



Principles of Judaism:

Torah on One Foot

With Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen

Six Monday Nights • 14 March to 18 April 2016
6:10p to 7:15p (Immediately following 5:45p mincha & maariv services)

For adults wishing an overview of the Principles of Jewish thought and life. Ideal for people new to Judaism, considering conversion, or wishing to undertake a systematic study and practice of Judaism. Free of charge.

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Torah for the Hungry Mind:

Adult Education at **Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel**

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Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 30a-b

Our Rabbis taught: A man should always be gentle like Hillel, and not impatient like Shammai. It once happened that two men made a wager with each other, saying, He who goes and makes Hillel angry shall receive four hundred zuz. Said one, 'I will go and incense him.' That day was the Sabbath eve, and Hillel was washing his head. He went, passed by the door of his house, and called out, 'Is Hillel here, is Hillel here?' Thereupon he robed and went out to him, saying, 'My son, what do you require?' 'I have a question to ask,' said he. 'Ask, my son,' he prompted. Thereupon he asked: 'Why are the heads of the Babylonians round?' 'My son, you have asked a great question,' replied he: 'because they have no skillful midwives.' He departed, tarried a while, returned, and called out, 'Is Hillel here; is Hillel here?' He robed and went out to him, saying, 'My son, what do you require?' 'I have a question to ask,' said he. 'Ask, my son,' he prompted. Thereupon he asked: 'Why are the eyes of the Palmyreans bleared?' 'My son, you have asked a great question, replied he: 'because they live in sandy places.' He departed, tarried a while, returned, and called out, 'Is Hillel here; is Hillel here?' He robed and went out to him, saying, 'My son, what do you require?' 'I have a question to ask,' said he. 'Ask, my son,' he prompted. He asked, 'Why are the feet of the Africans [negroes] wide?' 'My son, you have asked a great question,' said he; 'because they live in watery marshes.'

'I have many questions to ask,' said he, 'but fear that you may become angry.' Thereupon he robed, sat before him and said, 'Ask all the questions you have to ask,' 'Are you the Hillel who is called the nasi of Israel?' 'Yes,' he replied. 'If that is you,' he retorted, may there not be many like you in Israel. 'Why, my son?' queried he. 'Because I have lost four hundred zuz through you,' complained he. 'Be careful of your moods,' he answered. 'Hillel is worth it that you should lose four hundred zuz and yet another four hundred zuz through him, yet Hillel shall not lose his temper.'

Our Rabbis taught: A certain heathen once came before Shammai and asked him, 'How many Torah have you?' 'Two,' he replied: 'the Written Torah and the Oral Torah.' 'I believe you with respect to the Written, but not with respect to the Oral Torah; make me a proselyte on condition that you teach me the Written Torah [only]. [But] he scolded and repulsed him in anger. When he went before Hillel, he accepted him as a proselyte. On the first day, he taught him, Alef, beth, gimmel, dalet; the following day he reversed [them] to him. 'But yesterday you did not teach them to me thus,' he protested. 'Must you then not rely upon me? Then rely upon me with respect to the Oral [Torah] too.'

On another occasion it happened that a certain heathen came before Shammai and said to him, 'Make me a proselyte, on condition that you **teach me the whole Torah while I stand on one foot.**' Thereupon he repulsed him with the builder's cubit which was in his hand. When he went before Hillel, he said to him, 'What is hateful to you, do not to your neighbour: that is the whole Torah, while the rest is the commentary thereof; go and learn it.'