**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

**ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)**

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**A River Flows from Eden:**

**The Garden of Eden**

**as the Inner Source of the Jewish Holidays**

**Rav Uriel Eitam**

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Sponsored by Adam and Nurit Lerer

in loving memory of Adam’s grandfather,   
Murray Lerer / Moshe Yitzchak Ben Avraham Aryeh Z”L

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**Shiur #25:**

**The Festival of *Matzot* and the Taste of the Garden of Eden (3)**

**The *Mitzvot* of Matza and *Chametz* and their Reasons**

**IV**

**Chametz and Matza on Pesach:  
A Repair of Adam’s Sin**

The road that we have thus far traveled has taken us through several stations. We saw the important place assigned to grain in the story of the Garden of Eden, and the turning of wheat from a tree into a grass-like plant in the wake of Adam's sin. We discussed the nature of the wholesome eating intended for man, and the nature of the corrupt eating that takes place when man sins. We explained that behind the two types of eating, the one that cleaves to God, and the other that follows after the temptation of the serpent, stand the two elements out of which man is created — breath/ soul and dust. We concluded with the idea that choosing between soul-eating and dust-eating expresses itself in choosing between the two main trees in the Garden of Eden: the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Before that, in an earlier *shiur*, we saw that the beginning of the story of the Exodus from Egypt is connected to grain, as it is the shortage of grain that brings the house of Ya’akov down to Egypt. The foundation of the phenomenon of famine also lies in the new nature of wheat in the wake of the sin, by way of which it is distinguished from the fruit of trees. A tree lives from year to year, and its deep roots reduce its dependence on the current year's rains. Wheat, on the other hand, is sown and grows each year anew, like other grasses, and it is more dependent on the current year's rain and more sensitive to drought. It turns out then that the change of wheat from a tree into a grass, which occurs, as stated, in the wake of the sin of Adam and Chava, is what stands at the root of the exile in Egypt. The connection between Adam's punishment and the phenomenon of famine in general, and the famine that leads to exile in Egypt in particular, emerges also from the words of *Chazal*:

Ten years of famine came into the world: One in the days of Adam, as it is stated: "Cursed is the ground for your sake" (*Bereishit* 3:17); one in the days of Lemekh, as it is stated: "From the ground which the Lord has cursed" (*Bereishit* 5:29); one in the days of Avraham, [as it is stated]: "And there was a famine in the land, and Avram went down into Egypt" (*Bereishit* 13:10); one in the days of Yitzchak, [as it is stated]: "And there was famine in the land" (*Bereishit* 26:1); one in the days of Ya’akov [as it is stated]: "For these two years has the famine been" (*Bereishit* 45:6)… (*Bereishit Rabba* 25, 3)

Now that we have become familiar with the connection between the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and the role of grain in the Exodus from Egypt, we can move on to the topic of this *shiur*: explaining the roots of *chametz* and matza in the story of the Garden of Eden. Let us go back to the questions with which we began our journey: questions regarding the matter of *chametz* and matza and what lies hidden in their unique and diametrically-opposed laws.

As we have already seen, among the variety of foods that are found in man's world, bread stands as a staple. However, during the festival of Pesach, we encounter a distinction between two kinds of bread: *chametz* and matza. The difference between *chametz* and matza is exceedingly fine. Flour and water are the main ingredients of both *chametz* and matza. The process of *chimutz (*fermentation), which distinguishes between *chametz* and matza, causes two manifest external changes: the dough rises, causing a change in appearance; and the risen loaf has a new taste.

Here we come to choosing between different types of eating: the essential purpose of eating is to receive life from God, and the food which expresses this purpose is matza, which is made of flour and water alone, the elements which provide mankind with its nourishment and sustenance. The two differences which distinguish *chametz* from matza significantly influence the eating experience, but they provide no direct benefit regarding nutrition and sustaining life. Matzathen is bread that offers nothing but life. By contrast, *chametz* distinguishes itself with additions that are expressed in appearance and taste.

**The Tree of Chametz and the Tree of Matza**

The characteristics of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil parallel the characteristics of leavened bread in the most striking manner. The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is wheat, according to Rabbi Yehuda, but like leavened bread that is familiar to us, it is distinguished by the addition of appearance and taste, which stir up desire: "that the tree was good for food, and that it was desirable to the eyes" (*Bereishit* 3:6). A clear expression of the identification of *chametz* with desire is evident in the famous designation found in the words of *Chazal* for the evil inclination: "the leaven in the dough" (*Berakhot* 17a).

After identifying the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil with leavened bread, we can see that alongside that tree stands also the tree of unleavened bread. This is the Tree of Life, which gives man pure life, just like matza, which contains only the fundamental components of bread, flour and water, which give life to man.

Admittedly, Rabbi Yehuda teaches us only that the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is wheat. Is there any basis to say that the Tree of Life is wheat as well? We do indeed find a basis for this in the words of the Maharal, who explains, referring to a Midrashic source, that the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil are not two entirely separate trees, but rather two trees which grow from one root:

In the Midrash it is stated that the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge had one root, and the root of both of them was “in the midst of the garden,” in its center of the garden. (*Gur Aryeh*, *Bereishit* 2:9, s.v. *Be-tokh ha-gan*)

If we combine this with the words of Rabbi Yehuda, we learn that not only the tree from which Adam and Chava eat is wheat, but also the Tree of Life, from which they do not eat, is wheat. However, as opposed to the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the fruit of the Tree of Life is clean and pure, fruit whose entire essence is life. It is clear then that this is not leavened bread, but rather unleavened bread, bread that lacks the rising and the taste that stir up desire.

Identifying *chametz* with the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and matzawith the Tree of Life sheds new light on the *mitzvot* of Pesach that are connected to the *chametz-*matza axis.

**Negative and Positive Commandment from One Root**

We may now arrive at a solution of the difficulty that we raised at the beginning of our *shiurim* on Pesach, how is it that bread on Pesach entails, on the one hand, so many severe prohibitions, while, on the other hand, carrying a positive commandment, after which the holiday is named. The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is wheat, as maintained by Rabbi Yehuda, but so is the Tree of Life, which grows from the same root. It is not bread itself that is forbidden to humanity, as it is the primary source of its life, but rather leavened bread, which stirs up desire and the evil inclination with its taste and appearance. In contrast, the eating of unleavened bread, the Tree of Life, is the main mitzvagiven to man.[[1]](#footnote-1)

On Pesach, we return, as it were to the choice before Adam and Chava prior to their sin, in order to repair the sin retroactively. Before Pesach, the Jewish people scour their homes of *chametz*, which is "good for food and desirable to the eyes," and they return, as it were, to the world before eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, a world free of desire. At the beginning of the holiday, on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan, the people of Israel choose life, as they embrace the pure eating from the Tree of Life: "In the evening, you shall eat *matzot*" (*Shemot* 12:18).

**A Mixture of Good and Evil**

Now, we can understand why we find on Pesach the unique prohibition of a substance which contains a small amount of forbidden food — "a mixture of *chametz*."[[2]](#footnote-2)

Even though it is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil that introduces evil to the world, the tree is not called the Tree of Evil, but rather the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil." Its essence is not only the reality of evil, but the mixture of evil in good. This tree is like the tree of leavened bread. Alongside its external characteristics (its appearance and its taste), it contains also the basic resources of life (flour and water). In this sense, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is the twin of the Tree of Life, which grows from the same root. However, in contrast to the Tree of Life, in the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, desire is also mixed in, this being the mixture of evil in the good.[[3]](#footnote-3)

So too is leavened bread. Fundamentally it is bread — flour and water — man's basic food, but in it is mixed the evil inclination, a bit of "yeast in the dough," that turns it all into *chametz. Chametz* does not represent evil by itself, but rather the mixture of evil in good, the mixture of desire in life. Since the whole idea of *chametz* is a mixture, we understand why its prohibition is not cancelled in a mixture like all other prohibitions. Purification from *chametz* must be total purification, as in the Garden of Eden before the sin.

**“That Soul Shall Be Cut Off”**

One of the issues with which we opened our *shiurim* on the holiday is that of the unique severity of the prohibition of *chametz* on Pesach, the eating of which is punishable by *kareit* — "for whoever eats leaven from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel" (*Shemot* 12:15). Various explanations are given by *Chazal* and the Rishonim for the precise meaning of the punishment of *kareit* written in the Torah in different contexts, but in any case we are dealing with a cutting off of the soul, a phrase whose plain meaning is death, in one sense or another.[[4]](#footnote-4) We now understand why the punishment for eating *chametz* is *kareit*, because this transgression is similar to Adam's eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the punishment for which is death.

**The Prohibition of Eating and the Prohibition of Deriving Benefit**

The prohibition not only to eat *chametz*, but even to derive any kind of benefit from it, stems also from the sin of Adam and Chava, for their sin is rooted in his following considerations of pleasure — the taste of the tree that is good for food, and not the motive of receiving life. In order to repair this, the Jewish people are commanded to distance themselves from subjecting life to any particular pleasure.[[5]](#footnote-5)

**“And there shall be no *chametz* seen by you”**

There are different views regarding the definition of the prohibition of *bal yeira'eh*, from the Torah’s command (*Shemot* 13:7), “*Ve-lo yeira’eh lekha chametz*,” "And there shall be no leavenseen by you." Are we dealing with a prohibition connected to the actual seeing of *chametz*, or perhaps with a prohibition of having *chametz* in one's possession, similar to the prohibition of *bal yimatzei*, from the Torah’s command (ibid. 12:19) *“Shivat yamim se’or lo yimatzei be-vateikhem,*” “Seven days shall there be no leavenfound in your houses"? Either way, it is clear that that the Torah prohibits leaven (variously referred to in the verses as *chametz, se’or* or *machmetzet*)using the word "see," as in the first of these verses: "And there shall be no *chametz* seen with you, neither shall there be *se’or* seen with you, in all your borders.”

This prohibition as well, which is unique to *chametz*, can be understood in light of the identification of *chametz* with the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Seeing the tree, which stirs up the evil inclination, is what causes the sin of eating (*Bereishit* 3:6): "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was desirable to the eyes…" It is the act of eating that is forbidden to man, but the seeing which stirs up the heart's passions is not proscribed, and this is what ultimately leads to the failure.

In fact, even before eating from the tree, seeing the tree in itself is what brings the woman to desire (*ta’ava*), which she does not have earlier. In light of this we may say that this seeing is not only the cause of the sin, but also the first step into the world of sin. The holiday of Pesach comes to repair not only the sin but also the cause of the sin, which also has an element of the sin itself, and therefore not only is eating *chametz* forbidden, but even seeing it.[[6]](#footnote-6)

**“Let it be nullified and be like the dust of the earth”**

After all of this, it is difficult to understand the law of *bittul chametz*, nullification of leaven, which seems to replace directly confronting *chametz* with a symbolic or virtual act. The gap between the great severity of *chametz* and the uncompromising way of dealing with it, on the one hand, and *bittul chametz,* which is so easy to execute and does not deal at all with the *chametz* itself but rather leaves it in place, on the other hand, is a gap that at first glance seems difficult to bridge.

The inner logic of the mitzvaof *bittul chametz* lies in the fact that the evil inclination and desire are matters of the imagination, which depend first and foremost on a person's consciousness. For this reason, one may also nullify them in one’s consciousness.

In order to understand this, let us go back to man's fundamental structure. Man is composed of material dust and Divine breath/ soul: "Then the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (*Bereishit* 2:7). As we have seen, the dust represents inanimate, lifeless matter, and therefore in itself it has no value or importance. The dust receives all of its value and importance from the breath of life breathed into it, from the Divine vitality that fills it, and which turns man who is made of dust into "a living soul."

The dust, from which man's body is formed, is what leads to humanity’s downfall. Instead of following the breath of life within him and cleaving to God and to the Tree of Life, man is seduced by the serpent whose bread is dust, and eats from the *chametz* of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Therefore Adam is punished: "For dust you are, and to dust shall you return" (*Bereishit* 3:19). What brings man to this sin? The temptation of the serpent brings man to the illusion that material desire — of the beauty of appearance and the goodness of taste — will bring him happiness. If so, the root of the sin is not only in the content of the tree, but in man's attitude toward it. This attitude may be rectified by internal repair — with *bittul chametz*, which is primarily nullification in the heart (according to most Rishonim). *Bittul chametz* establishes the person's attitude to *chametz* as to something lacking all importance, when one makes it "as the dust of the earth," as we say in the Aramaic *bittul* formula: "Let it be nullified (*li-batel)* and be like the dust of the earth."

This is what the Rambam says about the nature of *bittul chametz*:

What is the destruction to which the Torah refers? To nullify leaven within his heart and to consider it as dust, and to resolve within his heart that he possesses no leaven at all: all the leaven in his possession being as dust and as a thing of no value whatsoever. (*Hilkhot Chametz U-matza* 2:2)

With this consciousness, the person sets the dust in its rightful place — as a worthless matter, rather than something on which one’s life depends. The illusion to which the serpent brings a person, as if the side of him that comes from the dust is the main part of his life, is instead nullified and given the value of the dust of the earth — like the food of the serpent and the source of the body and the evil inclination. This is also the true value of the illusion of bread's rising and taste: when the illusion of rising and taste turns in a person's eyes into the dust of the earth, the power of the serpent and of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which stems entirely from the power of seduction and the imagination, becomes dissipated. Just as Adam and Chava, before the sin, could have won the battle against the tree and the serpent in their hearts and in their minds alone, so can everyone in Israel defeat the *chametz* in one’s own consciousness, already on the eve of the holiday.

It is precisely the nullification of *chametz* — when done sincerely, when one’s consciousness and inner attitude truly relate to the *chametz* as dust of the earth, as one is no longer subjugated at all to the appearance and taste of the *chametz* — that effects the inner repair of the person and nullifies the power of one’s evil inclination. The evil inclination is internal *chametz*; it is what gives external *chametz* the power to seduce a person. *Biur chametz* removes the leaven from the world and from one's vision, in accordance with the prohibitions of *bal yeira'eh* and *bal yimatzei*. The mitzva of *bittul chametz*, which stands on its own, purifies a person's inner consciousness of the temptation of *chametz*.

**The Taste of Matza — The Taste of the Tree of Life**

Against all the various prohibitions of *chametz* stands the mitzva of eating matza, which plays a central role in the repair of the sin of Adam and Chava. As mentioned earlier, Adam is forbidden to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, but he is commanded to eat from the Tree of Life, included in the command, "Of every tree in the garden you shall freely eat" (*Bereishit* 2:16), and even standing at the heart of that command. Only after he eats from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is Adam banished from the Garden of Eden, lest he eat from the Tree of Life, to live eternally on his inferior level, with the evil within him that he absorbs from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

The mitzvaof eating matzais the only mitzvain the Torah until the present day that involves the eating of a particular food. In this sense it parallels the command to Adam: "Of every tree in the garden you shall freely eat" — a mitzva of eating, the essence of which is receiving life from God, and therefore its peak is eating from the Tree of Life.

As we explained above, the Tree of Life is a wheat tree, the fruit of which is matza, fruit that contains all the life-sustaining elements, like the flour and water in our matza. Therefore, the eating from the Tree of Life, which is not influenced by the external additions of appearance and taste, is wholly concentrated on the cleaving to and receiving life from God. Thus, the mitzvato eat matzaon Pesach completes the positive, proactive aspect of repairing the sin of Adam, in that it returns us to the first mitzvagiven to Adam in the Garden of Eden — the mitzva of eating, the essence of which is eating from the Tree of Life.

As with Adam, choosing the Tree of Life is possible only in a clean and pure world, a world in which there is no mixture of good and evil. Before Pesach Jews remove all *chametz­,* distance themselves from passionate eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and from any trace of contact with it, and in this way return to the point of Adam and Chava's choice before the sin. The people of Israel repair the sin of Adam and Chava by making the correct choice, eating matza,which is the repaired eating from the Tree of Life.

Admittedly, the eating of matzais governed by a special law, that it be eaten with an appetite. For this reason, *Chazal* prohibit all significant eating close to Mincha time on the eve of Pesach.[[7]](#footnote-7) This matter of eating the matzawith appetite impacts also on the course of the Seder: the main mitzvaof eating at the Seder is the mitzvaof eating matza, and therefore it would have been fitting to begin the night's eating with it. Nevertheless, *Chazal* set the eating of the *karpas* before the eating of the matza, so that the *karpas* may whet the appetite, and the matzawill be eaten with enhanced appetite. This law of eating with an appetite seems surprising in light of the understanding that eating matzais like eating from the Tree of Life, eating that is free of desire. To this difficulty we can add the halakhic requirement that the matzaeaten for the mitzva must have the taste of matza, and therefore, for example, one cannot fulfill one's obligation by eating cooked matza (*Pesachim* 38b; *Shulchan Arukh*, *OC* 461:4).

Even these laws illuminate the reason for the repaired eating. The fact that, in the simple sense, matza lacks taste, raises a question regarding the requirement that one experience "the taste of the matza." However, based on this question, we can understand that it is precisely in a place where there is no addition of external taste, that one may sense the inner and deeper taste found in eating itself, in the life that is in it. This is “the taste of the matza." Therefore, it is precisely the matza that is eaten to fulfill the mitzva, which is directed at eating that is not given over to external taste which stirs up desire, that must be eaten with an appetite. The matza does not stir up desire for passionate eating, but rather delicate appetite for the eating itself and the life within it.

It turns out that this eating is not supposed to be tasteless eating. The passions that are subjugated to extravagances and sharp tastes deaden the ability to find the truly good taste in simple things. The liberation from subjugation to the passion for eating can reveal the fine and simple taste in life-sustaining food, in matza to which nothing has been added. The appetite of a hungry person, which stems from a real need for food, allows a person to encounter the simple taste of matza. This may be likened to the sweet taste of clear water, with no added sweetener or color, to a thirsty person. It is precisely when one eats matza that one must appreciate its taste, which is plain and simple. This matzataste is a gate to the taste of the Tree of Life — the taste of life itself.

**The Pure Point of Origin**

On the Festival of *Matzot*, which marks the birth of the Jewish nation, the people of Israel build the basic attitude toward eating as something that is entirely receiving life from God. From here comes the uniqueness of the mitzvaof eating matzaand the severity of the prohibition to eat *chametz.* The focus is on food with respect to its inherent value through the mitzvaof eating matza, and the Jewish people must distance themselves from *chametz* whose danger is turning extraneous matters into a goal of its own which diverts attention from the main thing, a danger that leads Adam and Chava to cut themselves off from the supreme goal of life in accordance with the will of God. The people of Israel who go out of Egypt deal with repairing the sin of Adam and Chava, who at the very beginning of their life sin with their eating, and the nation opens a new gate to a more perfect future.[[8]](#footnote-8)

At the beginning of the yearly cycle of the people of Israel, the nation returns, as it were, to the level of life before the sin, and open the year by choosing pure life — cleaving to God-life in is fullness and purity. Eating *chametz* at this time is an act of severing the connection to the Source of Life, and therefore its punishment — and we might also say, its result — is *kareit.[[9]](#footnote-9)*

Therefore, on the Festival of *Matzot,* the Jewish people are commanded for all generations to create the primeval state of purified reality; a situation in which their world is free of the presence of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil that leads to sin, containing only the Tree of Life. In the new reality that is created there is no *chametz*, and there is no concern that their eyes will encounter it and stir up their desire. They purify their internal world by way of *bittul chametz* in their hearts, and in the center of their reality there is only matza — in the sense of the Tree of Life. At the beginning of the new year, by way of which the people of Israel experience every time anew all of Jewish history, they open a new cycle of life, with a repaired point of origin. At this unique point of origin, only the Tree of Life exists in their world, and the Jewish people begin their lives cleaving to it.

After the Festival of *Matzot*, when the Jews direct themselves toward receiving life itself from God with no supplements of taste or appearance, and thereby free themselves of subjugation to external trappings, they go on to the next step, to a world in which there is also the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, where *chametz* is once again permitted, even turning into a mitzva in the bringing of the Two Loaves on Shavuot.[[10]](#footnote-10)

(Translated by David Strauss)

1. See also the words of the *Zohar*: "We established the mystery of [the difference between] *chametz* and matzain several places: this is the evil inclination, while this is the good inclination" (*Raya Mehemna* II, 40b). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This is not the forum in which to expand upon the issue of a mixture of *chametz*, the source of the prohibition, its reason, parameters and validity. In any case, it is clear that on Pesach there is a unique prohibition of a mixture of *chametz*, different from other prohibited foods. See *OC* 442. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The author of *Nefesh Ha-chayim* (1, 6) explains the meaning of the name of the tree, "knowledge of good and evil," as "joining of good and evil": "This is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, that good and evil join together and intermingle in it and in the worlds, one actually inside the other, for, as we know, knowledge denotes joining." [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The main interpretations of the punishment of *kareit* are the following: a person's premature death; a person's dying without progeny; cutting off the soul from life in the World to Come (see *Mo'ed Katan* 28a; Rashi, *Bereishit* 17:14; Rambam, *Hilkhot Teshuva* 8:5; Ramban, *Vayikra* 18:29). All these are different forms of death: early physical death, cutting off the continuity of life, and the loss of life in the World to Come. In the penalty of death imposed upon man in the Garden of Eden, we may see all three explanations. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. It is true that the prohibition regarding the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is formulated in terms of "eating" — "You shall not eat of it." Still, the prohibition of deriving benefit from *chametz* on Pesach is derived from the term "eating" (*Pesachim* 21b). This is clear especially according to Rabbi Abbahu (ibid.), who states:

   Wherever it is said: “It shall not be eaten,” “That shall not eat,” “You shall not eat,” the prohibitions of both eating and benefiting [in general] are understood, unless the verse expressly states [otherwise], as it does in the case of a carcass [saying that it may be sold, but not eaten].

   This is in accordance with the ruling of the Rambam (*Hilkhot Ma'akhalot Asurot* 8:15). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Here, two aspects of the prohibition of seeing are intertwined. This prohibition, which constitutes a fence so as not to come to the prohibition of eating, is an independent prohibition. According to this understanding, both ways of understanding the prohibition of *bal yeira'eh* and *bal yimatzei* are fulfilled. This is in fact a fence erected by the Torah so that one not come to eat *chametz*, as implied by the verse: "Seven days shall there be no *se’or* found in your houses; for whoever eats *machmetzet*, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a sojourner, or one that is born in the land" (*Shemot* 12:19). See the possibility brought by the Ran (Rif, 1a, s.v. *U-ma*, end). At the same it is also an independent prohibition (as understood by most Rishonim). The sense of sight focuses a person on the external and material, and in that way stirs up one’s desire and distances one from God. Thus, seeing *chametz* is liable to lead a person to sin, and it is also problematic in its own right. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Thus it is taught in the Mishna: "On the eve of Pesach close to Mincha a man must not eat until nightfall" (*Pesachim* 10:1), and the Gemara explains (99b) that this law has special validity on Pesach because of the mitzvato eat matza, which must be performed with an appetite (Rashi, ad loc.). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See the words of Rabbi Tzadok Ha-kohen of Lublin: (*Peri Tzadik*, beginning of *Kuntres Eit Ha-okhel*, Letter *Yud*).

   The mitzvaof eating matza bestows sanctity upon eating… This is the reason for what is brought in the *Zohar* (II, 40b): “The good inclination and the evil inclination — *chametz* and matza.” Similarly in the language of *Chazal* (*Berakhot* 17a), it is “the yeast in the dough.” For the evil inclination is primarily in eating, as is known from the serpent. Moreover, *Chazal* say (ibid. 40a) that the Tree of Knowledge was wheat. Countering it, the eating of matzabestows sanctity on all the bread eaten all year long, as does the eating of *maror* on the eating of all vegetables, and the eating of sacrificial meat on meat. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See Rav Kook (*Orot Ha-kodesh*, III, p. 36): "One who eats *chametz* at this time of the renewal of his soul and the soul of the people of Israel, his life is removed from the world — ‘that soul shall be cut off.’" [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The allowance of *chametz* after Pesach and its being used in a mitzva on Shavuot will be explained in our *shiurim* dealing with Shavuot. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)