

The Tree of The [Knowledge](knowledge.html) of Good and Evil

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In this [study](study.html) I would like to [study](study.html) the tree of the [knowledge](knowledge.html) of good and evil, that was found in [Gan Eden](eden.html). This is the tree that [HaShem](hashem.html) commanded [Adam](adam.html) and Chava not to [eat](eating.html).

***Bereshit (Genesis) 2:16-17*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely* [*eat*](eating.html)*: 17 But of the tree of the* [*knowledge*](knowledge.html) *of good and evil, thou shalt not* [*eat*](eating.html) *of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

When [Adam](adam.html) and Chava [ate](eating.html) from this tree they crashed the [world](worlds.html). Most are aware that [Adam](adam.html) and Chava required clothes after they [ate](eating.html), but most do not realize the profound ramifications of this [sin](sin.html) that have reverberated through all of [time](time.html). In this paper we will explore some of these ramifications.

# Mixing Good and Evil

The tree of the [knowledge](knowledge.html) ([daat](daat.html)) of good and evil contained fruit that was a mixture of good and evil. If this idea was present in a human being, we would call this situation: Doubt. Thus we have the tree of doubt, the tree with an admixture of good and evil. To understand this admixture we must understand the state of [Adam](adam.html) HaRishon as he was before the [sin](sin.html). The state of [Adam](adam.html) HaRishon before the [sin](sin.html) was quite different from the state we find ourselves in today.

Hakham Chaim Volozhiner explains, in his *Nefesh HaChaim,* that [Adam](adam.html) HaRishon before the [sin](sin.html) *did* have the ability to choose good or evil. However, he was the embodiment of unsullied [purity](purity.html) and holiness without any *internal* leaning toward evil. Any [desire](needs.html) toward evil came from an external source (the primordial snake), as an outsider might try to convince a person to jump into a [fire](fire.html). By [eating](eating.html) from the the tree, man’s [desire](needs.html) to do evil entered the person himself to the point that it appears that *he* really [wants](needs.html) to do it!

Hakham Eliyahu Dessler said that the difference between before and after man’s [sin](sin.html) was the internalization of the evil inclination. Before [eating](eating.html) from the tree, Chava had to be convinced by a snake to disobey [HaShem](hashem.html), and [Adam](adam.html) in turn had to be convinced by Chava, neither would have sinned on their own. The snake, identified with the Satan, was instead of their evil inclination.

Hakham Dessler[[1]](#footnote-1) explains this further. In our present state of *after the* [*sin*](sin.html) we hear our [desires](needs.html) for evil in [**first**](one.html) person. “*I* really want to do that... *I* really want to go there...” The [desires](needs.html) for good then [speak](mashal.html) up in **second** person. “*You* [know](daat.html) that *you* really shouldn’t... *You* [know](daat.html) it’s wrong...” The “I” is the want to do evil. The mutiny has been so complete that we totally identify with the evil. That was not the case with [Adam](adam.html) HaRishon. As the Ramban wrote, his “I” only wanted to do what was good. An internal [desire](needs.html) to go against the will of [HaShem](hashem.html) was incomprehensible to [Adam](adam.html) HaRishon. It was like wanting to jump into a [fire](fire.html). How could “I” want to do evil? How could “I” want to cause myself destruction?

Before the [first](one.html) [sin](sin.html), according to Hakham Dessler, the roles were reversed: man’s natural tendency was to virtue, and [sin](sin.html) required conscious effort. In that sense, after the [sin](sin.html), man became “[knowers](daat.html) of good and evil” in a more immediate and personal way than ever before.

This is an important concept because we will find ourselves in this same state during the messianic age. During the messianic age we will no longer have to deal with the yetzer hara, our evil inclination, as a part of ourselves. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. Lets go back to the beginning and examine some the details of this tree.

## The Land Becomes Confused

Because of the [first](one.html) [sin](sin.html), [HaShem](hashem.html) cursed the land. Notice the *effect* of the curse:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 3:17-19*** *And unto* [*Adam*](adam.html) *he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast* [*eaten*](eating.html) *of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not* [*eat*](eating.html) *of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou* [*eat*](eating.html) *of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt* [*eat*](eating.html) *the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy* [*face*](body.html) *shalt thou* [*eat*](eating.html) *bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for* [*dust*](rock.html) *thou art, and unto* [*dust*](rock.html) *shalt thou return.*

Notice that we now have a mixture of good and evil sprouting from the earth. In addition to sprouting [food](food.html) plants, the ground is also sprouting volunteer thorns and thistles. I say volunteer because no farmer intentionally plants weeds. Weeds are the bane of a farmer. [HaShem’s](hashem.html) curse meant that man would spend his life separating the the good plants from the evil plants. He would spend his life pulling weeds and harvesting the fruit of the good plants.

Thus we see that [HaShem](hashem.html) extended the confusing effects of [Adam’s](adam.html) [sin](sin.html) to the earth. It was not longer man himself who was confused. Now even the land was confused. The land was now bringing forth good and evil. This situation will persist until the end of the age.

***Matitiyahu (Matthew) 13:24-30*** *Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *is likened unto a man which sowed good* [*seed*](flower.html) *in his field: 25 But while men* [*slept*](mashal.html)*, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good* [*seed*](flower.html) *in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and* [*gather*](gather.html) *them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye* [*gather*](gather.html) *up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the* [*time*](time.html) *of harvest I will say to the reapers,* [*Gather*](gather.html) *ye together* [*first*](one.html) *the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but* [*gather*](gather.html) *the wheat into my barn.*

Matitiyahu is a [midrash](orallaw.html) which present a profound truth disguised as a simple parable. In this section of the [midrash](orallaw.html) we see that Matitiyahu is using the opinion that the tree of [knowledge](knowledge.html) of good and evil, was wheat. The plants represent the mixture of the righteous and the [wicked](wicked.html). The righteous wheat will grow in a field mixed with the [wicked](wicked.html) tares. At the harvest these [two](two.html) types of men will be separated. This hints that at the end of the age the curse given to the land will be removed. This suggests that [Adam](adam.html) will have his confusion removed at the same [time](time.html).

# Marital Intimacy

[Knowledge](knowledge.html), as we have [studied before](study.html), is the intimate bonding of opposites which produce *fruit*. So, for example, when the opposites of [male and female](male%2Bfemale.html) bond in [marital intimacy](marriageact.html), then the result is a child. When good and evil become bonded in the human being, then the fruit of that [connection](connection.html) is *doubt*.

The account of the [first](one.html) [sin](sin.html) is given to us in a way that is different from most of the Torah. In most of the Torah, the [pshat](remez.html) is evident. In the account of [creation](bara.html), the pshat is deeply buried.

Rashi says, according to the Rambam, that if a person thinks that they will understand what went on in the [creation](bara.html) of a universe or the account of the [creation](bara.html) of man, then they are wrong. Imagine a gallon bucket which is having the waters of the Pacific ocean pumped into it, how much can it contain! Human intellect is finite the [creation](bara.html) is relatively infinite. The same is true for the story of the ejection of [Adam](adam.html) and Eve from the [garden of Eden](eden.html). The [Talmud](orallaw.html) states that after [Adam](adam.html) died, the light which shone from the lowest part of his [body](body.html) was greater than [two](two.html) [suns](hachama.html).[[2]](#footnote-2) Then what must the [light](lights.html) from his [head](body.html) have been like? This would be after he was dead what must he have been like while alive. That would be after the [sin](sin.html) of [eating](eating.html) the fruit from the tree of [knowledge](knowledge.html), what must he have been like before? The [Midrash](orallaw.html)actually states that the [Angels](angels.html) mistook [Adam](adam.html) for [HaShem](hashem.html).[[3]](#footnote-3) The [world](worlds.html) was different beyond our comprehension and so too were humans.

The [first](one.html) [sin](sin.html) is described by the Torah as “[eating](eating.html) the fruit of the tree of the [knowledge](knowledge.html) of good and evil”. As true as this is, it misses the depth of the reality. If we strive to understand its depth, we will begin to see what we need to do to correct it, and we will begin to understand how it relates to the rest of the Torah.

What is the essence of [*eating*](eating.html)? [Eating](eating.html) is where something external becomes a part of us. We share the same essence. Our [body](body.html) has become an admixture of what we were before we [ate](eating.html), and what we have just [eaten](eating.html). We have become [*one*](one.html) with what we [ate](eating.html). This gives us an essential clue to the depth of the [first](one.html) [sin](sin.html). Chazal [teach](teacher.html) that the [first](one.html) [sin](sin.html) was the [sexual intimacy](marriageact.html) of [Adam](adam.html) and Chava with the snake. The snake was an animal that was the manifestation of man’s yetzer hara, the evil inclination. When Chava became [*one*](one.html) with the yetzer hara, she become a mixture of good and evil. What [Adam](adam.html) [ate](eating.html) of this same fruit, when he became [intimate](marriageact.html) with the snake, he took on this same admixture of good and evil. He became [one](one.html) with the snake. He took the yetzer hara into himself and made it part of his being, as we read in the [Zohar](orallaw.html):

[***Zohar***](orallaw.html) ***Shemot 231a*** *Observe that at the* [*creation*](bara.html) *of* [*Adam*](adam.html) *the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, made him* [*male and female*](male%2Bfemale.html) *together,* [*female*](male%2Bfemale.html) *behind and* [*male*](male%2Bfemale.html) *before. Then He sawed them apart and adorned the woman and brought her to* [*Adam*](adam.html)*; and when they were thus brought* [*face*](body.html) *to* [*face*](body.html)*, love was multiplied in the* [*world*](worlds.html) *and they brought forth offspring, a thing that was not yet before. But when* [*Adam*](adam.html) *and his wife sinned and the serpent had* [*intercourse*](marriageact.html) *with Eve and injected into her his venom, she bore Cain, whose image was in part derived from on high and in part from the venom of the unclean and low side. Hence it was the serpent who brought death into the* [*world*](worlds.html)*, in that it was his side that was the cause of it.[[4]](#footnote-4)*

Rashi writes, “Even though [[Adam](adam.html)] was endowed with wisdom to give names [to the animals], the yetzer hara did not enter him until he [ate](eating.html) from the tree, upon which the yetzer hara entered him... .”[[5]](#footnote-5)

The rest of history is the story of man trying to overcome the yetzer hara and divest himself of it. [Adam](adam.html) and Chava not only crashed themselves, but they crashed all of [creation](bara.html). Chazal [teach](teacher.html) us that, “the yetzer hara exists mainly in the area of [sex](marriageact.html)“. Very often, it is sexual temptation that leads a person away from [HaShem](hashem.html) and G-dliness in other areas. It is often the strongest barrier [standing](mashal.html) in the way of an individual’s [spiritual](physical.html) perfection.

# Excretion

Everything in [creation](bara.html) was originally created perfect. Because of the [sin](sin.html) of [Adam](adam.html), all of [creation](bara.html) crashed. Originally, [Adam](adam.html) [ate](eating.html) only vegetables and fruits and there was no excretion because his [food](food.html) had no negative components which needed refining. He had no negative side and no negativity. After the [sin](sin.html), there was a negative component to [food](food.html) which needed refining. This is why the [Jews of the Exodus](gen-jew.html) in the days of Moses did not have to go to the bathroom. The manna had no negative component, therefore there was no excretion.[[6]](#footnote-6) The [Gemara](orallaw.html), in Yoma 75b, states that the manna was absorbed directly into the 248 limbs of the [body](body.html) and even elevated all other [food](food.html) stuffs so they too resulted in nowaste, meaning that no waste was produced.

This was a great mercy from [HaShem](hashem.html)! Consider that the [camp in the wilderness](stages.html) was more than [ten](ten.html) miles across. This means that [one](one.html) would have had quite a hike just to go to the bathroom! (Excretory functions had to be performed outside the [camp](stages.html).) The [Midrash](orallaw.html) also tells us of this miraculous manna:

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah -*** [***Numbers***](nchart.html) ***VII:4*** *When God brought down the manna for them He wrought for them many miracles. Our Rabbis said that they had no need to ease themselves as is otherwise usual with mortals. Why so? For no other reason than this: God said: ‘If My children are to have need of easing themselves, how can I cause it to be written concerning them that they are god-like beings, as I did in the text, I said: Ye are godlike beings (Ps. LXXXII, 6)? This must not be; but even as the* [*angels*](angels.html) *do not need this thing, so shall they also not need it any more.’* *Another exposition: God said: ‘ The* [*nations*](nations.html)[*eat*](eating.html) *and need to respond to nature’s call. How then shall I put a distinction between My children and the* [*nations*](nations.html)*?’ They, therefore, had no need to attend to nature’s call. How did they respond to the favour which God bestowed upon them? They began to say sneering things about the manna.* [*One*](one.html) *said to the other: ‘Do you hear, brother Simeon?’ The other said: ‘What do you say, brother Reuben? ‘Says the* [*first*](one.html)*: ‘On your life! Have you ever seen in all your days that a man should put wheat into the mill and that this wheat should not, after being crushed, run down? We, however,* [*eat*](eating.html) *the manna and it does not run down!’ His companion responds: ‘I* [*fear*](fear.html) *that ultimately my stomach will swell and burst, since we cannot excrete it.’ At that instant God said to Moses: ‘I can no longer suffer and control My anger, How long will this people despise Me? and how long will they not believe in Me, for all the* [*signs*](signs.html) *which I have wrought within them (Num. XIV, 11)?*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Tanchuma (Parshat B’Shalach 22)*** *Manna could assume almost any taste, depending of the consumer. It was completely digested leaving no waste to be evacuated. The amount taken would last all day and rot if left over for the next day. On Fridays a double portion would fall, enough for Friday and* [*Shabbat*](sabbath.html)*. The distance it fell from the home depended on the righteousness of the consumer; the more righteous the consumer, the closer it fell to the doorway of the family’s tent. For the righteous it was as fine bread; for the virtuous, as course cakes; and the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *had to grind it between millstones, or beat it with a mortar and pestle. Also, for the young it was as bread; for the old, as wafers made with honey; for infants, as mother’s milk; and for the sick, like fine meal with honey.*

Just as man is made up of a [spiritual](physical.html) and a [physical](physical.html) component, so too is everything that lives. Things like fruits and vegetables, as well as meat, have a [physical](physical.html) and a [spiritual](physical.html) component. Thus the [physical](physical.html) component is used to nourish the [body](body.html) and the [spiritual](physical.html) component is used to nourish the soul. This is why [eating](eating.html) only those things permitted by [HaShem](hashem.html) is so important! If we [eat](eating.html) that which is not called [*food*](food.html), then we fail to nourish our [souls](connection.html) and we become unable to absorb [spiritual](physical.html) matters. Throughout the Tanakh and the Nazarean Codicil, if it is permitted by [HaShem](hashem.html) to be [eaten](eating.html), then it is called [FOOD](food.html). Unkosher things which are [eaten](eating.html), are never called [food](food.html) by [HaShem](hashem.html).

When we [eat](eating.html), we are extracting the positive components of [food](food.html) and excreting the negative components. The [physical](physical.html) is excreted as brown stuff, and the [spiritual](physical.html) component is the smell. As Chazal [teach](teacher.html), the sense of smell is a direct [connection](connection.html) to the soul.

Baal Peor was a religion that worshipped excretion. [One](one.html) worshipped this god by deficating or urinating in front of the [idol](idolatry.html). Worshipping this god was a way that the adherents could connect themselves to the negative side.

Baal Zephon, the Lord of Flies, was a religion that worshipped a creature, the fly, that could only [eat](eating.html) excretion and things that have already started to decompose. Worshipping this god was a way that the adherents could connect themselves to the negative side.

Worshipping and serving [HaShem](hashem.html) is how [Jews](gen-jew.html) connect themselves to the positive side. We excrete, but then we reconnect to [HaShem](hashem.html) with a blessing. When we go to the bathroom we say the following blessing (Asher Yatzar) after we have excreted[[7]](#footnote-7):

*“Blessed are You,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, our G-d, King of the universe, Who formed man with wisdom and created within him many openings and many hollows (cavities). It is obvious and* [*known*](daat.html) *before Your Throne of Glory that if but* [*one*](one.html) *of them were to be ruptured or if* [*one*](one.html) *of them were to be blocked it would be impossible to survive and to stand before You (even for a short period of* [*time*](time.html)*). Blessed are You,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, Who heals all flesh and acts wonderously.”*

The healing mentioned in the last stich is what [HaShem](hashem.html) will do to restore us to the original state of [Adam](adam.html) where we will no longer need to excrete. This will be our state in the messianic era. Imagine, no more bathroom breaks!

The Ba’al HaTurim said, “Torah is only for those who [eat](eating.html) manna”, because the manna was 100 percent pure, there was no waste product whatsoever.

# The Place

On the spot where the earth from which [Adam](adam.html) was formed was [gathered](gather.html) by [HaShem](hashem.html)’s “[hand](fourteen.html),” where [Abraham](avraham.html) brought [Isaac](isaac.html) to be sacrificed, where the [first](one.html) Holy [Temple](temple.html) built by King Solomon stood, and the second Holy [Temple](temple.html) built by Ezra and Nechemiah stood, on this very spot the [third](three.html) and final [Temple](temple.html) will be built, when [Mashiach](mashiach.html) comes. This suggests that the place of our [sin](sin.html) is the place of our [atonement](atonemen.html).

What makes this so interesting is [HaShem’s](hashem.html) response to [Adam](adam.html) and Chava after they had [eaten](eating.html) the fruit. [HaShem](hashem.html) pretends that he does not [know](daat.html) where [Adam](adam.html) and Chava were. [HaShem](hashem.html) says, “Where are you?” This from the *omniscient* G-d who sees everything.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 3:9*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *God called unto* [*Adam*](adam.html)*, and said unto him, Where art thou?*

He contines pretending to be confused by asking, “did you [eat](eating.html) from the tree?” When [Adam](adam.html) and Chava [ate](eating.html) from the tree they became confused. At the same [time](time.html), [HaShem](hashem.html) begins to act confused.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 3:11*** *And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou* [*eaten*](eating.html) *of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not* [*eat*](eating.html)*?*

[HaShem](hashem.html) has made a way to restore the clarity that [Adam](adam.html) had before the fall. [HaShem](hashem.html) gave us the Torah and commanded us regarding the [mitzvot](cmds613.html). The [mitzvot](cmds613.html) are the [secret](sod.html) to the banishing of confusion and the restoration of the clarity of [Eden](eden.html). And many of the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) can only be performed in the place where [Adam](adam.html) became confused! Again we see that the cure comes in the same place where the disease began.

# What Was The Fruit?

What was the fruit of the tree of the [knowledge](knowledge.html) of good and evil?

1. Grapes: The claim that Eve “pressed grapes” and gave [Adam](adam.html) wine to drink, as surprising as it sounds, was the most widespread answer in our sources. Linguistically it is based on what is said in the Torah, “and she (Eve) took from its fruits” (Bereshit 3:6). Since it does not say “she took its fruits” but rather “from its fruits”, [one](one.html) can claim that Eve created something from the fruit, the bunches of grapes, and this she gave to [Adam](adam.html).

[***Midrash Rabbah***](orallaw.html) ***- Genesis XIX:5*** *SHE TOOK OF THE FRUIT THEREOF, AND DID* [*EAT*](eating.html)*. R. Aibu said: She squeezed grapes and gave him.*

Aryeh Kaplan suggests that [one](one.html) way to rectify [Adam’s](adam.html) [sin](sin.html) is to abstain from drinking wine or [eating](eating.html) the fruit of the vine in any form. A person who undertakes such abstention by means of a vow is called a [Nazir](hair.html). The nazir [wants](needs.html) to put himself in the state of [Adam](adam.html) before the [sin](sin.html). He [wants](needs.html) to rectify [Adam](adam.html)’s [sin](sin.html).[[8]](#footnote-8)

1. Wheat: This is [one](one.html) of the most surprising claims since wheat is not a tree, but rather a short plant, and wheat kernels, which [one](one.html) [needs](needs.html) to grind before use in baking, cannot be easily described as “the fruit of the tree”, but despite this we find this opinion in the [Midrash](orallaw.html). It’s basis is probably in studying the realities of life: Wheat symbolizes wisdom, “a baby does not [know](daat.html) to call for it’s father and mother until it [experiences](experience.html) the taste of wheat” ([Talmud](orallaw.html) Bavli Sanhedrin 72)

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis XV:7*** *AND THE TREE OF THE* [*KNOWLEDGE*](knowledge.html) *OF GOOD AND EVIL (ib.). What was the tree where of* [*Adam*](adam.html) *and Eve* [*ate*](eating.html)*? R. Meir said: It was wheat, for when a person lacks* [*knowledge*](knowledge.html) *people say, ‘That man has never* [*eaten*](eating.html) *bread of wheat.’ R. Samuel b.* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *asked R. Ze’ira: ‘Is it possible that it was wheat? ‘ ‘ Yes,’ replied he. ‘ But surely TREE is written?’ he argued. ‘It grew lofty like the cedars of the Lebanon’*

1. [Figs](bethphag.html): It is [known](daat.html) that after the [sin](sin.html) [Adam](adam.html) and Eve sewed themselves garments from “[fig](bethphag.html) leaves” (Bereishit 3:7). The [Midrash](orallaw.html) learns from this that the tree with which the original couple sinned was also the tree from which their rehabilitation after the [sin](sin.html) began.

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis XIX:6*** *AND THEY SEWED THE LEAVES OF THE* [*FIG*](bethphag.html) *(TE’ENAH) TOGETHER. R. Simeon b. Yohai said; That is the leaf which brought the occasion (to’anah)- for death-into the* [*world*](worlds.html)*.*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis XV:7*** *R. Jose said: They were* [*figs*](bethphag.html)*. He learns the obscure from the explicit, and [the meaning of] a statement from its context, thus: This may be compared to a royal prince who sinned with a slave girl, and the king on learning of it expelled him from court. He went from door to door of the slaves, but they would not receive him; but she who had* [*sinned*](sin.html) *with him opened her door and received him. So when* [*Adam*](adam.html)[*ate*](eating.html) *of that tree, He expelled him and cast him out of the* [*garden of Eden*](eden.html)*; and he appealed to all the trees but they would not receive him. What did they say to him? Said R. Berekiah: ‘ Behold, a deceiver who deceived his Creator, who deceived his Master! ‘as it is written, Let not the* [*foot*](heel.html) *of presumption come unto me (Ps. XXXVI, 12), which means, the* [*foot*](heel.html) *that presumed against its Creator; And let not the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *shake1 me (ib.): i.e. let it not take a leaf from me.2 But because he had* [*eaten*](eating.html) *of its fruit, the* [*fig-tree*](bethphag.html) *opened its doors and received him, as it is written, And they sewed* [*fig*](bethphag.html)*-leaves together, etc. (Gen. III, 7).*

It is interesting to note that the [oral Torah](orallaw.html) is also called a [fig](bethphag.html) tree, because it enclothes itself in that framework (mixing good and evil).[[9]](#footnote-9) The antidote to the tree of [knowledge](knowledge.html) of good and evil was found next to it in [Gan Eden](eden.html), for the [tree of life](eternal.html) is the Torah![[10]](#footnote-10)

1. Etrog: Because the word was seen as deriving from *ragag,* which means *to* [*desire*](needs.html).

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis XV:7*** *R. Abba of Acco said: It was the ethrog (citron), as it is written, And when the woman saw that the tree was good for* [*food*](food.html) *(Gen. III, 6). Consider: go forth and see, what tree is it whose wood can be* [*eaten*](eating.html) *just like its fruit? and you find none but the etrog.*

# Clothing

Before the [sin](sin.html), nakedness was the norm. [Adam](adam.html) and Chava were naked and the serpent was as well:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 2:25-3:1*** *And they were both* ***arom (naked)****, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed. Now the serpent was more* ***arom (naked)*** *than any beast of the field....*

[One](one.html) of the [consequences](conseq.html) of [eating](eating.html) of the fruit of the tree of the [knowledge](knowledge.html) of good and evil, was the awareness that we now had lust for [one](one.html) another. Being naked without lust was a beautiful thing. However, being naked in the presence of the yetzer hara produced lust and shame. Therefore, after the [sin](sin.html) we needed to have clothes.

The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for “garment” is Le-bhush. This comes from the word Bush, which means “to be ashamed.” The very structure of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) language indicates that clothing is worn because of shame.

Another [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for garment is BeGed. This has the same root as the word BaGad, meaning “to rebel.” This indicates that man wears clothing because he originally rebelled against [HaShem](hashem.html). Before man sinned and rebelled, he was perfectly content and unashamed of being nude.

[HaShem’s](hashem.html) [consequences](conseq.html) always serve to rehabilitate and provide a [tikkun](tikkun.html), not merely to punish. Therefore, the need to wear clothing is in some way associated with protecting us from further sinning and correcting the reasons why [Adam](adam.html) and Chava sinned to begin with. Thus we learn that clothing is designed to keep us from [sexual immorality](marriageact.html), to restrain lust from the [eyes](body.html).

Clothing is also an interesting mixture in that they conceal and they reveal. The clothes of a king, for example, conceal the [body](body.html) of a king, yet they reveal that he is a king. Clothes remind us of the [first](one.html) [sin](sin.html), and encourage us to look at a person’s inner beauty, not merely the external beauty. As this [generation](toldot.html) continues to decay, we attempt to eliminate the [tikkun](tikkun.html) that clothes provide. We seek to put naked [bodies](body.html) on display as meat in a market. This [generation](toldot.html) is obscuring the and deflecting us from the inner beauty that is revealed when clothes conceal.

The yetzer hara is hard at work undressing folks, whilst our clothes are working hard to give the yetzer hatov, the good inclination, a chance to assert itself. Clothes are learly a [tikkun](tikkun.html) for that [first](one.html) [sin](sin.html).

As an aside, it is interesting to note that the serpent deceived Chava with his lashon hara, evil speech. Lashon hara is when we [speak](mashal.html) evil, while clothing the evil with the good.

# Tu B’[Shevat](tubshevt.html)

On [Tu B’Shevat](tubshevt.html) we [eat](eating.html) the [seven](seven.html) fruits[[11]](#footnote-11) which are the praise of [eretz Israel](city.html). Recently, the mystics have also introduced a [seder](haggada.html) patterned after the [Pesach seder](haggada.html). These celebrations aim to allow us to enjoy the wine and the special fruits of [Eretz Israel](city.html).

[Tu B’Shevat](tubshevt.html) is the [new](teruah.html) year for the tree, as we can see from the [Mishna](orallaw.html):

[***Rosh Hashana***](teruah.html) ***1:1*** *On the* [*first*](one.html) *of* [*Shevat*](feasts.html) *is the* [*new*](teruah.html) *year for the tree . . .*

The Pri Tzaddik gives us a [connection](connection.html) between the tree of the [knowledge](knowledge.html) of good and evil, with Tu B’[Shevat](tubshevt.html). He notes that the [Mishna](orallaw.html) calls it THE tree. THE tree was the tree of the [knowledge](knowledge.html) of good and evil. This [teaches](teacher.html) us that Tu B’[Shevat](tubshevt.html) provides the [tikkun](tikkun.html) for [eating](eating.html) the fruit of the tree of the [knowledge](knowledge.html) of good and evil. After this tree grew and ripened its fruit, we are to use it for the good, thus producing a [tikkun](tikkun.html), a correction for that [first](one.html) [sin](sin.html).

Recall that we learned earlier that [one](one.html) opinion was that the tree of [knowledge](knowledge.html) of good and evil, was a [fig tree](bethphag.html). The [oral law](law.html) is also called a [fig](bethphag.html) tree.[[12]](#footnote-12) This suggests that the main [tikkun](tikkun.html) for that [first](one.html) [sin](sin.html) comes through the [oral law](law.html)![[13]](#footnote-13)

Thus, Tu B’[Shevat](tubshevt.html) is not about [eating](eating.html) fruits of the [new](teruah.html) year for fruit trees. That is only to remind us that to truly achieve [freedom](freedom.html) from the yetzer hara when we rectify THE tree, by re-dedicating ourselves to the oral [law](law.html) and by using it to rise above our everyday [physical](physical.html) reality into the supernatural [one](one.html) of the [Tree of Life](eternal.html).

**\* \* \***

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1. Michtav me-Eliyahu volume 2, p. 138 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Baba Bathra 58a [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Midrash Rabbah - Genesis 8:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *See also Shabbat 146a, Yevamot 103b Avodah Zarah 22b* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. In Bereshit 2:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. **Rashi Commentary for: ‎ Shemot (Exod.) 16:35** forty years Now were not thirty days missing? The manna first fell on the fifteenth of Iyar, and on the fifteenth of Nissan it stopped, as it is said: “And the manna ceased on the morrow” (Josh. 5:12). Rather [this] tells [us] that in the cakes the Israelites took out of Egypt they tasted the flavor of manna.-[from Kid. 38a]. Author’s comments: This suggests that the matza that they ate for the first thirty days also had the same qualities as the manna. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Brachot 60b [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The Aryeh Kaplan Reader [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Raya Mehemna, Parshat Nasop. 124b [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Mishlei 3:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Raya Mehemna, Parshat Nasop. 124b [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Pri Tzaddik, Tu B’Shevat 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)