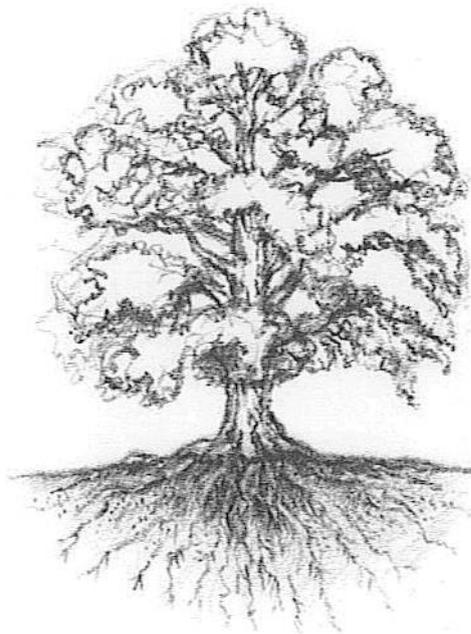




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# ט'ו בשבט

Tu B'Shevat Seder



# Tu B'Shevat Seder

## THE **FOUR WORLDS** OF TU B'SHVAT



|                   | FIRST WORLD   | SECOND WORLD   | THIRD WORLD  | FOURTH WORLD                 |
|-------------------|---|--|--|------------------------------|
| SPHERE (KABBALAH) | ASSIYAH } ACTION<br>עשיה  | YETZIRAH } FORMATION<br>יצירה  | B'RIYAH } THOUGHT<br>בריאה                                       | ATZILUT } SPIRIT<br>אצילות   |
| KAVANAH           | GROUNDEDNESS<br>DEFENSE   | GROWTH<br>CREATIVITY   | OPENNESS<br>ABUNDANCE  | MYSTERY<br>WHOLENESS         |
| ELEMENT           | EARTH   | WATER  | AIR  | FIRE                         |
| SEASON            | WINTER  | SPRING   | SUMMER   | FALL                         |
| SYMBOLIC FOODS    | Inedible outside,<br>edible inside:<br>orange, banana, walnut,<br>almond, pomegranate | Edible outside,<br>inedible inside:<br>Dates, olives,<br>apricots, plums | Entirely edible:<br>Blueberries,<br>strawberries,<br>raspberries | Only spiritual<br>sustenance |
| WINE              | WHITE   | 1/2 WHITE<br>1/2 RED   | 1/4 WHITE<br>3/4 RED   | RED WITH A<br>DROP OF WHITE  |
| ASPECTS OF SELF   | PHYSICAL  | EMOTIONAL  | INTELLECTUAL   | SPIRITUAL                    |

The first known Tu BiShvat seder, published in Venice in 1728 was titled *Pri Etz Hadar* – The Fruit of Splendid Trees.

## Cup 1 – Winter

We begin our telling with the origins of Tu B'Shevat.  
Before we begin to study, we drink our first cup of wine:

*From the Hazon Tu B'Shevat Seder*

The first cup we drink at the seder is pure white, like winter.

For the Kabbalists it represents the beginning – the time when creation began with the separation of light from darkness, a spark of divine creation. The white can also represent a seed or sapling, waiting patiently beneath the winter snow to fulfil its potential and grow into a beautiful tree.

We each fill our cup, say the blessing together, and then drink only half of the wine or juice in the cup:

Blessed are You, our Living God, Sovereign  
of the universe, who creates the fruit of the  
vine.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם.  
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן:

*Traditionally the first cup of wine is white to represent winter. The trees may be bare, the snow may have fallen. What parts of ourselves have been hibernating this year? What would we like to reawaken as the sap starts to flow again?*

## The origins of Tu B'Shevat

*Mishnah, Rosh Hashanah 1:1*

There are four heads of years:

On the first of Nisan, the new year for kings  
and for the festivals;

On the first of Elul, the new year for the tithing  
of animals;

Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Shimon say, on the  
first of Tishrei

On the first of Tishrei, the new year for years,  
for the Sabbatical years and for the Jubilee  
years and for planting and for vegetables

On the first of Sh'vat, the new year for trees -  
these are the words of the House of Shammai;  
The House of Hillel says, on the fifteenth of  
Sh'vat

ארבעה ראשי שנים הם:

באחד בניסן, ראש השנה למלכים  
ולרגלים.

באחד באלול, ראש השנה למעשר בהמה;  
רבי אלעזר ורבי שמעון אומרין,

באחד בתשרי. באחד בתשרי, ראש השנה  
לשנים לשמיטים:

וליובלות, ולנטיעה ולירקות.

באחד בשבט, ראש השנה לאילן, כדברי  
בית שמאי;

בית הלל אומרין, בחמישה עשר בו.

On the first of Sh'vat, the new year for trees.  
What is the reason?  
Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Oshaya:  
It is because most of the rains have passed

*Rashi comments:*  
'Since most of the winter's days have passed,  
now is the time for taking root, the sap ascends  
the trees, and fruit ripens from this moment on.'

באחד בשבט ראש השנה לאילן.  
מאי טעמא?  
אמר רבי אלעזר אמר רבי אושעיא: הואיל  
ויצאו רוב גשמי שנה ...

הִנֵּה מַה טוֹב וּמַה נְעִים שֵׁבֶת אָחִים גַּם יַחַד  
Hinneh mah tov umah na'im shevet achim gam yachad  
Behold how good and how pleasing for brothers and sisters to sit together in unity.



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ  
BA-RUCH A-TAH A-DO-NOI ELO-HAI-NU ME-LECH HA-O-LAM  
BO-RAI PRI HA-AITZ.  
Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of the Universe,  
Who creates the fruit of the tree.

*We eat fruits with a shell that is inedible (such as a pomegranate or tangerine).  
The kabbalists encourage us to use these fruits to reflect on the walls we put  
up around ourselves, and the barriers we erect that stop us from connecting  
to one another, to our higher selves, or to God.*

*If you eat a fruit you haven't yet eaten this Jewish year, you can recite this  
blessing:*

Blessed are You, our Living God,  
Sovereign of the universe, who has kept  
us alive and supported us and brought us  
to this season.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ  
הָעוֹלָם. שְׁהַחַיֵּנוּ וְקִמַּמְנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ  
לְזִמַּן הַזֶּה:



## Cup 2 - Spring

The second cup of wine is a mixture of white and red.

For the Kabbalists, the white represented the spark of Divine holiness, and the red, the flame of life which has begun to burn within that spark. The red can also symbolize the tree's growth as she is nourished in the spring. Beginning as a small sapling, she starts to gain her physical and spiritual strength from the four basic elements: earth, water, air, and fire. Her small trunk reaches toward the sun, her roots soak up water from the ground, her tiny leaves breathe in air, and the fire of life swells within her.

We add half a cup of red wine to the half cup of white wine that is already in our cups, so that the cup is again full.

Blessed are You, our Living God, Sovereign of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם.  
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

The Kabbalists were not the first to recognise the symbolic power of the produce of trees, and the intimate connection between the people, God and the land:

### The Seven Species

#### Deuteronomy 8: 7-10

The Eternal your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with streams and springs and fountains issuing from plain and hill; a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs, and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey; a land where you may eat food without stint, where you will lack nothing; a land whose rocks are iron and from whose hills you can mine copper. When you have eaten your fill, give thanks to the Eternal your God for the good land which God has given you.

כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מְבִיאֶךָ אֶל-אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה  
אֶרֶץ נַחְלֵי מַיִם עֵינַת וּתְהַמֵּת יִצְאִים בְּבִקְעָה  
וּבְהָרִ: אֶרֶץ חֹטֶה וּשְׂעָרָה וְגֶפֶן וּתְאֵנָה וְרִמּוֹן  
אֶרֶץ-זֵית וְדָבָשׁ: אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא  
בְמִסְכָּנֹת תֹּאכְלֶנָּה לֶחֶם לֹא-תִחַסֵּר כֹּל בָּהּ  
אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲבָנֶיהָ בְּרִזָּל וּמִהַרְרֵיהָ תִּחְצַב  
נְחֹשֶׁת: וְאָכַלְתָּ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת-יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל-הָאֶרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-לְךָ:

## The Four Species

### Leviticus 23: 39-40

Mark, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the yield of your land, you shall observe the festival of the Eternal to last seven days: a complete rest on the first day, and a complete rest on the eighth day.

On the first day you shall take the product of *hadar* trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Eternal your God seven days.

אֲדָבָר בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי  
בְּאַסְפְּכֶם אֶת־תְּבוּאֵת הָאָרֶץ תַּחֲגִּוּ  
אֶת־חַג־יְהוָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן  
שָׁבֹתוֹן וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי שָׁבֹתוֹן:  
וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן פְּרֵי עֵץ הָדָר  
כַּפַּת תְּמָרִים וְעֵנָף עֵץ־עֵבֶת וְעַרְבֵי־נַחַל  
וַיִּשְׂמְחֶתֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם שִׁבְעַת יָמִים:

We turn to fruit that grows closer to the earth - strawberries, blueberries, even bananas are considered to grow on a bush rather than a tree as the banana palm is hollow.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה

BA-RUCH A-TAH A-DO-NOI ELO-HAI-NU ME-LECH HA-O-LAM BO-RAI PRI HA-A-DA-MAH.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of the Universe,  
Who creates the fruit of the earth.

*Some fruits, including strawberries and blueberries, are completely edible. Figs are also included in this category. Midrash compares the Torah to a fig. Why? Other fruits have something inedible: dates have stones, grapes have seeds, pomegranates have skin. But every part of the fig is good to eat. What do we need in order to find wholeness for ourselves in the coming year.*



The almond tree blossoms  
and a golden sun does shine.  
Birds from every rooftop  
announce the festive time:  
Tu B'shevat is here, the festival of trees.

הַשְּׂקֵדִיָּה פּוֹרַחַת. וְשֶׁמֶשׁ פָּז זוֹרַחַת:  
צִפְרִים מְרֹאֵשׁ כָּל־גָּג  
מְבִשְׂרוֹת אֶת־בֵּית הַחָג:  
ט'וֹ בְּשִׁבְטֵי הַגֵּיעַ חַג הָאֵילָנוֹת:

The land cries out:  
the planting time has come!  
Let everyone take a sapling.  
Let us go to dig and plant.  
Tu B'shevat is here, the festival of trees.

הָאָרֶץ מְשׁוֹנְעֵת. הַגֵּיעַ עֵת לְטַעַת:  
כָּל־אֶחָד יִקַּח לוֹ עֵץ.  
בְּאֵתִים נִצָּא חוֹצֵץ:  
ט'וֹ בְּשִׁבְטֵי הַגֵּיעַ חַג הָאֵילָנוֹת:

Let us plant each mountain and hill  
from Dan to Be'er Sheva  
and we shall again possess our land - the land of  
olives, oil and honey.  
Tu B'shevat is here, the festival of trees.

נָטַע כָּל־הָהָר וְגִבְעָה. מִדָּן וְעַד בְּאֶרֶשׁ־שֶׁבַע:  
וְאֶרְצֵנוּ נוֹשֵׁב נִירָשׁ.  
אָרֶץ זֵית וְדִבְשׁ:  
ט'וֹ בְּשִׁבְטֵי הַגֵּיעַ חַג הָאֵילָנוֹת



Ha-sh'keidiyyah porachat, v'shemesh paz zorachat.  
Tsipporim meirosh kol gag m'vass'rot et bo he-chag.  
Tu bishvat higi'a chag ha-ilanot.

Ha-arets m'shavva'at, higgia eit lata'at.  
Kol echad yikkach lo eits, b'ittim neitseit chotseits.  
Tu bishvat higi'a chag ha-ilanot.

Nitta kol har vageva, middan v'ad b'eir sheva.  
V'artseinu shuv nirash, erets zeit yitshar ud'vash.  
Tu bishvat higi'a chag ha-ilanot.

Psalm 92

<sup>13</sup>The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree,  
grow tall like a cedar in Lebanon.  
<sup>14</sup>Planted in the house of their Maker, they  
shall flourish in the courts of our God,  
<sup>15</sup>bearing new fruit in old age still full of sap and still  
green,  
<sup>16</sup>to declare that the Creator is faithful, my Rock in  
whom there is no wrong.

**צב**  
<sup>ג</sup>צַדִּיק כַּתְּמָר יִפְרַח כַּאֲרֵז בְּלִבְנוֹן יִשְׁגַּח:  
<sup>ד</sup>יְשׁוּלִים בְּבֵית יְהוָה בְּחִצְרוֹת אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
יִפְרִיחוּ:  
<sup>ה</sup>עוֹד יְנוּבוֹן בְּשִׁיבָה דְּשָׁנִים וְרַעֲנָנִים  
יִהְיוּ:  
<sup>ו</sup>לְהַגִּיד כִּי־יָשָׁר יְהוָה צוּרֵי וְלֹא־עוֹלָתָהּ  
בוֹ:

<sup>1</sup>Mizmor shir l'yom ha-shabbat.....

<sup>13</sup>Tsaddik ka-tamar yifrach, k'erez ba-l'vanon yisgeh.  
<sup>14</sup>Sh'tulim b'veit Adonai, b'chatsrot eloheinu yafrichu.  
<sup>15</sup>Od y'nuvun b'seivah, d'sheinim v'ra'ananim yihyu.  
<sup>16</sup>L'haggid ki yashar Adonai, tsuri v'lo avlatah bo.



## Cup 3 - Summer

The Third cup:

This cup of wine is partly white and mostly red.

In the heat of summer our tree has rooted herself firmly in the earth, grown into its full being and is blooming. The shade, wood, herbs and flowers that are her simple and modest gifts to the earth and humankind allow us to now see her and embrace her as provider.

We each add more red wine to the mixture of wine that is already in our cup, so that the cup is again full, say the blessing together, and then drink all of the wine in the cup except for a small drop.

Blessed are You, our Living God,  
Sovereign of the universe, who creates  
the fruit of the vine.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ  
הָעוֹלָם. בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן:

*Some fruits have hard, inedible centres, such as avocado, peaches, plums, cherries. The Kabbalists ask us to reflect on what hardness we harbour in our own hearts, preventing us from offering loving kindness to the world.*

*A blessing after eating*

Blessed are You, our Living God,  
Sovereign of the universe, who creates  
many living things and their needs, with  
all that You created to keep each one of  
them alive.  
Blessed are You, the life of all existence.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ  
הָעוֹלָם.  
בוֹרֵא נִפְשׁוֹת רַבּוֹת וְחֶסְרוֹנָן.  
עַל כָּל־מַה־שֶּׁבָּרַאתָ לְהַחְיֹת בְּהֵם  
נִפְשׁ כָּל־חַי.  
בָּרוּךְ חַי הָעוֹלָמִים:

## Cup 4 - Autumn

What underlies our modern celebration of Tu BiShvat is our dependence –  
on the world and on God, and our responsibility for our world.  
Before we study, the fourth cup

Our final cup of wine is fully red.

For the Kabbalists, this cup represents the highest level of Creation, the red flame completely overpowers the white light of the beginning. Our tree is in her full autumnal glory. This deep red wine is the citrus whose fruits are now ripe, the etrog whose fragrance we enjoy in the autumn. The cup of red wine symbolizes the source of our strength, the source of our connection with the earth.

We fill our cups once again with red wine, adding to the small drop at the bottom that still contains some white, say the blessing together, and then drink the entire glass.

Blessed are You, our Living God,  
Sovereign of the universe, who creates  
the fruit of the vine.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ  
הָעוֹלָם. בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

*Genesis 2:15*

The Eternal God took Adam and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to till it and to tend it.

*Ecclesiastes (Kohelet) Rabbah on Ecclesiastes (Kohelet) 7:13*

CONSIDER THE WORK OF GOD; FOR WHO CAN MAKE STRAIGHT THAT WHICH GOD HAS MADE CROOKED?  
When the Holy Blessed One created the first human being, God took him and led him around all the trees in the Garden of Eden. God said to him, “See how beautiful and praiseworthy all of My works are? Everything I have created has been created for Your sake. Think of this, and do not corrupt or destroy my world; for if you corrupt it, there will be no one to set it right after you.

*Story loosely based on Talmud*

Two people were fighting over a piece of land. Each claimed ownership. To resolve their differences, they agreed to put the case before the rabbi. The rabbi listened but could not come to a decision, because both seemed to have a case. Finally he said, “Since I cannot decide to whom this land belongs, let us ask the land.” He put his ear to the ground, and after a moment straightened up. “Gentlemen,” he said “The land says that it belongs to neither of you – but that you belong to it.”

One day, the sage Honi was walking along a road and he saw an old man planting a carob tree. Honi asked him: "How many years will it take for this tree to give forth its fruit?" The man answered that it would take 70 years. Honi asked: "Are you so healthy a man that you expect to live that length of time and eat its fruit?" The man answered: "I found a world with carob trees because my ancestors planted these for me. So, too, will I plant for my children."



### **The Four Children**

What does the WISE child say? She says, "I will plant flowers and grow trees. I will not write on walls or throw rubbish around. I will teach my friends to look after the land we live in."

What does the WICKED child say? He says, "I will leave lights on, waste paper, throw food away, trample on flowers, and throw litter."

What does the SIMPLE child say? She says, "Why is it my job to look after the world?"

And the ONE WHO DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO ASK must be shown by those who are older how to protect the world they live in and how to make beautiful things grow.

*We finally turn to seeds, in which so much potential is held.*

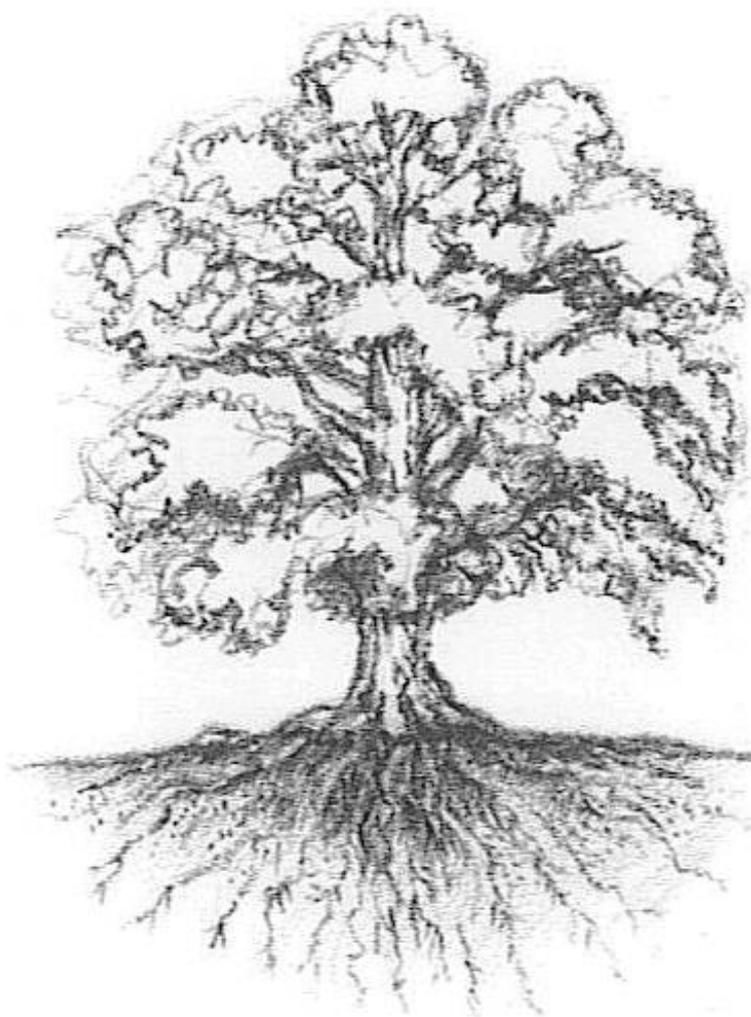
*Hope like trees starts out in little packages and blossoms if nurtured, just like people. In every seed there is the promise of new life. May we, in our lives, plant seeds of wisdom, friendship and peace.*

*May the year ahead be fruitful and blessed.*

## A Closing Prayer

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*



*Written and Compiled by  
Rabbi Josh Levy, adapted by Janet Berenson, Jess Gold, Rabbi Mark Goldsmith and  
Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers*

*Introductions to the cups of wine and chart of Kabbalistic four worlds taken from Hazon Tu  
BiShvat seder:  
<http://www.hazon.org/educational-resources/holidays/tu-bishvat/>*