

:PARSHAT BEREISHIT-2014, 5775

Initially, Adam Ha'Rishon and Chava received six Mitzvot; (Gemara Sanhedrin 56b, Rambam –Melachim 9:1). Ten generations later, Noach was responsible for these six, but in addition, he received a seventh Mitzvah, that of not eating Eiver Min Hachai, a limb from a live animal, and these seven Mitzvot are referred to as the “SHEVA MITZVOT BNEI NOACH”. (The 7 Noachite Commandments.) Adam HaRishon and Chava did not need this seventh Mitzva because they were not permitted to eat any meat from animal kingdom, but only fruits and vegetables.

These seven Mitzvot were of a permanent nature, for Adam and for all future generations, However, Adam was also then given a temporary Mitzvah, a Hora'at Sha'a Mitzvah, not for future generations, and that was-not to eat from the Eitz HaDaat. As stated in the Torah: (2:16) “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, (2:17) but from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad, you must not eat.” So, not eating from the Eitz HaDaat was a definite Mitzvah, but the question is, was the first part of the pasuk also a Mitzvah?. When HaShem said “Of every tree of the garden you may eat”, did that constitute a Mitzvah? The broader question is, when HaShem permits us to do something, does that mean it is an option open for us, or does it mean that HaShem permits us, wants us, and expects us to do it? If the latter is true, then Adam actually received two extra Mitzvot, one-not to eat from Eitz HaDaat, and also- a positive Mitzvah, to eat from all other trees!.

Chazal seem to go in the latter direction that everything permitted in this world is meant for us to partake. The Yerushalmi at end of Kiddushin says that people will be held to task if they do not bother to experience the permitted enjoyments that HaShem provided for us.

Furthermore, the Meshech Chochma says that Chava's lack of comprehension of this Mitzvah, to eat, deprived her of fulfillment of Mitzvot on an ongoing basis. For one who does an action that is a Mitzvah but is unaware that the Mitzvah even exists is not credited for it. Had she fulfilled the Mitzvah of eating as a positive Mitzvah on an ongoing basis then the rule of “Mitzvah Goreret Mitzva”, doing one Mitzva brings about our doing another Mitzvah that would have strengthened her moral fiber, and would not have let her weakness be exploited by the snake.

We must be aware of not merely what we may not do, but also what we may do, (e.g- work for six days in order to rest on the seventh) as that which is permitted is often what HaShem wants us, and expects us to do.