

The Fall of the Serpent ... And Our Loss



The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge, good and evil (Genesis 2:9)

Now the serpent was most cunning of all the beasts of the field that the Lord God had made... And the serpent said to the woman [regarding the tree], "You shall not be doomed to die. For God knows that on the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will become as gods knowing good and evil.

And the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and that it was lust to the eyes and the tree was lovely to look at and she took of its fruit and ate and she also gave to her man with her, and he ate (Genesis 3:1-5).

What was the wicked serpent thinking during that episode? I will go and kill Adam and marry his wife, and then I will be king of the whole world! And I will walk tall and upright, and I will eat all the delicacies of the world! So, the Holy Blessed One said to him: "You said, 'I will kill Adam and marry Eve!' Thus "I will place hostility between you and the woman" (Genesis 3:15) You said, 'I will be king of the whole world.'" Thus "You will be the most cursed of all the animals" (Genesis 3:14). You said, 'I will walk tall and upright.' Thus, "You will crawl on your belly" (Genesis 3:14). You said, 'I will eat all the delicacies of the world.' Thus, "You will eat dirt all the days of your life" (Genesis 3:14).

Rabbi Shimon ben Menasya said: It is a pity that a great helper was lost from the world. For if the serpent had not been cursed, everyone in Israel, the Jewish people would have two serpents in his house. One would be sent out to the west, and one would be sent out to the east, and they would bring back gems and precious stones and pearls and every precious thing in the world. And no creature could harm them. Not only that, but they could put them underneath a camel, or a donkey, or a mule, and they would gather the dung and bring it to gardens and orchards for fertilizer. (Avot D'Rabbi Natan)