

A Tu B'Shevat Hagada

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 enter into prayer
To talk to the One I belong to,

- Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlov

for P'nai Or



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A Tu B'Shevat Hagada for P'nai Or

Tu B'Shevat is one of four New Year celebrations recorded in the Talmud. The others are *Rosh Hashana*, marking the beginning of spiritual renewal, the first of *Nisan*, celebrating the beginning of the rule of the kings of Israel; and the first of *Elul*, celebrating the tithe of cattle.

All four new years mark the cycles of the Earth and celebrate our connection to these cycles. Jewish tradition is deeply rooted in natural cycles, giving us an opportunity to identify with nature on ever deeper and more profound levels. As we observe and celebrate the cycles of sun and moon, we deepen our awareness of the sacred dimension of life: We celebrate and make holy all the cycles, so that we will live in harmony with them, and so that their flow of blessing will not cease.

On *Tu B'Shevat*, the New Year for Trees, we join in eating the fruits of the earth to renew our connection to the Source of Life from which these fruits spring. We marvel at the exquisite balance of elements that sustains all life, and are called yet again to preserve this balance, not destroy it .

The *Tu B'Shevat* celebration was created in the 16th century by the Jews of *S'fat* (Safed) in Palestine. *S'fat* had become a center for the learning of Kabbalah, the traditions of Jewish mysticism. In *S'fat* a whole community gathered to begin a great work. Reeling from the destruction of the Jewish community of Spain, we wanted to learn how alienation and exile had entered the world, so that we could become conscious agents of healing. The community of *S'fat* taught us to awaken the Divine Presence, the *Shekhinah* within and around us, with prayer, mitzvot, meditation, celebration and song. By opening our hearts we bridge the gap between heaven and earth.

There in *S'fat*, the great kabbalistic master Isaac Luria, known as "The *Ari-za!*" (The Lion whose memory is a blessing) explained that every physical object or being owes its existence to the **spark of holiness** embedded within it. When we eat food, our bodies extract the vitamins and minerals, but it is not these that keep our souls alive. The human soul recognizes and extracts the holy spark, and is nourished.

On *Tu B'Shevat* we rejoice in the fruits of the Land which are filled with sparks of the Divine Presence. These fruits are like batteries of spiritual energy which stir our souls with yearning to reconnect with the Source of Creation.

Tu B'Shevat is our day set aside for celebrating the gift of these fruits. On this day, the 15th of the month of Shevat, the *saraf* (sap) begins to rise in the trees of *Eretz Yisrael*, the first step in the long process of producing a ripened fruit.

Outside, freezing winds howl, for the 15th of Shevat is called 'the cold of winter' (*Babba Metzia 106b*): yet inside the tree the first warm fluids of springtime begin their upward flow.

There is also a spiritual dimension in this sap, for the word *saraf* literally means "fire" or "burning energy," alluding to the sacred sparks contained in abundance in the fruits of the Holy Land. These sparks can ignite (our) souls with a burning desire to rise ever higher and closer to God. *Tu B'Shevat* is the day when God begins to deposit the first sacred sparks into the trees from where the fruits of the coming year will emerge.

The great hasidic master Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov writes in his classic work *B'nei Yissoschor*: '..on this day the *saraf* begins its rise, and the outcome depends on our spiritual merit. Pray fervently on this day... and your prayers will literally bear fruit.'

Food is life. Food is fuel. Food is fire-calories for the cells, holy sparks for the soul. We must teach ourselves how to savor food's spirituality... by remembering the Divine Source of all food, and by leading our lives in a manner that does credit to the sacred sparks we absorb into our bodies from the food we eat. -Rabbi Avrohom Chiam Feuer

We come together to celebrate the sacred spark in these fruits. May our souls be refreshed, delighted and strengthened for the year ahead!

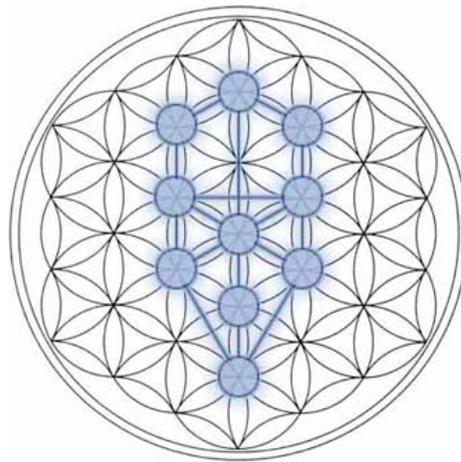


Come Learn!

Our people's ancient wisdom teaches us:
The flow of Divine Energy into this world
is like the flow in a tree.

Its limbs and branches are wondrous pathways.
Through them God-energy flows like sap
calling all life into being,
again and again,
renewing all life at every moment.

It is called the TREE OF LIFE.



On Tu B'Shevat, the New Year of Trees,
The TREE OF LIFE
renews the flow of life-energy
to the universe.

These fruits connect us to this awesome moment.
We join to encourage the flow of life
that renews and heals the world,
by blessing these fruits and eating them with
full awareness.

Together we revitalize and uplift our world
and our lives.

Our people's ancient tradition teaches further:

How can we understand with even deeper wisdom,
the Flow of God-energy into the World?



Come Learn!

The Flow has four levels:
Four "Worlds" of Spiritual Energy!

The first is
Assiyah:
the world of doing, physical matter, and earth.

Search deeper to find
Yetzirah:
the world of emotion, dreams, the subconscious,
and water.

Travel further to find
Briyah:
the world of air, the creating intellect,
the flash of pure knowledge
when our mind and the Divine mind touch.

Peer beyond.
to glimpse *Atzilut*:
the blinding flash of pure God-energy surging into
Creation;
the world of fire.

During this celebration our souls travel
through these worlds:
tasting their fruits,
drinking their juice and wine,
singing and dancing their songs,
and sharing their teachings.

THE FIRST WORLD

ASSIYAH

This is the world of the physical,
of making and doing and having;
the world of earth and matter.

This is the world of separations and distinctions,
In *Assiyah* we become keenly aware of our physical self:

So wonderful!

Such a gift!

We look around us and we see other extraordinary beings,
amazing people,
all kinds of creatures,
plants, rocks, shells,
grains of sand...

We know that each is unique...
and yet
we feel how close we all are
to the earth that we come from!

We look around us....

We are the *B'nei Adama*:
The Children of the Earth!

COME LEARN THE TORAH OF ASSIYAH!

We enter into the energy of *Assiyah*
through its juice or wine and its fruits.

The cup of *Assiyah* is white

The rains of the first weeks of *Shevat* have soaked the hillsides of *Eretz Yisrael*. Spring has come to the land. First to welcome the new season is the almond tree. All over the countryside the almond trees burst into their white garments. Fragrant white flowers cover their branches.

The almond tree carries a deep teaching in its name: *Shah-keyd*

The root letters ש ק ד *sh-k-d* mean "to be diligent" and "to be wide awake". The almond tree is the first to awaken. Its blossoms are the blossoms of the promise that God's purpose in creation will be fulfilled.

We fill our glasses with pure white juice or wine.

The white wine is our commitment to equal diligence: to keep the God-energy flowing so it never departs from the earth.

Before we drink

We Praise the Source of Creation
for Wine and the Juice of Grapes

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch Ata יהוה Eloheynu Melech Ha-Olam Borei Pri Ha-Gafen

A Fountain of Blessing are You, Life-Breath of Being, Our God and Guide, Sourcing Power of Time and Space, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

The nuts and fruits of
Assiyah
have hard, inedible outer shells or skins.

These include all kinds of nuts, coconuts, peanuts,
pomegranates, oranges, grapefruits...

In the world of *Assiyah*,
we have heightened awareness of our physical fragility.
We seek the protection the earth provides:
external protection,
like the hard nut shells which surround the soft insides,
because we know ourselves to be vulnerable.
In *Assiyah* we keep both our physical self
and our inner self well defended.

**As we eat these nuts and fruits we enter the world of
protection.**

These questions are raised for us:

When, how, and why might I be I under-defended and
inappropriately vulnerable?

When, and how and why am I hyper-defended, and how does this
over-protection cause me harm?

When and how do I keep my need for boundaries and protection in
healthy balance?



Before we taste the nuts and fruit we recite a bracha:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ / הָאֲדָמָה

Baruch Ata יהוה Eloheynu Melech Ha-Olam

Borei Pri Ha-Etz (for fruit/nuts from trees)

Borei Pri Ha-Adamah (for fruits from the other greenery or roots)

A Fountain of Blessing are You, Life-Breath of Being, Our God and Guide, Sourcing Power of Time and Space, Who creates the fruit of the tree (or) earth .

*In the world of Assiyah
we remember our obligation to protect and repair the earth*

A patch of tropical rainforest 4 miles square contains:

- 1500 species of flowers
- 750 species of trees
- 125 species of mammals
- 100 species of reptiles
- 42,000 species of insects

30 acres of rain forests are destroyed every day.

***When The Holy One created the first human beings,
The Holy One led them around the Garden of Eden
and said:***

"Look at my works!

See how beautiful they are - how excellent!

For your sake I created them all.

***See to it that you do not spoil and destroy my world;
for if you do, there will be no one else to repair it."***

(Midrash Kohelet Rabbah 1 on Kohelet 7:13, c 800 CE.)

THE SECOND WORLD

YETZIRAH

This is the world of feelings and emotions,
the world of dreams and the subconscious,
the fluid and flowing world of water.

In *Yetzirah* we become aware that there is another realm of consciousness alongside the physical and factual. Deeper meanings lie below the surface of things. In the waters of our subconscious images form and dissolve. We dream. We feel. We have ways of knowing that do not always lend themselves to rational explanation. From the collective subconscious of our people we tap ancient mythic stories that resonate within us. In *Yetzirah* we dive into Torah as if into a dream.

In Yetzirah
the protection we need
is not for our bodies, but for our hearts.

It is, after all, a risk to open up,
to peel off protective shells.

Inside us our feelings flow like streams,
and are as deep as oceans.

We enter into the energy of *Yetzirah*
through its juice or wine and its fruits.

As the sun warms the earth, the almond blossoms are joined by other budding trees. The fig leaves are sprouting their furry tips. The fields are strewn with wildflowers, chiefly cyclamen, whose stalks are filled with sweet juice. The anemone, with its tiny red flowers blooms, as does the fragrant narcissus. Gradually the land changes its colors from white to white-red.

The cup of *Yetzirah* therefore darker:
white into which we pour a few drops of red

Before we drink

We Praise the Source of Creation for Wine and the Juice of Grapes

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch Ata יהוה Eloheynu Melech Ha-Olam Borei Pri Ha-Gafen

A Fountain of Blessing are You, Life-Breath of Being, Our God and Guide, Sourcing Power of Time and Space, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

COME LEARN THE TORAH OF YETZIRAH !

In Yetzirah

we eat fruits with hard pits inside.

We have let go of our outer shells.

We have softened, become more fluid.

*We have opened ourselves to the wells of emotion,
and we begin to reach out with our love.*

In Yetzirah we still need protection for our hearts.

As we eat these soft fruits with their protected centers, these (and more) questions are raised for us: When and how am I willing to share my deep feelings and dreams? Do I let myself know them, or do I shield even myself? How do I keep my heart protected? What are my fears?



Before we taste the fruits of *Yetzirah*,

We Praise the Source of Creation
for the fruits of trees
and the fruits of the earth.

A Kavannah for our bracha

When a *bracha* is recited before eating,
then the act itself becomes a spiritual undertaking.

Through the *bracha*,
the act of eating becomes a contemplative exercise.
Just as one can contemplate a flower or a melody,
one can contemplate the act of eating.

One opens one's mind completely
to the experience of chewing the food,
and fills the awareness with the taste and texture.

One then eats very slowly,
aware of every nuance of taste.

-Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי תְּעֵץ / הָאֲדָמָה

Baruch Ata יהוה *Eloheynu Melech Ha-Olam*

Borei Pri Ha-Etz (for fruit/nuts from trees)

Borei Pri Ha-Adamah (for fruits from the other greenery or roots)

A Fountain of Blessing are You, Life-Breath of Being, Our God and Guide, Sourcing Power of Time and Space, Who creates the fruit of the tree (or) earth.

THE THIRD WORLD

BRIYAH

Briyah takes us deeper and higher, beyond the realms of the world, into the realm of air. This is the world of pure thought, of creating with the mind: the world of the "aha!"

In *Briyah*, in the image of the Holy One-Creator of the All-ness, we also create: new ideas, new visions, new ways of looking at ourselves and the world. In *Briyah* the Divine Mind and our mind touch. We float free of mundane habits of thinking. Our minds and souls expand with wisdom.

As we enter the world of *Briyah* we feel much more unencumbered. Here we can be wide open and yet we need no protection!

We know that we are part of the dance of all life.
Shekhinah energy flows
through us and around us,
in an endless embrace.

COME LEARN THE TORAH OF *BRIYAH*.



**We enter into the energy of *Briyah*
through its juice or wine and its fruits.**

As the summer arrives in *Eretz Yisrael* days are lengthening and the earth is warming. The land slowly becomes bright red. On the slopes of the hills the tulips, red poppies and pheasant's eye burst forth. On the plains the gladiolus, crowfoot and purple iris grow. Fiery yellow chrysanthemums join a rainbow of wild orchids. The birch tree, laurel and oak are now covered with blossoms.

The air too is filled with movement. Yellow wagtails, finches and other birds are migrating north. The storks arrive from their autumn stay in the Sudan. The bee-eater and turtledove are also returning from their migrations, just as the sparrows and the swallows have completed their nests and are hatching their young.

The air is moist and warm. Water, sunshine and time combine to call forth new life.

**We fill our cups for the third time, still darker.
The cup of *Briyah* is red, with a dash of white.**

**Before we drink the cup of *Briyah*
We Praise the Source of Creation
for Wine and the Juice of Grapes**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch Ata יהוה Eloheynu Melech Ha-Olam Borei Pri Ha-Gafen

A Fountain of Blessing are You, Life-Breath of Being, Our God and Guide, Sourcing Power of Time and Space, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

In Briyah
we eat the fruits that need no protection,
and are soft throughout

We have touched the free spirit at our center,
and we are wide open.
Our souls reach out to one another without fear.
Our hearts open to love.
Our minds expand with new wisdom, and we float free.

As we eat these unprotected fruits, these are some of the questions they raise for us: What memories and fears may still be holding me back from sharing my full self? What has it been like when I have shared the full me? What wisdom has come to me at those moments?

Before we taste the fruits of Briyah
We Praise the Source of Creation
for the fruits of trees
and the fruits of the Earth

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ / הָאֲדָמָה

Baruch Ata יהוה Eloheynu Melech Ha-Olam

Borei Pri Ha-Etz (for fruit/nuts from trees)

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A Fountain of Blessing are You, Life-Breath of Being, Our God and Guide, Sourcing Power of Time and Space, Who creates the fruit of the tree (or) earth.

THE FOURTH WORLD

ATZILUT

Atzilut ~ The highest level~ Perfection.

All obstacles are gone now as we move closer (*atzel*)
and closer to the Radiant Source.

*Atzilut is the flame,
the fire of Creation Energy,
the fire in which all dissolves into the
Eternal One.*



Come Learn!

The Holy Zohar teaches

that a kiss is the merging of one breath with another. Love begins with physical attraction. Then as lovers begin communication, they begin to speak. As they get closer they stop speaking and are merely aware of each other's breath. Finally, they come closer still, and their communication becomes a kiss. At this moment of the kiss they are aware of each other's life-force. Kissing is a natural consequence of the increased intimacy that begins with speech. The two mouths come closer and closer and progress from speech to breath to kiss. Thus there are four levels of intimacy in love: Physical attraction (*Assiyah*), speech (*Yetzirah*), breath (*Briyah*) and kiss (*Atzilut*). **These same levels exist in the relationship of a person and the Divine.**

(R. Aryeh Kaplan)

Atzilut is the kiss!

***Atzilut is our most intimate communication
with the Life-Force itself***

***We enter the energy of Atzilut through
its cup of wine or juice.***

As spring slips into summer, the air of *Eretz Yisrael* becomes sharp and clear as a diamond. The sun's heat increases, until the air above the fields shimmers in fluid waves. Wheat and oats stretch towards the sunlight. The earth hums with the richness of life. Here, in the height of summer, the life-force of the world pulses full strength. Already plants are preparing new seed to get ready for the next cycle of nature.

The cup of Atzilut is the cup of

Yichud

union

and

Shalom

wholeness

completion

fulfillment and peace

Before we drink the cup of *Atzilut*

We Praise the Source of Creation for Wine and the Juice of Grapes

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch Ata יהוה Eloheynu Melech Ha-Olam Borei Pri Ha-Gafen

A Fountain of Blessing are You, Life-Breath of Being, Our God and Guide, Sourcing Power of Time and Space, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

The fruit of *Atzilut* is spiritual perfection.

For this world we enjoy all kinds of heavenly deserts!

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא מִיְי מְזוֹנוֹת:

Baruch Ata יהוה Eloheynu Melech Ha-Olam Borei Minei M'zonot

A Fountain of Blessing are You, Life-Breath of Being, Our Power, Power of Space-Time, who creates all kinds of pastries.

Blessings
for endings and new beginnings

May it come to pass,
Holy One,
Fountain of Life,
Source of All

that by virtue of the fruits we have
eaten and blessed,
the sparks of Divine Energy
in all these fruits will be purified
and released into the flow of holiness.

May the trees be charged with a profusion of
fruits that grow and flourish,
from the beginning of this new year
until its end,
for good,
blessings,
life
and
peace.

Amen.

My Roots Go Down (a jazzy song with movement)

My roots go down, down into the Earth (3x)

My roots go downnnnnn.

Might branches go high, high into the Sky (3x)

My branches go hiiiiigh.

Like A Tree

Like a tree I reach for the light

And my roots go oh so deep (2x)

Etz Chayyim Hee - She is a Tree of Life (2x)

And I wrap my arms around her!

A Doo Wop Tu B'Shevat Song

by Rabbi Yaakov Gabriel

Tuby Shevat Tuby Shevat O Tuby Tuby Shevat (3x)

Tuby Shevat ba dam bum

Call my yuntif Tu B'Shevat, tell you why,

It means the winter is passing by.

The Earth is fertile and the air is clean..

That's my yuntif dream!

Earth has been our mother though history

She rocks the cradle with mystery,

We need to heal 'cause we've hurt her so..

We need to let her grow!

If we're ecologically conscious here,

The trees will have a very good year.

We need to wake up from our selfish trance!

The Earth still has a chance!

Call my yuntif Tu B'Shevat can't you see

The little blossom on the almond tree?

We'll make a seder. we'll sing and dance

For nature to advance!

