

Read me first!

Welcome to the Tu B'Shvat Seder Toolkit, version 1.2. This toolkit is freeware. Where noted, the authors must be credited whenever the materials herein are used. The original compiler of this sidur wrote much of this material and wishes to remain anonymous.

The goal in creating this toolkit was to put an entire Tu B'Shvat seder in electronic form. It was also to put an alternative Tu B'Shvat seder in electronic form. Ultimately, I hope to be putting such texts in editable electronic form, but with the scarcity of software to handle Hebrew and English together, the ugliness of the output of most such programs, and the Babel-ous lack of standards between the various packages, I decided, instead, to create something "half-tech" that could be printed out and incorporated in a traditional "cut 'n paste" Hagaddah. The sole advantages of this form are in portability, and (for most computer users) ease of printing fresh copies, rather than being forced to rely on xeroxes of xeroxes of xeroxes. Think of this file as a very thin book :-).

If you have questions, corrections, or materials that you would like to add to future versions of this toolkit, please contact me:

ari@ivritype.com

Addenda: At the back of this Hagaddah are some alternate forms of some of the blessings. There are no graphics in this toolkit because I had none whose artists I could verify to ask whether or not they wished to see entire works put into public domain. With text, excerpts, properly cited, credit the author and direct attention to their full works. An illustration is, by itself, a full work. If someone has created graphics that they would like to see embodied in future versions of this, or similar projects, do contact me.

I would like to add thanks to Pat Cohn who provided a copy of the seder, to Carol Delton, cantor extraordinaire, who dug up legible, correct Hebrew versions of some of the songs herein, along with much good advice, and to Lilith Morgan (oakleaf@well.com) and the other beta testers of the various versions of this toolkit.

Technical stuff: This text was composed in Quark XPress 3.3 using Adobe Palatino, some oddities from Adobe's Woodtype 2 collection, and a customized version of Henri Friedlander's Hadassah typeface. The current online versions are being made available in Adobe Acrobat format, hopefully properly byteserving thanks to a friend with version 3.x of the Distiller. Let us hope all goes well! For those in the know, use of XPress means that, yes, I typed all of the Hebrew in backwards and carefully, hand-kerned, each and every vowel into place (well, some of the work was done by the kerning tables, but not as much as you'd think). I did it this way because I wanted things "just so:" Text whose layout, line width, placement of vowels, letter-spacing, mixing of Hebrew and English, etc., are as close to the ideal as possible. I chose these particular typefaces because they are commonly available, sturdy, xeroxable, and aesthetic. For those who wonder at the juxtaposition of Hebrew and English, yes, it does mean that these are commonly done poorly. Careful study of the polyglot classics will show that the backing of Hebrew and transliteration, or backing of Hebrew and English, is the most readable (and comfortable to the

viewer) way to place these languages on a page. A personal agenda in the creation of this text is to put Hebrew done well into people's hands, and to encourage others to do as well (and, without incredible difficulty, better).

If you want a good Hebrew-English (and more) word processor (and don't like editing your Hebrew in reverse!), you should explore Nisus (Macintosh) or Dagesh (Windows). The latter comes with a lovely collection of Hebrew truetype fonts, as well. FontWorld, up in Rochester, New York, makes a wide variety of Hebrew fonts for Mac and Windows, which can be purchased through Precision Type (they've got an 800 number) of Long Island, New York.

Known Bugs: The "shin" appears to be hinted poorly, and I have not yet managed to fix that. At lower resolutions (<400dpi), it will appear larger than the other letters. I am working on a fix.

Warning: We Jews have a special relationship with books and with the printed word, and with G-d. When prayerbooks or bibles grow old, for instance, they are buried rather than thrown out. Fundamentalists will want to be careful. Printouts of this material have the same halachic status as any other prayerbooks and must be disposed of according to Jewish practice. Your local rabbi can help, both in terms of ritual, and in storing the material until a burial takes place.

It should be noted that the compiler of this toolkit feels that laser printouts are laser printouts. He carefully recycles such paper, as he does with all paper generated by his laser printer, with no further ritual. I have included the warning by request.

—Ari Davidow,
ari@ivritype.com
חשוון תשנ"ה October 1994
version 1.2, January 1998

סדר
תיקון
ט"ו בשבט

A Seder
for
Tu B'Shvat

This Hagaddah is dedicated to Tamar Kaufman.

Feminist, journalist, and friend, Tamar died of brain cancer in late 1994 (<http://www.well.com/user/ari/tamar/tamar.html>).

After a delightful stint as a farrier following high school, Tamar emigrated to Israel during the Seventies where she became an activist in the Israeli Feminist movement. She also experienced her first bout with cancer. By the mid-Eighties, Tamar was living in the Bay Area, writing for the Northern California Jewish Bulletin. In 1987 she played a major role in helping me start the Jewish discussion SIG on the WELL, still one of the largest moderated online SIGs, and one of the most diverse. She was also active in the writers' guild on CompuServe, and in real life. Several years ago, Tamar became (and continues to be) my co-moderator and co-conspirator. Six years ago she encountered cancer a second time. That appeared to be defeated, but in 1993, it returned.

Tamar leaves behind a husband, Daveed Mandel, two brothers, and many devastated friends.

The family asks that donations be sent to:

The Tamar Kaufman Memorial Fund
New Israel Fund
PO Box 91588
Washington, DC 20090-1588

Donations made in Tamar's name will be used to help promote the status of women in Israel.

Introduction

Why do we observe Tu B'Shvat with a Seder?

The mystical sages of Safed in the 16th century understood God as a tree of life, whose roots were in the heavens, and whose branches extended toward earth, bringing all of us life and blessing. The New Year of Trees was a holy time, an opportunity to partake of the fruit of the trees, and to thank God for the wonder of renewed life for the universe. They organized a “Seder for Tu B'Shvat” at which they drank four cups of wine, and many different kinds of products from the Land of Israel.

In 1653 the first liturgy, a collection of readings and rituals for Tu B'Shvat, was published in Salonica (Greece) under the name *Pri Etz Hadar* (פרי עץ הדר—Fruit of the Goodly/Citrus Tree). Although the identity of the author is unknown, it is generally assumed to have been Haim Vital, a student and disciple of the Ari (Rabbi Isaac Luria), reknowned kabbalist of Safed.

The basic concept behind the ritual is to increase the flow of God's emanations/blessings into the world. By eating the various kinds of fruits with the proper intention, we aid in the refructification of our world from the divine Tree of Life.

In Salonica two legends are related concerning Tu B'Shvat. The first states that an angel hits the head of every plant on this day saying to it: “Grow.” The second believes that, on this day the trees embrace. Anyone seeing that embrace will have his or her wish fulfilled.

Some barren Jewish women, believing in the power of sympathetic magic, would plant raisins and candy near trees, or embrace trees on Tu B'Shvat, at night, praying for fertility. Young girls eligible for marriage were brought to trees where an imitation marriage was enacted. If, shortly after, buds were found on the tree to which

they were 'married' they knew their turn would soon come. In some areas the Tu B'Shvat celebrations were held in the homes of families who had lost a beloved during the past year, to remind of the prohibition of mourning on that day, and also of the renewal of life from the trees being parallel to the resurrection.

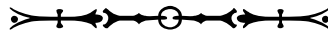
In southern and rural Morocco, the rich would invite the whole town to their homes and fill their hats with fruit. In Persia there was a custom of climbing on the roof and lowering an empty basket through the chimney which would be returned laden with fruit. In Turkey there was a custom where each member of the family would have a special relationship with one species of fruit. In Persia and Afghanistan, Jews on Tu B'Shvat would purchase new fabrics from which clothing for Pesach would be sewn. Another custom performed 'in anticipation' was to eat jelly made from the last Sukkoth's etrog, and then to pray for etrogim of fine quality for the coming Sukkoth.

Opening Dance

On seeing fruit trees blooming for the first time in the year

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,	Barukh ata Adonai,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,	Eloheinu melekh ha-olam
שֶׁלֹא חָסַר בְּעוֹלָמוֹ דָּבָר,	sheh lo kheesehr b'olamo davar,
וּבָרָא בּוֹ בְרִיּוֹת טוֹבוֹת	u'vareh vo briyot tovot
וְאֵילָנוֹת טוֹבִים	v'ilanot tovim
לְהַנּוֹת בָּהֶם בְּנֵי אָדָם.	l'hanot ba-hem b'nei adam.

Blessed ... Universe, who has withheld nothing from this world and has created beautiful creatures and beautiful trees in it, so that we may delight in them.



(Lighting the Sabbath candles, and L'Cha Dodi, are done only if the holiday falls on the Sabbath)

Upon lighting the Sabbath lights

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,	Barukh ata Adonai,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,	Eloheinu melekh ha-olam
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו	asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק	v'tzeevanu le-hadleek
נֵר שֶׁל־שַׁבָּת.	ner shel-Shabbat.

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe who has sanctified us with His commandments and ordained that we kindle the Sabbath light.

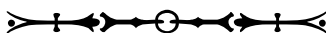
L'kha Dodi

לְכָה דוֹדֵי לְקִרְאֵת בְּלָהּ L'kha dodi, likrat kalah
פְּנֵי שַׁבָּת נִקְבְּלָהּ P'nai Shabbat ni-kabla

לְקִרְאֵת שַׁבָּת לְכוּ וְנִלְכָה Leekrat Shabbat L'khu v'nelkha
כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה kee hee m'kor habrakha
מֵרֹאשׁ מְקֵדֶם נְסוּכָה mey-rosh mee-kedem n'sukha
סוּף מַעֲשֵׂה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה תִּחְלָה. sof ma'aseh b'makhshavot t'khila.

Come, my beloved, with chorus of praise,
Welcome Bride Sabbath, the Queen of the days.

Sabbath, to welcome thee, joyous we haste;
Fountain of blessing from ever thou wast—
First in God's planning, thou fashioned the last,
Crown of His handiwork, chiefest of days.



(continue with the service here)

According to Kabbalah, there are four worlds or levels of creation: azilut (emanation), bria'ah (creation), yetzira'ah (formation), and assiyah (action—our world of physical reality). The world of azilut is purely spiritual and cannot be symbolized in any concrete way. The world of bria'ah is symbolized by ten fruits that have neither pits on the inside nor shells on the outside—that is, they are totally edible: grapes, figs, apples, etrogim (citrons), lemons, pears, raspberries, blueberries, carobs, and quinces. (Seeds are considered edible in this system.) The world of yetzira'ah has pits inside, but the outside can be eaten. Its ten fruits are olives, dates, cherries, jujubes, persimmons, apricots, peaches, loquats, plums, and hackberries. The world of assiyah has an outside shell that must be discarded and an inside

that can be eaten. Its ten fruits and nuts are pomegranates, walnuts, almonds, pine nuts, chestnuts, hazelnuts, coconuts, Brazil nuts, pistachios, and pecans. The symbolism, in brief, is as follows. Those parts that can be eaten represent holiness, the inedible parts—that is, the pits—represent the impure, and the shells serve as protection for the fragile holiness inside.

(from *The Jewish Holidays*, by Michael Strassfeld)

The categories of fruits may symbolize three kinds of interpersonal situations also. Entering an unfriendly or anxiety-producing atmosphere, one is guarded, externally armored, as it were. The shell is on the outside, like the fruits of *assiyah*.

In friendlier surroundings, but superficial or entered with some reservations, there is more interpersonal contact and exchange, even some degree of affable sharing, but the very private self remains surrounded by the inner shell, like the fruits of *yetzirah*.

In certain special situations of deep trust and intimacy, however, the inner self is revealed and shared with another; at this moment of I-Thou there is no inner shell, like the fruits of *beriah*.

At several Tu B'Shvat seders in recent years, we have spent time reflecting individually on interpersonal situations during the preceding year that exemplified each of these categories, and each time most of us present have been nourished by the discoveries we've made.

(E. G. *) *possibly
Everett
Gendler,
possibly cited
in *The Jewish
Holidays*.
If anyone can
confirm, please
let us know so
that we can
correct this.

Song—Nad Elan

נָד אֵילָן	Nad eelan
צִמְרָתוֹ לִטֵּף הָרוּחַ	Tzamarto leetef ha-ru'akh
וְנָשַׁק עָלָיו.	Ve'nashak alav.
שָׁם בְּגֵן	Sham bagan
יִפְתִּי קִטְפָה תִפְוֹחַ	Yafati katfah tapuakh
וְצַחֲחֹקָה שְׁנֵהָב.	Utzkhokah—shenhav
לוֹ אֲנִי אֵילָן — הִיא רוּחַ	Loo ani eelan he ru'akh
וְנָשַׁקָה אֵף לִי.	V'nashkah af li
עוֹד תִּקְטֹף אוֹתִי תִפְוֹחַ	Of tiktof oti tapuakh
חֵנְנִי ...	kheenani, kheenani.
הוּ, מָתַי הַיּוֹם יִפְוֹחַ	Ho matai hayom yafuakh
וְאֶשָּׂא קוֹלִי —	v'esah koli
יִפְתִּי רְדִי לְשׁוֹחַ	yafati, redi lasuakh
בְּגֵנִי ...	begani, begani.

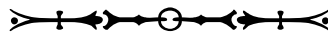
The tree is swaying / The wind caresses the treetops
And kisses its leaves / There, in the garden
My beauty picked an apple / And her smile is ivory
If I were a tree and she the wind
She would kiss me too, / Or she may pick me
A lovely apple / Oh, when will the day end
And I will start to sing
My beauty, come take a walk / In my garden.

—Words: M. Dor; Music: J. Hadar

The Kabbalists of Safed used to drink four cups of wine, each one redder than its predecessor. So today, following this tradition, we drink our first cup which is white wine representing the winter season at its peak.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, Barukh ata Adonai,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן. borai pree ha'gafen.

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.



“Let the trees rustle in the summer on the mountain, on the slope of the valleys; let them fringe the roads and give shade by day to the wanderer and shelter to the tired laborer.”

Another lost cite. Anyone able to help?

וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ Ve-haya k'etz shatul
עֵץ שְׂתוּל עַל-מַיִם etz shatul al mayim

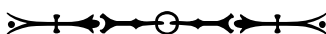
And he shall be as a tree planted by the waters

—Jeremiah 7:8

Once when Rav Kook was walking in the fields, lost deep in thought, the young student with him inadvertently plucked a leaf off a branch. Rav Kook was visibly shaken by this act and, turning to his companion he said gently: “believe me when I tell you that I never simply pluck a leaf or a blade of grass or any living thing unless I have to. Every part of the vegetable world is singing a song and breathing forth a secret of the divine mystery of the creation.” The words of Rav Kook penetrated deeply into the mind of the young student: For the first time he understood what it means to show compassion to all creatures.

—Wisdom of the Jewish Mystics, pp. 80

The Kabbalists also spoke of *tikun olam*, the repair of the world. We live in a time when the natural world, too, needs repair.



Our situation as a species is the following: the life-support systems of this almost impossibly beautiful planet are being violated and degraded, resulting in damage that is often irreparable, yet only a small proportion of humans have engaged their consciousness with this crisis. In our own country, our farms are losing four billion tons of topsoil a year; the groundwater and soil are being poisoned by pesticide run-off and toxic dumping; the groundwater table itself, accumulated over thousands of years, is being recklessly depleted to serve the profits of agribusiness and developers; the nuclear power industry has generated much more than enough plutonium to poison every creature and ecosystem on Earth and has no idea how to store it safely; we're losing 200,000 to 300,000 acres of wetland habitat every year; and the songbirds, which used to herald the coming of spring, are now perishing in large numbers every winter when they migrate to the devastated land in Central and South America that formerly was majestic tropical rain forest.

—Charlene Spretnak

Biblical law required Jewish farmers annually to contribute ten percent of that year's orchard harvest to the Temple*. The question arose in which year does one include the fruits in the process of growth during portions of consecutive years. We learn from the Tosefta (Sh'viit 4:20) that the Rabbis fixed Tu B'Shvat as the determining date—all fruits beginning to flower before that date were considered to be produce of the previous year (from the past Tu B'Shvat to the present Tu B'Shvat); those which blossomed after Tu B'Shvat would be counted as produce of the new year.

*actually, the Kohanim and Leviim?

עֲנֵה דוּדֵי וְאָמַר לִי	'Ana dodi v'amar lee
קוּמֵי לָךְ רַעֲיָתִי	koomee lakh ra'yati
יִפְתֵּי וּלְכִי־לָךְ:	yafatee u'l'khee-lakh.
כִּי־הִנֵּה הִסְתָּו עֶבֶר	Kee-heenay ha-stav 'avar
הַגֶּשֶׁם חָלַף הַלָּךְ לֹו:	ha-geshem khalaf halakh lo.

Come with me, my love, come away
 For the long wet months are past,
 the rains have fed the earth

—Song of Songs, 2:10–11, Marcia Falk translation

Following the tradition of Rabbi Isaac Luria, the Kabbalists in their Tikun Tu B'Shvat divided the fruits to be consumed into three groupings according to the three levels of physical creation. The simplest level, Olam Ha'asiyah, is that in which we assemble and shape artifacts without changing the form of the raw material. An example would be the construction of a wooden table. This lowest level was considered to be the most vulnerable and in need of protection. It was symbolized by those vulnerable fruits which possess an outer protective covering, usually peeled off and discarded. It is fruits of this category which we eat now.

Meditation

There never seems to have been any doubt that Rocks came before living things—that they were in a sense, the first beings. In the oldest myths Rocks are tricky objects. Sometimes alive, or at least inhabited by spirits, they could move around and turn into other things. Monotheism quieted them down. They became Rocks of Ages, symbols of heavenly permanence and power, eminences for saint and prophet to stand on, foundations for temples and churches. Evolution seems to have reversed this trend towards quiescence and Rocks are on the move again. Although we no

This meditation is sweet, but the original compiler and I are not sure where it came from. By us, this doesn't feel particularly Jewish! This would be a good place to insert your own mediation.

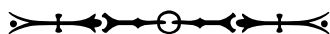
longer see them as animate, we know that some of them once were alive, that many will be alive again as their elements break down into soil and are taken up by plants, and that they are constantly on the move. Rocks have regained respect in the past century or two. They are not just inert stuff to be blasted through or piled up into buildings. They have a slow life of their own. They form, mature and age, and their movements affect the lives of plants and animals enormously.

—David Rains Wallace, *The Klamath Knot*

Song: U'moshe hikah al selah

וּמֹשֶׁה הִכָּה עַל צוּר	U'moshe hikah al tzur
(2) בַּמַּטֵּה הִכָּה עַל סֵלַע	ba-mateh hikah al selah (2)
וַיֵּצְאוּ מִמֶּנּוּ מַיִם	va-yatzu me-menu mayim
הַפֵּלֵא וּפְלֵא (3)	Ha-flei va'feleh (3)
אָמֵן סֵלָה	Amen, selah

And Moses struck the rock / With a staff he struck the stone
And there came forth water / A marvelous deed, a wonder
Amen, Selah.



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,	Barukh ata Adonai,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,	Eloheinu melekh ha-olam
בוֹרֵא פְרֵי הָעֵץ.	borai pree ha'etz.

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the tree.

Oranges are eaten

כִּי יְהוּה אֱלֹהֶיךָ	For the Lord your God
מְבִיאֲךָ	is bringing you
אֶל-אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה	into a good Land
אֶרֶץ	a Land
נַחְלֵי מַיִם	of brooks of water,
עֵינֹת וְתַהֲמַת	of fountains and depths
יִצְאִים בְּבִקְעָה וּבְהָרִים:	springing forth in valleys and hills,
אֶרֶץ חֹטֵה וּשְׁעָרָה	a Land of wheat and barley
וְגִפְנֵי וְתַאֲנָה	and vines and fig trees
וְרִמּוֹן	and pomegranates,
אֶרֶץ-זֵית וְדִבְשׁ:	a Land of olive trees and honey,
אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא בְּמִסְכַּנּוֹת	a Land wherein
תֹּאכְלֶבֶה לֶחֶם	you shall eat bread
לֹא-תִחַסֵּר כֹּל בָּהּ	without scarceness,
אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲבָנֶיהָ בְּרֹזֶל	a Land whose stones are iron
וּמִהַרְרֵיהָ	and out of whose hills
תִּחְצַב נְחֹשֶׁת:	you may dig brass.
וְאָכַלְתָּ וְסָבַעְתָּ	And you shall eat and be satisfied,
וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת-יְהוּה אֱלֹהֶיךָ	and bless the Lord your God
עַל-הָאֶרֶץ הַטֹּבָה	for the good Land
אֲשֶׁר נֹתֵן-לְךָ:	which is being given unto you.

—Deuteronomy 8:7-11

Yetzirah

The world of water

Yetzirah is the world of formation and birth. Water, the fluid element, gives shape to all matter. Our hearts are folded rivers; our bones are spiralling vortices; knots in trees are recycling eddies.

From water, the heart, pours forth blessing and emotions. At this time we honor the watery ones: the phytoplankton who produce most of our oxygen, the sea creatures: dolphins, whales and seals subject to our unconscious wastefulness, the salmon whose lives are interrupted by dams....

ושבתם מים בששון U-shav-tem mayim b'sasson.
ממעניי הישועה. mee ma'ayanay ha-y'shu'a.

And you shall draw water with gladness from the wells of salvation.

Rain Prayer

With all our Being, all our Heart
we Pray for Rain
With all our Intention, all our will
we Pray for Rain
Hear us, Creator, answer Our Prayer
Bless us with ample Rain for this year
Hear us, Creator, answer Our Prayer
Bless us with Rain

—words, song by Andrea Beth Damsky

The olive appears early in the Bible, playing an important role in the flood story. It is a symbol of renewed life and peace.

עצי זתים עומדים Atzay zayteem omdeem

The olive trees are standing.

צדיק בתמר יפרח Tzadeek k'tamar yeefrakh

כארז בלבנון ישגה: K'erez bal'vanon yisgeh.

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

—Psalms 92:13

ברוך אתה יי, Barukh ata Adonai,

אלהינו, מלך העולם, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam,

בורא פרי העץ. borai pree ha'etz.

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the tree.

Dates are eaten

Choni, the righteous man, was journeying on the road and he saw a man planting a carob tree. He asked him, “how long does it take for this tree to bear fruit?” “In about 70 years,” answered the man. “But you are so old, you will never taste its fruit.” “You are right, but I have eaten the fruit of trees that have been planted before I was born. I plant for my daughters and sons, granddaughters and grandsons.”

(Choni sat down to have a meal and sleep overcame him. As he slept, a rocky formation enclosed upon him which hid him from sight and he continued to sleep for seventy years. When he awoke he saw a man gathering the fruit of the carob tree and he asked him, “are you the man who planted the tree?” The man replied, “I am his grandson.” Thereupon Choni exclaimed: “It is clear that I slept for seventy years.”

—Talmud, Ta’anit 223a (Talmud)

Commentary on carob in Europe

For us, Judaism is the carob tree planted by others: our mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, and the many Jews who lived and developed our tradition. It is now for us to plant for ourselves by connecting and making traditions passed on to us our own. In addition, we plant for the future by adding our energy and creativity to Jewish life in its many forms and styles.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, Barukh ata Adonai,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ. borai pree ha’etz.

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the tree.

Carob is eaten

Our second cup of wine is white, but tinged with red. It symbolizes the beginnings of springtime and the earth's reawakening. In Israel, pink and white flowers dot the hills and mountains at this season of the year. As we drink the wine, let us think of one hope or wish we have for the coming spring.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, Barukh ata Adonai,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן. borai pree ha'gafen.

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Briyah

The world of air

The third level of creation was designated by the Kabbalists as Olam HaBri'ah. We eat the entire body of the fruit which represents this world. This fruit is both wholly soft so that it can be wholly taken in by us, and is yet wholly strong, structured so that it needs no outer hard shell nor inner hard pit: its special strength is present in its every portion.

In Arabic, the wind is “ruh,” but the same word also means ‘breath’ and ‘spirit.’ In Jewish tradition, the word “ruach” has been broadened to include concepts of creation and divinity.

Without wind, most of Earth would be uninhabitable. But with the wind, Earth comes truly alive. Winds provide the circulatory and nervous systems of the planet, sharing out energy and information, distributing both warmth and awareness, making something out of nothing.

And what is there to life if man cannot hear the lonely cry of the whippoorwill or the arguments of the frogs around a pond at night? The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of the pond, and the smell of the wind itself cleansed by a mid-day rain, or scented with pinyon pine. For all things share the same breath—the beasts, the trees, the man.

—Chief Seattle, 1855 (letter to President Pierce)

Time is the continuous loop, the snakeskin with scales endlessly overlapping without beginning or end, or time is an ascending spiral if you will, like a child's toy Slinky...

The power we seek, too, seems to be a continuous loop. I have always been sympathetic with the early notion of a divine power that exists in a particular place, or that travels

Here's another one we consider mysterious. Annie Dillard's thoughts are beautiful, but we do not see where they fit into Jewish tradition...

about over the face of the earth as a man might wander—
and when he is “there” he is surely not here. You can shake
the hand of a man you meet in the woods; but the spirit
seems to roll along like a mythical hoop snake with its tail
in its mouth. There are no hands to shake or edges to untie.
It rolls along the mountain ridges like a fireball, shooting off
a spray of sparks at random, and will not be trapped,
slowed, grasped, fetched, peeled, or aimed.

This is the hoop of flame that shoots the rapids in the creek
or spins across dizzy meadows; this is the arsonist of the
sunny woods: catch it if you can.

—Annie Dillard (Pilgrim at Tinker Creek)

... the original
compiler now
notes that this
feels more like
a negation of
the שמע!

נשמת כל חי תברך Nishmat Kol Khai T'varekh

Our every breath we breathe could surely be a wonder.
If we could only taste every sensation passing through us,
taste every breath we pulled into our lungs,
were we to refuse to allow any joy or pain
brought to any of our senses
to pass through us unexamined and unappraised,
then every breath,
every movement, every thought,
every apprehension, every fear and every caress
would be a prayer of awe.

Let us feel it all, let us embrace it all, let us love it all
even that which we hate.

Then we would not only eat, we would taste,
we would not only hear, we would listen,
we would not only be awake, but be aware
we would not only be standing, but be upstanding,
then we would not only be released from prison,
we would be free:

Free to say our thanks, free to feel our love, free to feel our
pain, free to struggle, free to submit,
and free to inspire the breath of life infusing all matter,
all energy in all time and space.
When that breath is our breath,
Then every breath will speak
the secret holy name

ישתבח שמך לעד גרלנו Yish'tabakh shimkha l'ad goraleynu

Could I repress my praise if I wanted to?
And if I could,
would it stop the irrepressible river of praises,
songs and celebrations
that open our mouths as we our witness
the infinite energy and power which are set before us
every moment of every day?

All I can say
is that blessings are not enough,
and praisings lack the scale to embrace our awe
of just this one humble drop of universe
which has been ours to examine.

ברכות והודעות Brakhot v'hoda'ot

Blessings and many thanks from now and forever more.
Blessed is the majestic and mighty,
the delicate and fragile,
the melody and song,
the power, the beauty, the life of all worlds!

—David Cooper © 1988

2x {	Spirit of the (Earth, Water, Air, Holy)
	Carry me
	Spirit of the (Earth, Water, Air, Holy)
	Carry me home
4x {	Spirit of the (Earth, Water, Air, Holy)
	Carry me home to myself

הלליה Halleluyah

Psalm 150

הלליה	Halleluyah (4)
הללו אל בקדשו	Hallelu (2) el b'kadsho
הללוהו ברקיע עזו:	Halleluhu (2) birkiya uzo
	Halleluhu (4)
הללוהו בגבורתיו	Halleluhu (2) big'vurotav
הללוהו כרב גדלו:	Halleluhu (2) krov gudlo
	Halleluhu (4)
הללוהו בתקע שופר	Halleluhu (2) b'teika shofar
הללוהו בנגבל וכנור:	Halleluhu (2) b'neivel v'chinor
	Halleluhu (4)
הללוהו בתוף ומחול	Halleluhu (2) b'tof umachol
הללוהו במנים ועגב:	Halleluhu (2) b'minim v'ugav
	Halleluhu (4)
הללוהו בצלצלי שמע	Halleluhu (2) b'tsil-ts'lei shama
הללוהו בצלצלי תרועה:	Halleluhu (2) b'tsil-ts'lei tru-a
כל הנשמה תהלל יה	Kol han'shama (2) t'hallelya (2)
הלליה:	Kol han'shama, t'hallelya halleluyah (2)

Praise God, sun and moon
Praise God, all you stars of light
Praise God, heavens of heavens
and you waters that are above the heavens.

Let all praise the name of the Lord
Who commanded and they were created.

Praise God from the earth
O monsters and all deeps,
fire and hail, snow and vapour
storm wind fulfilling 'the word.'
Mountains and all hills,
fruitful trees, and all cedars,
beasts and all cattle;
creeping things and winged birds,
kings of the earth, and all peoples

... Let them praise the Name of the Lord;
Whose name alone is exalted;
Whose majesty is glorified above the earth
and the heaven.

—from Psalm 148

The most widespread custom for the celebration of Tu B'Shvat is the enjoyment of many different fruits, the number and combination of species varying widely among communities. Many observe the custom of eating 15 types in honor of the name of the day (לכבוד שמו של יום). Another popular practice is the maximizing of the number of fruits eaten: וכל האדמה הרי זה משובח

We say שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ (shehechyanu) over a new fruit—one which we have not eaten since at least last fall:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,	Barukh ata Adonai,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,	Eloheinu melekh ha-olam
שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ. וְקִיַּמְנוּ.	shehechyanu v'kiyuimanu
וְהִגִּיעֵנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה.	v'higiyanu lazaman ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has kept us alive, preserved us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.

כְּשׁוֹשָׁנָה בֵּין הַחוֹחִים	K'sho-sha-na bain ha-cho-chin
כֵּן רַעֲיָתִי בֵּין הַבָּנוֹת:	ken ra-ya-ti bain ha-banot.
כְּתַפּוּחַ בְּעֵצֵי הַיַּעַר	K'ta-poo-ach ba-atzei ha-ya-ar
כֵּן דּוֹדֵי בֵּין בָּנִים	ken do-di bain ha-ba-nim

Like a rose among the thorns / such is my love among the daughters. / Like an apple in the trees in the forest / is my love among the sons.

Meditation on safety and courage

On seeing fruit trees blooming for the first time in the year

לֹא־יִשָּׂאוּ גּוֹי אֶל־גּוֹי חֶרֶב Lo yis'oo goy el goy cherev
וְלֹא־יִלְמְדוּן עוֹד מִלְחָמָה: v'lo yilm'doon od milchama.
וַיָּשְׁבוּ אִישׁ תַּחַת גַּפְנוֹ V'yashvu ish tachat gaf-no,
וְתַחַת תְּאֵנָתוֹ וְאֵין מַחְרִיר v'tachat t'eynato, i'eyn machrir.

The original compilers asks, "Is this the right season to include this bracha?"

The fig is mentioned in the Bible sixteen times together with the vine as the most important fruit of Eretz Israel. The fig motif illustrates an era of peace and security in the past, and an ideal vision for the future.

Nation shall not take up sword against nation / they shall never again know war. / But every person shall sit under her grapevine / or fig tree with no one to disturb her.

—Micah 4:3–4

Sing together:

לֹא־יִשָּׂא גּוֹי אֶל־גּוֹי חֶרֶב Lo yisa goy el goy cherev
וְלֹא־יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה. v'lo yilm'du od milchama.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, Barukh ata Adonai,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ borai pree ha'etz.

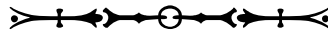
Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who
creates the fruit of the vine.

Figs are eaten.

We now lift our cups a third time with wine of crimson hue,
representing the beginning of Spring with its promise of bountiful
grain harvest.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, Barukh ata Adonai,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן. borai pree ha'gafen.

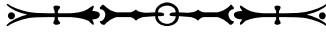
Blessed are You, Adonai, Source of all life. You create the
fruit of the vine.



Today, like every other day, we wake
up empty and frightened.
Don't open the door to the study and
begin reading.
Take down the dulcimer.

Let the beauty we love be what we do.
There are hundreds of ways to kneel
and kiss the ground.

—Rumi, Open Secret



Then the Lord God formed the human
of the dust of the ground,
and breathed into the nostrils
the breath of life;
and the human became a living soul.

—Genesis II:7

“The breath of life” ... of course that is Its name. We
breathe, and the trees breathe. We breathe in what the trees
breathe out. So we breathe each other into existence: We,
and the galaxies, and the arrays of science and the codes of
law and the plays of music, we are breathing each other
into existence.

And the breath, of course, goes in a cycle.

—Arthur Waskow, Rainbow Sign

Atzilut

The world of fire

There's a fire alive within
every living cell of every being. The
carbons we eat burn in the presence
of the oxygen we breathe giving us
the energy to be. This spark of
light is our connection to
the Divine.

The fourth Kabbalistic category of creation was spiritual and therefore unrepresentable by physical food. עולם העצילות Olam Ha'atzilut dealt with God's love, mercy, wisdom, and other essential and omnipresent realities which we perceive with our hearts rather than our five senses.

Ayts Chaim

עץ־חַיִּים הִיא לְמַחְזִיקִים בָּהּ. Ayts chayim hee la-machazikim ba
וְתִמְכֶּיָה מֵאֲשֶׁר: Ve'tomchay-ha me'u'shar.

She is a tree of life to all who hold fast to her, and all of her supporters are happy.

⋈ Candles ⋈

Tribute to the Trees

I sing to the trees
I sing to the trees
I sing to the trees
I sing to the trees

I sing to the trees that feed me
I sing to the trees that shade me
I sing to the trees that house me
I sing to the trees that be

I sing to the trees in flower
I sing to the trees of green leaves
I sing to the trees of beauty
I sing to the threes that be

—words, song by Andrea Beth Damsky

The original
compiler says,
“This reminds
me of the Reb
Nachman /
Naomi Shemer
song:

דע לך שכל
רועה ורועה
יש לו ניגון
מיחד משלו.

Every part of the vegetable world
is singing a song
and bringing forth a secret
of the divine mystery
of the creation.

—Rav Kook

No man is sterile. Every soul is pregnant with the seed of insight. It is vague and hidden. In some people the seed grows; in others it decays. Some give birth to life. Others miscarry it. Some know how to bear it, to nurse, to rear an insight that comes into being. Others do not....

—Abraham Heschel

1. If you were unblocked by fear and in possession of all your powers, what would you do to heal our world?
2. What specific projects could actually be accomplished through you in the next year's time?
3. What strengths and resources do you have now that would help you do that?
4. What will you need to learn or acquire?
5. What obstacles are you likely to put in the way of fulfilling this goal?
6. What can you do in the next 24 hours, no matter how small the step, that will help you reach that goal?

—Joanna Macy

We now fill our cups a fourth and final time with the wine red in color representing the ruling of Spring and the first hints of summer with its mature fruits whose blossoms were born on Tu B'Shvat.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,	Barukh ata Adonai,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,	Eloheinu melekh ha-olam
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.	borai pree ha'gafen.

Blessed are You, Adonai, Source of all life. You create the fruit of the vine.

Connections are made slowly, sometimes they grow underground. You cannot tell always by looking what is happening. More than half a tree is spread out in the soil under your feet. Penetrate quietly as the earthworm that blows no trumpet. Fight persistently as the creeper that brings down the tree. Spread like the squash plant that overruns the garden. Gnaw in the dark and use the sun to make sugar.

Weave real connections, create real nodes, build real houses. Live a life you can endure: make love that is loving. Keep tangling and interweaving and taking more in, a thicket and bramble wilderness to the outside but to us interconnected with rabbit runs and burrows and lairs.

Live as if you liked yourself, and it may happen: reach out, keep reaching out, keep bringing in. This is how we are going to live for a long time: not always, for every gardener knows that after the digging, after the planting, after the long season of tending and growth, the harvest comes.

—Marge Piercy, from *The Seven Pentacles*

Blessing over Challah

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,	Barukh ata Adonai,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,	Eloheinu melekh ha-olam
הַמוֹצֵיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.	ha-motzee lechem meen ha-aretz.

Blessed are You, Adonai, Source of all life. You bring forth bread from the earth.

Closing song

Addendum

Feminized forms of some blessings

ברוכה יה שכינה, B'rukha yah shekhina,
אלהינו, מלכת העולם, Eloheinu malkat ha-olam
בוראת פרי העץ. borait pree ha'etz.

Blessed art Thou, Divine Presence, Queen of the universe,
who creates the fruit of the tree.

ברוכה יה שכינה, B'rukha yah shekhina,
אלהינו, מלכת העולם, Eloheinu malkat ha-olam
בוראת פרי הגפן. borait pree ha'gafen.

Blessed art Thou, Divine Presence, Queen of the universe,
who creates the fruit of the vine.

ברוכה יה שכינה, B'rukha yah shekhina,
אלהינו, מלכת העולם, Eloheinu malkat ha-olam
המוצאת לחם מן הארץ. ha-motzeyt lechem meen ha-aretz.

Blessed art Thou, Divine Presence, Queen of the universe,
who brings forth bread from the earth.

⌘ from Marcia Falk ⌘

A blessing over wine

נְבָרֶךְ אֶת עֵין הַחַיִּים N'vareykh et eyn ha-khayim
מְצַמִּיחַת פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן Matzmikhat P'ri ha-gefen
וְנִשְׁזֹר אֶת שְׂרִיגֵי חַיֵּינוּ v'nishzor et s'rigei khayeynu
בְּמַסֹּרֶת הָעָם: b'masoret ha-am.

Let us bless the source of life that nurtures fruit on the vine
as we weave the branches of our lives into the tradition.

נְבָרֶךְ אֶת מְעִין חַיֵּינוּ B'rukha yah shekhina,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מַלְכַת הָעוֹלָם, Eloheinu malkat ha-olam
שֶׁחַיֵּינוּ וְקִיּוּמָנוּ. shechchiyanu v'kiyuimanu
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה. v'higiyanu lazaman ha-zeh.

Let us bless the flow of life that revives us, sustains us, and
brings us to this time.

The blessings on this page were originally part of a broadside
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