

IF HE COULDN'T EAT FROM THE TREE, WHY WAS IT THERE?

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: CD #1047– Mogen Avos on Friday Night - When and Why? Good Shabbos!

The Torah says, "And *Hashem Elokim* commanded the man saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad, you must not eat thereof; for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die.'" [Bereishis 2:16-17] *Hashem* [G-d] places Adam in Gan Eden and makes everything accessible to him – with one exception: The fruit of the "*Etz Ha'Daas*." The Torah immediately continues: "And *Hashem Elokim* said 'It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a helper against him.'" [Bereishis 2:18]. Thus, immediately after the warning to distance himself from the Tree of Knowledge, the Almighty establishes the institution of marriage as part of Creation.

What is the lesson of this juxtaposition?

We may answer this question by asking another question: If *Hashem* did not want Adam to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, why did He put it in *Gan Eden*? If there needed to be a Tree of Knowledge, let the Almighty plant it somewhere on the other side of the world where it would not tempt man! Had He done that, Adam could have been given *carte blanche* – eat whatever you want from the Garden – no exceptions! What would have been wrong with that?

The answer is that the *Hashem* is teaching humanity a lesson. Every human being must learn that there are certain things in this world that are off limits. Man needs to confront limitations. Not everything in the world should be accessible. The Almighty knew exactly what he was doing. He wanted something to be placed within man's reach that would be "off limits" precisely so that man would recognize that certain things are "off limits."

The Tiferes Shlomo (Rav Shlomo Hakohen Rabinowicz [1801-1866], the first Rebbe of the Radomsk Hasidic dynasty) makes an interesting point. The *pasuk* cited above reads, "And *Hashem Elokim* commanded **upon** man saying (***al*** *ha'Adam leimor*)."

The Torah commonly uses a slightly different terminology, for example, "And Hashem spoke **to** Moshe (***el*** *Moshe*)..." The Tiferes Shlomo asks, why doesn't the *pasuk* here also use the expression "And *Hashem Elokim* commanded **to** man (***el*** *ha'Adam leimor*)"? The Tiferes Sholmo answers that ***al*** *ha'Adam* – **upon** man – means this defines humanity. This commandment (regarding limitations) is what makes a *mensch*! Humanity needs to

recognize that there are moral borders in this world – up until this point and no further! Man cannot have **everything** he desires. There needs to be something that man cannot have, so that he can learn the concept of restraint.

This is why when we look at the world around us and we see sports stars or we see the *menuvalim* who populate Hollywood, etc., we notice that everything is accessible to them. Whether legal or illegal, moral or immoral, they feel they must have everything. Nothing is off limits. What happens to such people? They inevitably, invariably, sink to the depths. It is because they have no limits, and can get away with everything, that they self-destruct – morally and even physically. When you can say whatever you want to whomever you want and can do whatever you want anytime you want, you stop being a human being.

The *sefer* Milchamos Yehuda writes that this is why the *pasuk* introducing marriage comes immediately following the *pasuk* introducing limitations. After "*Hashem Elokim* commanded upon man..." then "*Hashem Elokim* stated, 'It is not good for man to be alone...'" For a person to live with another human being, each party needs to know that there are limits. There are some things you can do and there are some things you cannot do. There are lines that you cannot cross. A person who learns that lesson easily and learns it early will have a successful marriage. A person who never learns that and has no borders and has no restraints – not in the way he talks, not in the way he acts, and not in the way he eats – is not going to have a successful marriage.

Only after the concept of limitations was established into the world, could the institution of living with another person and the concept of marriage be successfully implemented for man.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com

Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org

This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. A listing of the halachic portions for Parshas Bereishis is provided below:

- CD# 026 - Adoption: Problems and Solutions
- CD# 068 - Artificial Insemination
- CD# 117 - Inducing Labor: A viable option?
- CD# 164 - Weddings in Shuls: Is there a Problem?
- CD# 210 - Is Marriage a Mitzvah?
- CD# 254 - Truth Tellings and Shidduchim
- CD# 300 - A Mamzer's Obligation in Mitzvos
- CD# 344 - Marriage and the Birchah Airusin

- CD# 388 - The "Kedushai Ketanah" Controversy
- CD# 432 - Choices in Marriage Partners
- CD# 476 - Melacha of Planting
- CD# 520 - Kavod and Oneg Shabbos
- CD# 564 - You and Your Wife - Ishto Kegufu
- CD# 608 - The Tefilah of Modeh Ani
- CD# 652 - The Tefilah of Asher Yatzar
- CD# 696 - The Bracha on the Havdala Candle
- CD# 740 - When Exactly Does Shabbos Start?
- CD# 784 - The Beautiful Essrog - How Much More?
- CD# 828 - The Baal Teshuva and Pirya Ve'Rivya
- CD# 872 - Marrying Someone With The Same Name As Your Mother
- CD# 916 - Not Having Children?
- CD# 959 - The Case of the Mixed Up Wedding Ring
- CD#1003 - The Case of the Missing Shabbos Bathroom Tissue
- CD#1047 - Mogen Avos on Friday Night - When and Why?
- CD#1090 - Bracha on Havdalah Candle: Before or After?
- CD#1133 - Bracha of ELOkai Neshama She'Naasaata Be
- CD#1176 - Chupa: Inside or Outside? In a Shul or Not In A Shul?
- CD#1220 - Forgetting Mashiv HaRuach on Friday Night
- CD#1264 - Can Women Drink from the Wine of Havdala

A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information.