

# TU B'SHVAT SEUDA



עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה ותומכיה מאושר (Etz chayyim):

*Etz chayyim hee lamachazikim bah v'tomcheiha meushar*

Sources: <https://www.aish.com/h/15sh/ho/48965616.html>  
hazon.org Tu BShvat Seuda  
[https://www.myjewishlearning.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Seuda-booklet-Letter-Size-PRINT\\_no-trim-marks-1.pdf](https://www.myjewishlearning.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Seuda-booklet-Letter-Size-PRINT_no-trim-marks-1.pdf)

For more info: <sup>1</sup>[kavconnect@gmail.com](mailto:kavconnect@gmail.com)

# MEDITATION

Tu B'Shvat

It's a perfect time for dveikus / connection  
the last chanuka candles burned down weeks ago,  
and we find ourselves in a limbo of low light and dull landscapes.

Consuming fruits with the right kavanah (intention)  
is believed to release the divine sparks / netitzos in the fruit,  
and bring the world into greater harmony.

Tiferet

The theme of this Seuda is kavana / intention.  
Consider choosing an intention  
to reflect on during the Seuda and hold in your mind  
when eating the fruit.

Its a time for stillness  
Trees lie in contemplation,  
Gathering their strength.  
Take a moment now,  
To listen to the silence.  
Feel the sap rising.

Leaves will soon unfurl,  
Breathing life into us.  
Life to life to life.

Take a moment now,  
To listen to your breathing.  
Form your intention.

**DARKNESS  
HOLDS THE  
POSSIBILITY OF  
LIGHT**



## (1) INTRODUCTION

Tu B'Shvat offers a unique opportunity for insight into living and personal growth. The Seuda presented here is based primarily on the Kabbalistic work, *Chemdat Yamim*, later published separately under the title Pri Aitz Hadar.

## PREPARATIONS

To enjoy this experience in your own home, try to prepare the basic items mentioned below. Don't worry if you can't find all these items; do the best you can. Since the order and the contents of the Seuda do not follow a specific Jewish law, there is much room for flexibility and creativity.

You will need lots of fruit, including the 7 species by which the Land of Israel is praised:

- Figs
  - Dates
  - Pomegranates
  - Olives
  - Grapes (or raisins)
  - wheat and barley (in the form of bread, cake or cereal)
- 
- Various nuts with the shells (walnuts, almonds, pistachios, coconut),
  - Fruits with peels (oranges, pomegranates, avocado)
  - Fruits with edible seeds (e.g. blueberries)
  - Fruits with inedible pits (e.g. peaches, plums)
  - Wine or grape juice, both white and red

## (2) THE Seuda BEGINS

### THE LEADER ASKS:

Why do we celebrate the New Year for fruit trees on Tu B'Shvat?

### PARTICIPANT SAYS:

Since the Bais Hamikdash was destroyed, the Jewish people could no longer bring the First Fruits (Bikkurim) to Yerushalayim. On Tu B'Shvat we offer instead the fruit of our lips, to praise Hashem for all the fruit trees in the world.

### PARTICIPANT:

Tu Bishvat marks a new period for taking tithes, a portion of which is given to the poor. Therefore:

When a person is privileged to eat in the presence of Hashem, he must show his appreciation by giving charity to the poor and feeding them, just as Hashem in His bounty feeds him. ( Zohar - Parshat Trumah)

#### PARTICIPANT:

The Mishnah in Tractate Rosh Hashana says that Tu B'Shvat is New Year for the TREE (singular). This reference to a singular tree alludes to The Tree - the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden.

And Hashem said: 'Let the earth put forth grass, herb-yielding seeds, and fruit trees bearing fruit of its kind.' 'Fruit tree' means the EITZ Hada'as Tov vRa / Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which put forth blossoms and fruit. 'Bearing fruit' is the tzaddik, the basis of the world. 'Of its kind' means all the human beings who have in them the spirit of holiness, which is the blossom of that tree. This is the covenant of holiness, the covenant of peace - and the faithful enter into that kind and do not depart from it. The Tzaddik generates, and the tree conceives and brings forth fruit of its kind. (Zohar - Bereishit 33a)

### MEDITATION

One should intend that he is eating at the celestial table before Hashem, in the Garden of Eden/ Gan Eden before the Divine Presence. (*Raishit Chochma - Shar HaKedusha*)

Take a few moments and think deeply about being in the company of Hashem... sitting at His table... experiencing the sublime spiritual pleasure of a relationship with the Creator Himself.

#### DISCUSSION

B) There were two trees in the center of the Garden: the Tree of Life (representing Torah and eternal life) and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (representing death and distortion). Another way of expressing this distinction is that the Tree of Life is objective wisdom, while the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is personal experience. Why would Adam and Chava have chosen to eat from the latter, especially since Hashem had explicitly instructed them not to?

#### PARTICIPANT SAYS:

Adam and Chava erred by eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. To correct this mistake, we eat our fruit today with pure intentions, as if from the Tree of Life.

**PARTICIPANT:**

Rabbi Chaim Vital wrote: My teacher [the holy Arizal] used to say that one must intend while eating the fruits [at the Tu B'Shvat Seuda] to repair the sin of Adam who erred by eating fruit from the tree.

Partaking in the physical world inappropriately, for its own sake, lowers us spiritually and diminishes our enjoyment. The solution is to engage in the physical world as a means to a worthy end i.e. appreciating the greatness of Hashem who created all.

### (3) THE Seuda CONTINUES

**PARTICIPANT:**

The Talmud says that someone who eats and doesn't say a bracha is considered a thief. Why? Because every aspect of Hashem's creation is inherently holy. So when one eats a piece of fruit, he is depriving the world of a piece of holiness. A bracha re-infuses the world with holiness. Eating without a bracha, however, lowers the level of holiness in the world without replacing the loss - and is regarded as theft. (Maharal of Prague)

**PARTICIPANT:**

The Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Chassidut, was once visiting the home of Rabbi Yaakov Koppel. When Rabbi Yaakov danced in front of his Shabbos table for an hour, the Baal Shem Tov asked to explain this unusual custom. Rabbi Yaakov replied: Before I taste physical food, I absorb the food's spiritual essence. In doing so, I become so excited that I sing and dance!

Leader: Everything in the physical world is a metaphor for a deeper spiritual concept.

Eating is to the body, what knowledge is to the soul. When we eat, we internalize the good part of the food - and through that we grow and develop. Similarly, when we learn a new piece of information, we must chew it over, digest it, and integrate it into our very being. Only then can we truly grow in wisdom and spirituality.

### (4) GRAIN PRODUCTS

Now comes the part we've been waiting for: drinking wine and enjoying other delicacies!

Wheat and barley are the first two of the seven species connected to the greatness of the Land of Israel, as it says: A land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs, and pomegranates, a land of olives and honey (Deut. 8:8).

*We begin by eating bread or cake.*

**LEADER:**

Before saying the bracha, let us pause and reflect on our good fortune. Hashem has given us innumerable brachas, enabling us to enjoy this food. Hashem could easily have arranged for humans to be nourished by photosynthesis like plants, or by eating bland oatmeal, or by taking pills. Instead, He created a seemingly endless variety of appetizing and nourishing foods for us to enjoy. He gave us taste buds, and many miraculous organs with which to eat and digest the food.

**PARTICIPANT:**

Who is the wealthy person? The one who is happy with what he has. The more we appreciate our gifts, the more sincere is our thanks, and the more sublime is our pleasure.

If eating cake or crackers recite the following bracha: **boray minay mezonos.**

**MEDITATION:**

Savor each bite of the cake or bread. Appreciate that Hashem loves us and created everything for our good.

**(5) FRUIT**

On Tu B'Shvat, we eat the fruit by which Hashem Himself praises Eretz Yisrael. As the verse says: The trees have borne their fruit, fig tree and vine have yielded their strength. Children of Tzion be happy, rejoice in the Lord, your Hashem. (Yoel 2:22-23)

*Say the following bracha and then eat one of the fruits:*



**FRUIT OF THE TREE**

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
**בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ:**

Baruch attah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam,  
**Borei Pri Ha'Etz.**

Blessed are You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe,  
**creator of fruit of the trees.**

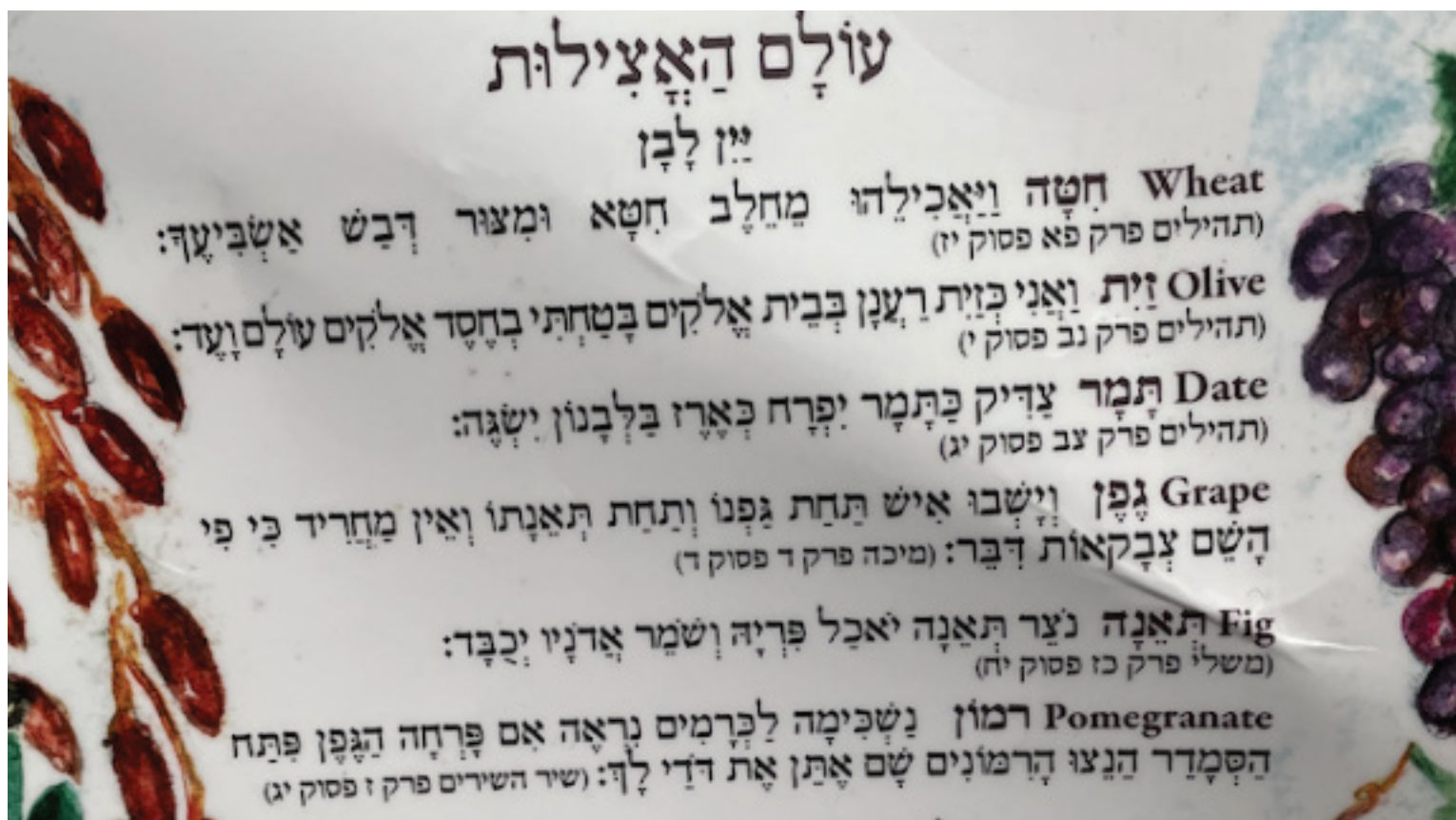
**SHEHECHIYANU**

Baruch attah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam,  
**Shehecheyanu, vekiyemanu  
vehigiyanu lazman hazeh.**

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
**שֶׁהַחַיָּנוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ לְזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה:**

Take each fruit one by one,  
as the appropriate paragraph below is recited.  
Enjoy the many unique flavors and textures.  
Reflect on the reality  
that the Creator of time and space  
wants us to take pleasure in everything  
that He put into the world.

*Participants take turns saying the following paragraphs:*





## MEDITATION 7 species from Eretz Yisrael:

**Wheat / CHESED** / kindness: Hashem provides for our basic needs such as bread. Rectifies our emotional realm.

**Barley / GEVURAH** / might: Elevates our physical drives to the spiritual plane.

**Grapes / TIFERET** / beauty: The idea of humility. Just as the larger, heavier clusters hang lower than the smaller, lighter ones so should those in Klal Yisrael who are greater in Torah act humbled

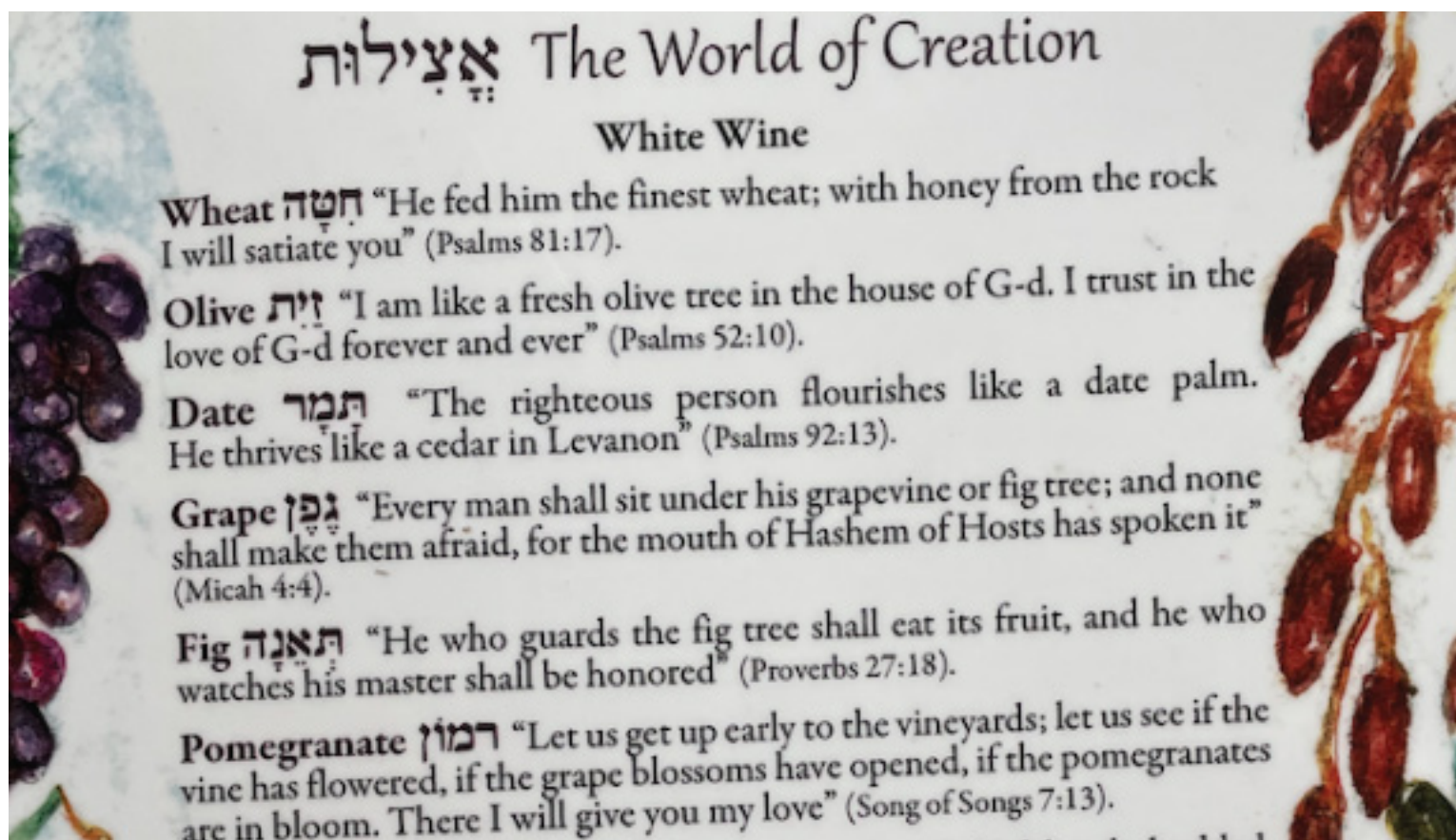
**Figs / NETZACH** / victory: Be quick to perform deeds, seek to do good, to do mitzvot.

**Pomegranates / HOD** / splendor: The idea of collectivity and unity. We must rely on one another to perform the entirety of the 613 mitzvot.

**Olives / YESOD** / foundation / work on transforming the bitter into something good; Needs to be crushed in order to be used for light.

**Dates / MALCHUT** / kingship The entire date tree can be utilized. The date tree grows tall and straight, so too the righteous.

By Orit Esther Riter: <https://dailydoseofemuna.com/tu-bshvat-seder-and-insights/>



## (6) WINE:

It is a special custom on Tu B'Shvat to drink four cups of wine:

### FIRST CUP – PURE WHITE pure divinity

#### Olam HaAtzilut

When drinking white wine we should thus intend that we are ascending to bind ourselves with Hashem's pure infinite light.

### SECOND CUP – PALE PINK (white with a drop of red wine)

#### Olam HaBeriah

When drinking white wine mixed with red wine, we want to draw that pure white light down and out into Beriah corresponding to our intellect.

### THIRD CUP – DARKER PINK (with more red added)

#### Olam HaYetzirah

Draw that pure white light down and out into Yetzirah, corresponding to our emotions.

### FOURTH CUP – RED

#### Olam HaAsiyah.

When drinking pure red wine, we want to draw it down into Asiyah, corresponding to our body/ actions.

#### ON THE 4 CUPS BY RABBI AVRAHAM SUTTON

The idea behind this is brought out in the following teaching from the Ari: In **Atzilut**, evil has no existence, as per the verse, "**Ki lo El chafetz resha atah**—for You are not a God who sanctions/



desires wickedness; **lo yegurkha ra**—evil cannot abide in Your presence” (Psalm 5:5). At that high level, there is no evil, only the light of the endless Infinite One. There the light is so powerful that there no possibility of a shadow, i.e., the semblance of anything other than God. This is not the case in the three lower worlds. In general, **Beriah** is said to be **rubo tov u’miuto ra** (overwhelmingly good with a smidgen of evil). In **Yetzirah**, good and evil are **shekulim zeh keneged zeh** (equally balanced, one against the other). **Asiyah** is **rubo ra u’miuto tov** (overwhelmingly evil with a smidgen of good) (see Leshem Shvo VeAchlamah, Drushey Olam HaTohu, Chelek Beit 1:7:4-5, p. 18).

Based on this we can understand a deeper level of “Hashem doesn’t desire/sanction evil; evil cannot abide in His presence.” In general, the three lower worlds are best seen as levushim (garments, filters) over the awesome reality of Atzilut that lies at the penimiyut (core and nucleus) of reality. When Hashem reveals His Atzilut light, whatever illusions existed as a result of His hiding the light will be exposed as the nothing that they really were, and disappear.

**PARTICIPANT:**

White wine represents nature in potential. Red wine represents nature in full bloom. On this day, we begin to leave the winter behind and move into a period of renewal and life.

It is stated in the Zohar: Wine has two colors - white and red. White is from the right side [of kindness]; red from the left side [of strength and judgment].

As we progress from white to red, we move from potential to actuality. We are able to appreciate Hashem’s judgment as well as His kindness. We see Hashem’s design and goodness in the world with increasing clarity.

**PARTICIPANT:**

Wine rejoices the heart of man. This refers to the wine of Torah. Yayin (Hebrew for wine) equals 70, the numerical value of Sod, meaning secret. [Wine represents the hidden aspects of the Torah.] ( Zohar - Parshat Pinchas).

**PARTICIPANT:**

The section in Gemara dealing with agriculture is called trust in Hashem. When a farmer plants a seed, trust in Hashem gives him the strength to survive the winter. On Tu B’Shvat he begins to see that trust rewarded.

Similarly, when we plant a seed for personal growth, it requires trust and patience to survive the ‘cold,’ before we see the fruits of our labor.

We will now drink 4 cups of wine (or grape juice) in conjunction with four different categories of fruit. Each of these pairs correspond to each of the four spiritual realms (from lowest to highest): Each level becomes more connected to the Creator. As we eat, we elevate the fruits – and ourselves – through the various levels, rising higher and higher.

Pour the 1ST cup of wine (all white)  
WINTER

ROOT / ASIYAH

Look around you.

It's winter, and the trees have withdrawn into themselves.

Not doing, simply being.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם  
בורא פרי הגפן:

Baruch attah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam,  
**Borei Pri Ha'gefen.**

Blessed are You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe,  
**creator of the fruit of the vine.**



The white wine reminds us of winter.

The trees are asleep,  
silently gathering their strength.

May we, too,  
find strength and tranquility in the winter months.  
We are thankful for the seasons,  
for the trees, and for the fruit of the vine.

*All say the following bracha, and then drink from the white wine:*

Slow down

and really enjoy the taste of the wine.

Appreciate it

Feel Hashems pure infinite light throughout your body.

LEADER:

*We now eat fruits with inedible shells or peels.*

For example: nuts, pomegranate, oranges, avocado.

The edible part of the fruit corresponds to perfection and purity, while the inedible is connected to deficiency and impurity. This is parallel to the realm of action (Asiah), the lowest of the spiritual worlds - a world which is enveloped by materialism, just as the fruit is enveloped in its peel/shell.

**PARTICIPANT:**

As it is the virtue of a nut to be closed in from all sides, so too the Heavenly Chariot which goes out of the Garden of Eden is hidden on all sides. And just as the four sections of a walnut are united at one side and separated on the other, so are all parts of the Heavenly Chariot united in perfect union - and yet each part fulfills a specific purpose. ( Zohar - Shmot 15b)

**MEDITATION:**

As you toss away the peels and shells,  
see one of your negative middos /  
character traits (anger, impatience, etc.)  
being tossed away.

In your mind's eye, picture the bad midda  
as the shell / klippa.

Then, as you toss it away,  
feel the trait leaving you.

That's not the real you.

The real you is the fruit...

delicious and nourishing.

See the trait going into the garbage.

Pour the 2ND cup - pale pink  
(white with a drop of red)

## SPRING

### TRUNK

Pale pink flowers announce the beginning of spring.

Cherry and plum trees explode in delicate blossoms,  
just in time to feed the bees as they emerge from hibernation.

May our hopes blossom,  
as the winter thaws.

*Drink the 2nd cup with gratitude.*

*We now eat fruits with inedible pits.*

For example: dates, olives, peaches, plums, cherries. This stage is comparable to the realm of formation (yetzirah).

The edible parts of the fruit represent holiness. Pits represent impurities which have penetrated the holiness.

As the color of the wine begins to get darker, we can start to see potential turn into reality. The inedible part has now moved from the outside to the inside of the fruit. This is an advancement toward purity. In addition, the inedible part is no longer waste; it is a seed with potential to grow.

### MEDITATION:

Imagine one of your bad traits as this seed.  
Really see it.

Then, see that trait growing and developing  
into something great.

This trait no longer holds you back,  
but propels you forward.

Many great people have turned their faults into assets.  
You too can become great.

Pour the 3rd cup - dark pink  
(white with more red)

## SUMMER

### BRANCH

Spring to summer, our world will change in ways we cannot begin to imagine. Seeds will become saplings. Saplings will become towering trees.

We give thanks for the turning of the seasons, for the birth of spring, for the growth of trees.

*Drink the 3RD cup with gratitude*

*Now we eat fruits that are completely edible:*

For example blueberries, strawberries, grapes

**LEADER:** This is the realm of creation / Briaah, the highest level in the created world. (The three lower worlds - asiyah, yetzirah, and briaah - are referred to as ma'aseh bereishit, the act of creation. )

### MEDITATION:

Things are coming close to their full potential.

Even the seeds are now edible.

They not only have future potential, but are also delicious and ready to eat right now.

Think about an area of life you would like to improve.

Picture your ideal self.

Realize that's the real you.

actually be that person.

Act as if you're already there.

No barriers – the Divine spark flows freely.



## Pour the 4TH cup (red) AUTUMN

May all the sparks scattered by our hands,  
or by the hands of our ancestors,  
or by the transgressions of the first human against the fruit of the tree,  
be returned and included in the majestic might of the Tree of Life.

*Drink the 4TH cup*

When drinking pure red wine, we want to draw it down into Asiyah, corresponding to our body/  
actions.

### (8) CONCLUSION

#### BRACHA AHRONA

After enjoying all the wonderful pleasures that Hashem has given us, we complete the process with a meaningful, heartfelt thanks to the Creator.

#### PARTICIPANT:

Rashi explains: When the Land of Israel will give fruit bountifully, this is an indication of the impending redemption, and there is no greater indication than this.

#### CONCLUSION:

We come to the end of the Tu B'Shvat Seuda.

We have only touched the surface of the true meaning of the holiday  
and of the significance of trees and fruit in Hashem's creation.

# SHANA HABABA B'YERUSHALAIM!

## Next year in Jerusalem!

(The rest of the evening is spent singing and learning Torah.)

## A Four Fold Song

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There are many levels of song. There is one who sings the **song of one's own life**, and in herself she finds everything, full spiritual satisfaction. There is another who sings the **song of his people**. He leaves the circle of his own individual self, because he finds it without sufficient breadth, without an idealistic basis. He aspires toward the heights, and he stretches himself with a gentle love to the whole community of Israel. Together with her he sings her songs. He feels grieved in her afflictions and delights in her hopes. He contemplates noble and pure thoughts about her past and her future, and probes with love and wisdom her inner spiritual essence.

There is another who reaches toward more distant realms, and she goes beyond the boundary of Israel to sing the **song of humanity**. Her spirit extends to the wider vistas of the majesty of humanity in general, and its noble essence, aspiring towards humanity's general goal and looking forward towards its higher perfection. From this source of life she draws the subjects of her meditation and study, her aspirations and her visions.

**Then there is one who rises toward wider horizons, until he links himself with all existence, with all God's creatures, with all worlds, and he sings his song with all of them.** It is of one such as this that tradition has said that whoever sings a portion of song each day is assured of having a share in the world to come.

And then there is one who rises with all these songs in one ensemble, and they all join their voices. Together they sing their songs with beauty, each one lends vitality and life to the other. They are sounds of joy and gladness, sounds of jubilation and celebration, sounds of ecstasy and holiness.

The song of the self, the song of the people, the song of humanity, the song of the world all merge in her at all times, in every hour. And this full comprehensiveness rises to become the song of holiness, the song of God, the song of Israel, in its full strength and beauty, in its full authenticity and greatness. The name "Israel" stands for shir el the song of God. It is a simple song, a twofold song, a threefold song, and a fourfold song. It is the Song of Songs of Solomon, Shlomo which means peace or wholeness. It is the song of the Highest One in whom is wholeness.

— **Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook**, from *Orot Hakodesh, Volume II, pp.458-459*

## Silent Reflection and Call To Action

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Master of the Universe, grant me the ability to be alone;  
May it be my custom to go outdoors each day  
Among the trees and grass — among all growing things  
And there may I be alone and enter into prayer,  
To talk with the One to whom I belong.  
May I express there everything in my heart.  
And may all the foliage of the field, all grasses trees and plants  
Awake at my coming, to send the powers of their life into  
the words of my prayer  
So that my prayer and speech are made whole  
Through the life and spirit of all growing things,  
Which are made as one by their transcendent Source.  
May I then pour out the words of my heart  
Before your Presence like water, O God,  
And lift up my hands to You in worship, on my behalf, and  
that of my children!  
**Rabbi Nachman** *of Bratslav*

## SHEVAT MEDITATION NECHAMA SARAH BURGEMAN

From the seeds of our visions in Kislev,  
and navigating our truth  
through the dark snake like path of Teves  
we broke the ground,  
planted our seeds  
and now  
we begin to sprout forth  
a life renewed.

“Man is like a tree of the field”.  
Now we re-awaken  
to the reality that we are one among many trees  
in the groves of humanity.

With our branches ...  
to whom do we reach out?

Where do we draw new healthy boundaries?  
Tiferet is the sefirah of this month,  
our middle trunk expressed  
through our heart  
(as we radiate love to a world that needs healing)  
and stomach (the aiver / body part associated with this  
month of shvat)

Now is the time to re-center  
reclaim our internal harmony  
and hishtavus / equilibrium.

Connecting with our inner tzaddik  
(the letter of this month)  
we intuitively choose  
(from our gut)  
which food,  
which information and  
which stimuli is truly nurturing our soul.

Trust  
that the answers can be found within.  
Re-connect with our roots,  
the Torah  
-our family tree.  
Plant ourselves in the fertile ground of the living To-  
rah.

This is a special time of growth as we,  
like trees begin to sprout forth new blossoms.  
It's not easy to grow  
and it is usual to feel growing pains.

As we switch from our lone, focused itinerary  
of navigating through this world  
as we plant our seeds of truth  
extracted from pure visions  
we now spread our branches  
and reach out to each other.

We are not alone,  
yet we need to consider others  
as we root ourselves in reality.

The tension of embracing all of life  
while maintaining our center,  
balance and integrity  
is the point of growth.  
Tiferet

From the snake and the liver energy  
we now receive a special Divine effluence  
to re-find our center (tiferet)  
and listen to Hashem's messages  
through our stomach.

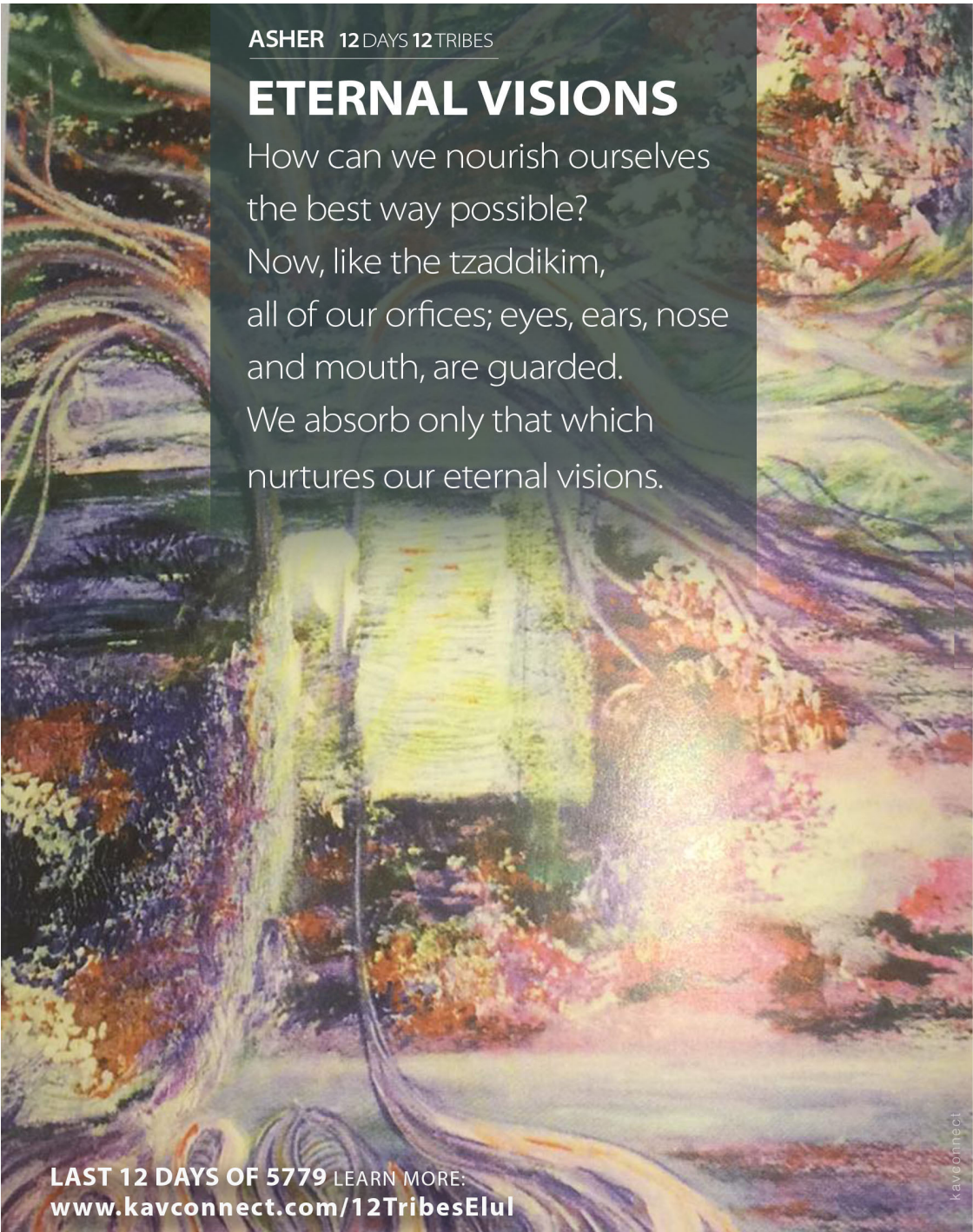
As we struggle with our growing pains  
we tune into what we need  
to nurture our growth.

We choose to ingest healthy food,  
healthy relationships  
inspiring Torahs  
which nurture our living relationship  
with (our self, each other, and) Hashem.

We are all tzidkanios All your people are tzaddikim' .  
Time to tap into  
and trust the tzad(ekes) within.  
Superimpose the letter tzaddik  
on your stomach and mid section (tiferet).  
Listen inside as we tap into our inner Asher  
from the language of osher-riches  
and ashrei happiness..

‘Who is rich? He who is happy with his lot.  
May we merit to experience  
and cultivate this inner peace  
and well being through this dimension of shevat

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ASHER 12 DAYS 12 TRIBES

## ETERNAL VISIONS

How can we nourish ourselves the best way possible?

Now, like the tzaddikim, all of our orifices; eyes, ears, nose and mouth, are guarded.

We absorb only that which nurtures our eternal visions.

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בס"ד



**SHEVAT  
SPIRITUAL  
PLEASURE**

**כתר**

**Tu Bshvat,**

*inspired by a shiur by Rabbi Yaakov Labinsky 2-10-20*

TuBShvat

Rosh Hashana Elanos (of the trees)

represents a marker in time

Sukkos 15 Tishrei / 15 Shvat

Exactly 4 months

1/3 33.33% marker of the year.

Creation was born with

chesed within gevurah

we need both

gevurah builds the vessel

in which to draw down the divine light,

chesed

the trees in Israel begin to blossom / today

blossoming / *chanata*

is the gematria of 72

which is also the gematria of chesed

is the expression of chesed

a birthing process

the surging within the tree

sap / saraf

the Chesed / sap within Gevurah/ trunk

this is the marker point of one third

we now have the ability to be disciplined,

and focused in our vision

for ourselves and Am Yisrael.

2 sides to creation coming together

As the sap reaches the juncture point of

bringing out the blossoms

TuBshvat is chesed

Rosh Hashana begins the first trimester

Representing the full potential of the year

We are now ending this 1st trimester period

signifying potentiality;

Is not easy

It has been dark

Tu Bshvat is the blossoming:

The manifestation of chesed;

the beginning of the 2nd trimester:

We will feel relief and release:

This is the time of the birth process when

The fetus is beginning to show;

Roots which have been percolating below the ground are becoming revealed

Our life force

this is a celebration

of our spiritual development of the year.

Is beginning to show

This is the key to its success

This point which chesed and gevurah come together

chesed pumps vitality

gevurah provides focus

the 2 come to work together

Tu Bshvat is telling us

We are now at a certain stage of

*hatchalis hagilui:*

beginning to reveal itself like

a little bump

we thank HKBH working together

Chesed and Gevurah

when we get to this juncture points

we thank Him immensely...

in the realm of pure awareness

a third / a third / a third

from pure potential

to partial actualization

to full actualization

the klal and the prat

a beautiful symmetry

how perfect and exquisitely beautiful!

raise your divine consciousness

so your actions get infused with meaning and purpose

each year we recreate ourselves

breaking down

to reveal H' more fully

SEE the blossoming of the trees in E"y

Hashem is saying

I want you to fall in love with me again

As the blossoms reveal chiyus/ life

as you eat the fruits

and say the brochas

know

we made it this far.

In dveikus

Create the moment

Of gratitude to Hashem

for bringing us to this juncture

may Your glory shine fully in this world

as we celebrate

thank H' for each marking point

Look at the world with an ayin tova

A good eye / heightened vision

we have been gifted beyond we can imagine

Feel the pleasure of where we are

Now

In this moment

may we be strengthened with H's chesed and rachamim  
HKB"H is behind us.

keep asking Him for guidance

may we fully experience the revelation

## MAN IS A TREE OF THE FIELD

*From TuBShvat Kavanot by Rabbi Avraham Sutton*

We read in the Mishnah that Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel disagree over whether Rosh Hashanah lallan (the New Year of the Tree) is on the first of the month of Shvat or the fifteenth thereof.<sup>i</sup>

We will explain their disagreement further on, but it is important first of all to ask why this holiday is celebrated in the middle of winter when there is absolutely no visible sign of anything happening to the trees. It would have been more appropriate to celebrate it in exactly one month and a half, at the beginning of Nissan (which is also called Aviv, Spring), when fruit trees bud with the first blossoms of spring. Indeed, that is exactly when we go out to the fields and bless Birkat Hallanot (the Blessing on the Trees) on two species of fruit trees.

According to Rashi, this is what the Talmud means when it asks why Shvat—which again is in the middle of winter—was chosen as the New Year of the Tree.

Rashi explains the Talmud's answer that it is precisely at this point that the ground has become saturated with the rains of the new year. As a result, seraf (sap) is beginning to rise up into and through the roots, which means that the fruit can now begin to bud.<sup>ii</sup> In other words, even though this is happening deep, deep underground, completely hidden from our eyes, and will not become apparent for at least another month and a half, new life is starting to come up through the roots which will eventually manifest full-blown as blossoms, buds, and fruits. This is sufficient reason to establish either the first or the fifteenth of Shvat as the New Year of the Tree. Amazing.

We will see below that this ties in exquisitely with why Beit Shammai rules that the first of Shvat is Rosh Hashanah la'llan, whereas Beit Hillel rules that it is the fifteenth. Basically, Beit Hillel consistently emphasizes the actual manifestation of a thing (yetziah la'poal, bringing forth or coming forth into actuality), whereas Beit Shammai emphasizes the stage or stages before actual manifestation (koach, and koach sh'be'koach, potential and potential of potential).

Second, it is important to notice that the Mishnah calls this day, not the New Year of the Trees, but the New Year of the Tree.

Of course, there is no question that this includes all trees. And even though the Tu B'Shvat seder emphasizes fruits that grow on fruitbearing trees, we must not miss the fact that all trees are included. Trees are amazing in so many ways. One way involves the process known as photosynthesis....

In addition to these amazing physical properties, it is known that the System of Ten Sefirot is called The Tree of Life. The highest sefirah, Keter, embodies the Will and Desire of the Infinite Ein Sof— what the Zohar calls Raava d'Raavin (the Will that includes all wills, the Desire that encompasses all desires). Chokhmah and Binah, corresponding to the two hemispheres of the brain, embody the overall plan that is needed to bring the original will/desire to fruition. The next six sefirot—Chesed, Gevurah, Tiferet, Netzach, Hod, and Yesod—embody the different emotional and practical qualities needed to bring the desire and plan closer and closer to actuality. Malkhut embodies the final product, the hotzaah la'poal (bringing forth to complete actualization) of the entire system.

It is known, as well, that man (humanity as a whole, and each individual) is also called a tree. This is hinted at in the verse, "**Ki ha'adam etz ha'sadeh**—for man is a tree of the field" (Deuteronomy 20:19).

Basically, according to Kabbalah, the image of a tree, like that of a building or any other complete system, structure, or gestalt, represents and is a metaphor for grasping the essential underlying unity of creation. Ha'olam (the world, creation in its entirety) can be and is likened to an adam gadol (immense man), ilan (tree), binyan (building), or a computer program. The main point is that creation is a holistic system wherein everything is interconnected. In addition, nothing in creation is static, and nothing happens by chance or by itself. There is order, design, meaning, and ultimate purpose in everything, and it is to our benefit to be aware of this to the greatest extent possible.