

## Pesikta de Rab Kahana, Piska 20:6

*A stand of wheat that grows in the earth upon the top of the mountains, will like [a cedar of] Lebanon shake [down seed] from its fruit* (Ps. 72:16). What was the plant Adam ate of? Wheat, according to R. Meir. The grape, according to R. Judah bar R. Il'a'i. According to R. Abba of Acco, it was the etrog (a lemon-type fruit used during Sukkot). According to R. Jose, it was the fig.

Each of these teachers cited proof for his answer. The proof of R. Meir who said that the plant was wheat: It is the way of the world that when a man has no understanding, people say of him, This man is “wise,” God help him, because in all his days he never put bread made of wheat, [the source of wisdom,] into his mouth. With regard to R. Meir’s opinion, R. Ze’era put the following question to R. Samuel bar R. Isaac: What Adam ate of is described in Scripture as a tree, so how can you say it was a grain – wheat? R. Samuel bar R. Isaac replied: [In the Garden of Eden] stalks of wheat were like trees, for they grew to the height of cedars of Lebanon and used to shake down their seed to the ground.

The proof of R. Judah bar R. Il'a'i who said that it was grapes: *Grapes of gall, they have clusters of bitterness* (Dt. 32:32) – those clusters that Adam ate brought bitterness into the world. The proof of R. Abba of Acco who said it was the etrog: The words *Eve ... ate of the tree* (Gn. 3:6) indicate a tree whose wood, like its fruit, may be eaten. And what tree is that? The etrog.

The proof of R. Jose who said it was figs: *They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves girdles* (Gn. 3:7). The import of this verse, R. Joshua of Siknin, citing R. Levi, illustrated by a parable of a king who had a son and also had many maidservants. The king instructed his son, saying to him: My son, beware of touching a single one of all these maidservants. But what did the son do? He proceeded to disgrace himself with one of the maidservants. When his father became aware of what his son had done, he deposed him and expelled him from the palace. The son then went about to all the houses of the other maidservants, and not one of them would take him in. You must therefore conclude that the one with whom he had disgraced himself was the one who opened her door and took him in. So it was with Adam. When he ate of the tree, he and his wife heard all the other trees repudiate him, saying: “Behold the thief! Behold the thief who sought to deceive his Creator, who sought to deceive his Master.” Each one of the trees said, *Let not the foot of pride come unto me* (Ps. 36:12) – let not the foot that stepped forward in pride come unto me. *And let not the hand of the wicked shake me* (ibid.) – let him not lay his hand upon me to shake me or even take leaves from me. From the following verse you must therefore conclude that the tree which had given him fruit was the same one which had given him leaves: *They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves girdles* (Gn. 3:7). And what was the name given to the fig tree? “Daughter of woe,” so said R. Levi, for it brought woe and weeping to the world.

Rabbi Berechiah, citing R. Simon who cited R. Joshua ben Levi, said: As to the identity of the tree from which Adam ate, the Holy One has not revealed, and will not reveal it. For a somewhat similar reason – [to spare mankind shame] – the Holy One said: It is

written *If a woman approach any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman and the beast* (Lev. 20:16). The human being commits a sin, to be sure, but what sin does the animal commit? None. However, because the animal is a stumbling block whereby a human falls into sin, therefore the Holy One said: Let it be stoned. Another reason for destroying the animal: That if it be allowed to live and be seen going through the marketplace, people will be tempted to say, “This is the animal on account of whom So-and-so was stoned to death.”

And so the Holy One said: If, in regard to matters of this kind, I take such pains to spare Adam’s descendants shame, all the more reason that I [do not make known the kind of tree whereby Adam sinned and thus] spare men the shame they would feel [whenever they saw the tree].