone for the praise that follows (i.e., in the fourth year).

Perhaps an analogy is -- film photography.

In order to capture a photograph, the first step must be to block out all light from reaching the film.

Even the smallest deviation from this will ruin the film. Did you ever accidentally open a camera while there was a roll of film in it? (if you remember what film is...)

But then, in order to take the picture, you must open an aperture, permitting light to reach the film.

The Torah tells us that the fourth year of the fruits is a year of praise; interestingly, the Hebrew word used is related to the word shine (as in *lyov* 29:3).

So in order to praise, there first must be a period of darkness, a period of silence.

So maybe darkness is dark; or maybe it's just preparing us to let the light in, capturing the brilliance of the moment.

(Based on Sanhedrin 29a & Maharsha ad loc; Likkutei Torah 30a)



A Cup of Tea

Rebbetzin Rivka Schneerson (wife of the 4th Lubavitcher Rebbe) would make tea to heal sick people.

A woman came to her and requested some tea to cure her ailing son. Rebbetzin Rivka obliged.

A short while later, another woman came to the Rebbetzin, saying, "Did you just give tea to a woman who says she has a sick son? She is a liar! I just came from her house, and her son was running around, playing, in perfect health!"

"Baruch Hashem that the child is ok!" replied Rebbetzin Rivkah.

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