

STORY

What type of sacrifices does Hashem treasure?

“וְהָבֵל הִבְיָא גַם הוּא מִבְכוֹרוֹת צֵאנוּ וּמִחֻלָּבֶהוּן”



Visiting hours were over and now it was only my husband and our third child - all of 12 hours old. B"H all had gone well and I felt pretty good. In the peace and quiet of my hospital room we discussed the baby's name and the Kiddush in two days.

Then we moved on to our Korban Toda of sorts. In the past, as a תודה, a thanksgiving to Hashem, for all His kindness to us, we did something special in honor of the birth of our first two children. For the oldest, we sponsored the Avos Ubanim Motzai Shabbos learning program in our shul. For the second, being born only days before Purim, we made a large contribution to Lakewood Yeshivas Mordechai Hatzaddik. What should we do in honor of the third? It would be hard. My husband lost his job nine weeks ago. Anything we would do would cost us money that we didn't have now.

The next day, I was being discharged with all the papers, instructions, baby's

next appointment and all the other paraphernalia. That's when it struck me. The magazines... The ones the hospital gives along with all the coupons for diapers and wipes, cribs and carriages, baby books and toys and portraits. But these magazines also have a lot of un-Jewish family-life articles. I'll just leave it behind. This will be my sacrifice, my korban toda. I shared my thought with my husband, who was all for it - with one addition. From now on, we should do this with all this kind of stuff that keeps coming in the mail. We'll just forgo all those coupons - as much as we could use them now, and keep our home 'clean'.

Comparing this to my last two Todahs: The last ones cost me much more money than the amount of money I was giving up on these coupons, (I could have used them much more now than in the earlier days.) And the publicity went with the last ones, none with this one.

But the effectiveness? I wouldn't be surprised to learn one day that the latter was the more precious in Hashem's eyes.

SMILE! IT'S CONTAGIOUS



My short-term memory is not as sharp as it used to be. Also, my short-term memory's not as sharp as it used to be.



The statement below is true. The statement above is false.



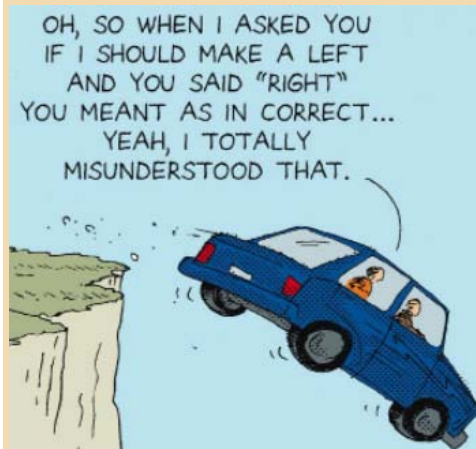
My teachers told me I'd never amount to much because I procrastinate so much. I told them, "You just wait!"



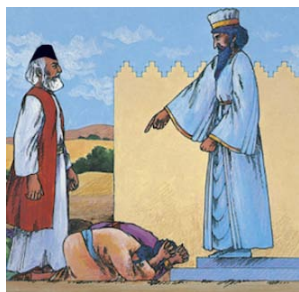
Have you ever noticed that anyone driving slower than you is an idiot, and anyone going faster than you is a maniac?



How many books can you put in an empty backpack? One (after that it's not empty)



Adam and Haman



The Gemara in Chulin (139b) asks, where can we find “Haman” (from the story of Purim) in the Torah? Says Rav Masnah, “from the pasuk after the sin of the Eitz Hadaas when Hashem asks Adam: ‘Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?’” In Lashon Kodosh the words are:

“Hamin ha’etz etc...” The word “Haman” and “Hamin” have the same letters.

The question is, what connection is there between this Pasuk and Haman? The Balei Mussar give an interesting and powerful answer. Haman had everything a person could dream of. Many children, riches beyond imagination, and tremendous power. But because one single person didn’t bow to him, “all this is not worth anything to me”! He wanted everything. And this was ultimately his downfall.

When the Gemara asks, “Where can we find Haman in the Torah?” they mean to ask, where can we find the root of this character trait to want everything? Answers Rav Masnah, in the first man – Adam. Hashem placed him in Gan Eden and gave him every pleasure imaginable, commanding him only against ONE fruit. But he couldn’t hold back and had to have that too, leading to his downfall.

Hashem blesses our lives with so much good, but he has commanded us to stay away from “forbidden fruit”. We don’t need to learn from the school of “hard knocks” when we try to partake of everything. Let’s learn from Haman’s downfall and be HAPPY with what Hashem has given us!

The Barrel of Scorpions



The Gemara brings a Moshol from Rabbi Levi on the story of Adam in Gan Eden, who couldn’t hold himself back from the one tree he was commanded not to partake of:

A married woman has a friend who asks her how her husband treats her. She responds that her husband gives her everything

her heart desires and treats her like a queen, besides for one barrel that he has warned her not to touch. “In that barrel are snakes and scorpions, and my husband has warned me never to stick my hand in there.” Her friend responds, “rubbish! I’ll bet you he’s keeping all his money and diamonds in that barrel, saving it with a plan to leave you and give it to another woman whom he loves more than you.” When she heard that, she stuck her arm into the barrel and was promptly bitten and stung by snakes and scorpions. Upon hearing her cries, her husband came running and shouted, “Did you stick your hand into the barrel that I warned you not to?!”

This Moshol sounds so much like the Yetzer Hara for lust. Hashem truly has ONLY our best interest in mind at all times. He is withholding this back from us only for our OWN good. Let us not fall for the Yetzer Hara’s lies!

Character Defects? Congratulations, You’re Human!



By Rabbi Abraham J Twerski

“G-d said, ‘Let us make man.’” All of creation is done by G-d alone. Only in creation of man does G-d say “Let us make man.”

G-d created animals and He created angels. Both are created in a state of completion. Now, G-d

wanted a different type of being, one that is created essentially as an animal, but which, by his own efforts, will subdue his animalistic drives and become spiritual. G-d could have created man fully spiritual, but then he would have been an angel, not man.

Our character defects are part of our animal being. We have the ability to be different than animals, eliminate the character defects, and become what G-d intended us to be, not an angel, but a spiritual human being.

FOR THOSE WHO STRUGGLE WITH SHMIRAS EINAYIM, NOW IS HARDER THAN EVER!

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Being confined to home without work, feeling anxious and stressed, as well as constantly checking our computers and phones, are breeding grounds for the Yetzer Hara.

Sign-Up to GYE's **Viral Chizuk** during these trying times by email and Whatsapp:

One Forbidden Tree

The story of Adam & Chava in Gan Eden comes first in the Torah because it is the story of us all.



Mankind has been placed in a literal “Gan Eden” today. Most of us have good wives, beautiful and healthy children, nachas, parnasa, and all the comforts and conveniences of the 21st century.

We have bathrooms in our homes, hot and cold running water, heating and air-conditioning, and plenty to eat. For the majority of people today, obesity is more of a challenge than having enough food! Yet in midst of this veritable Gan Eden that we live in, there is one beautiful and seductive tree that has become bigger than ever in the 21st century, of which Hashem tells us: ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it; for in the day that you eat from it, you shall surely die.’

We also see from the words that the Torah uses, how the desire of the fruit was mainly in the eyes: “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.”

When Hashem asked Chava why she had eaten from the fruit, her answer was: “הַנָּחָשׁ הִשְׁיִיאֵנִי, וָאֲכַלְתִּי”. Chazal say that she used a lashon of “ishus” because the nachash had seduced her with carnal desires.

The story of Adam and Chava is talking to each and every one of us, especially us on GYE. We have been given so much blessing by Hashem; ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat’, but we find that we are still not happy and want the forbidden fruit!

So how can we ensure that we don’t fall for the cunning snake’s seductions? Firstly, we must make Gedarim for ourselves, as the Pasuk says: “And the woman said unto the serpent: ‘Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said: You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” Chazal explain that even though Hashem had not forbidden

touching it, Adam had instituted a fence and told Chava that even touching it was forbidden. It was only because she allowed herself to break this fence that she ended up falling all the way.

We must also not allow ourselves to gaze upon the forbidden fruit, for this was the very thing that brought Chava to their great downfall; “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes”...

By humbling ourselves and surrendering our selfish “right” to partake of the forbidden fruit, we thereby declare our gratefulness to Hashem for all the good He has given us by letting us partake of all the delicious fruit of all the other trees!

And by staying far away from the forbidden tree, we are fixing the sin of Adam and Chava and bringing the world closer to its final Tikkun in ways that possibly no other Mitzva can do!

INSPIRATIONAL IMAGE OF THE WEEK

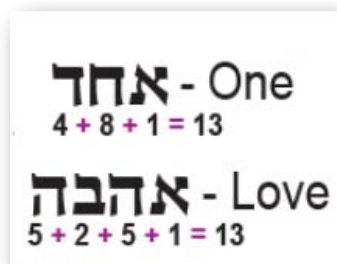
What is today’s “Tree of (all human) Knowledge”, both good and evil?



עץ הדעת טוב ורע = 932 בגימטריה

אינטרנט = 329 בגימטריה

How to Love Hashem



We declare everyday "Hashem Echad" - that there is only one game in town: Hashem's will. "And you shall love Hashem your G-d with all your heart/s (as Chazal explain, with both your Yetzer Tov and Yetzer Hara) with all your soul and with all your possessions/midos".

How many people get a chance to really fulfill this central mitzvah and goal in a Jew's life? Most of us enjoy our lives of Torah and Mitzvos. Today there is Kosher food in abundance, we have nachas from our children, Shabbos is a day off to spend with the family and get rest, etc. So where do we get a chance to really show Hashem (and ourselves) that this is all about HIM, not us; that we really LOVE HIM with all our hearts and all our beings? Who knows if we won't come up to Shamayim after 120 and find that we did it all for ourselves, we didn't really love Hashem at all!

Perhaps it is this one forbidden tree, whose fruits look so luscious and tempting, which the snake keeps trying to push us to gaze upon and partake of its fruits that gives us a chance to show a little messiras nefesh for a change. Only when

the desires feel really strong do we have a chance to show Hashem who we are really living for at the end of the day - for ourselves or for HIM?

Because if it's all about me, then how can I give up such "seemingly" great pleasures? But if we are striving to love Hashem, if we truly believe "Hashem Echad" - that it's all about HIM, that there is only HIS will - then how fortunate are we to have a chance to show it - a real chance to give up something that 'feels' truly precious to us.

We all know the truth in our minds, that it's all hot air, but Hashem does a great chesed by fooling us into feeling a great "need" for these things. He does this so we can get the zechus/reward/chance of giving up something that really feels substantial (even though we all know deep down that it really isn't).

So from now on when we feel these desires tempting and beckoning us, instead of feeling resentful about it, let us THANK Hashem for tricking us into feeling these strong desires so that we have a chance to show Him our true direction in life. When we "feel like" we are giving up our deepest desires, it is an awesome chance that we have to truly demonstrate and declare that our lives are really about HIM and not ourselves.

Ashreinu!

DESIRES ARE AN ILLUSION

Which one is bigger?

They're both exactly the same!

Our eyes are a tremendous blessing that allow us to perceive the world around us. However our eyes can trick us as well, making us believe that we need things that in reality it may be very bad for us. Let's train ourselves to use our eyes for good and not let them trick us to turn after our hearts desires!

