

Pirkei Avot

This week we are learning the 5th chapter of Pirkei avot. Here is a story about learning Torah, Doing Mitzvot and Good deeds:

A sly fox passed a lovely vineyard. A tall, thick fence surrounded the vineyard on all sides. As the fox circled around the fence, he found a small hole in the fence, barely large enough for him to push his head through. The fox could see what luscious grapes grew in the vineyard, and his mouth began to water. But the hole was too small for him. So what did the sly fox do? He fasted for three days, until he became so thin that he managed to slip through the hole.

Inside the vineyard, the fox began to eat to his heart's content. He grew bigger and fatter than ever before. Then he wanted to get out of the vineyard. But alas! The hole was too small again. So what did he do? He fasted for three days again, and then just about managed to slip through the hole and out again.

Turning his head towards the vineyard, the poor fox said: "Vineyard, O vineyard! How lovely you look, and how lovely are your fruits and vines. But what good are you to me? just as I came to you, so I leave you . . ."

And so, our sages say, it is also with this world. It is a beautiful world, but—in the words of King Solomon, the wisest of all men—just as man comes into this world empty handed, so he leaves it. Only the Torah he studied, the mitzvot he performed, and the good deeds he practiced are the real fruits which he can take with him.