



CONGREGATION SHAAREY ZEDEK'S

PLOWSHARES AND PRUNING HOOKS

A TU B'SHVAT HAGGADAH



THESE TREES

Tu B'Shvat is called Chag Ha'Ilanot, the Holiday of the Trees, but the Mishnah (Rosh HaShanah 1:1) refers to the holiday as the New Year of the TREE. Why does the Mishnah address the holiday in the singular?

Tonight we come together with an answer. We study and learn so that we might recognize that each of us is a tree, capable of creating, capable of providing goodness and nourishment, and capable of beautifying the world around us. We honor the world of Creation by becoming partners with the Creator, to celebrate the Earth and to give thanks for all of her gifts.

This haggadah is meant to guide us on the journey, but it can only function as an open fence to the elaborate and limitless Garden that is this holiday. The true fruits of Tu B'Shvat hang from the conversations that take place around our table, from the songs, poems, and moments of understanding that enter our hearts through the coming together of family, friends, and strangers who will not be strangers for long.

This evening we continue the tradition established by Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (the Arizal) and his disciples in the hills of Tzfat some 500 years ago, so that we may offer thanks to a world of beauty, of mystery, of holiness. Today is the holiday of the trees, and today we join them in their song.

-Rabbi Yoni Dahlen

ROOTS

The holiday of Tu B'Shvat was purely agricultural until the Middle Ages, when Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, the founder of Lurianic and modern Kaballah, instituted a communal seder, composed of symbolic food and drink, with the aim of reaching a mystical state of Divine Communion.

The seder was designed to spiritually move the individual and the group from human purity to the fire of Ein Sof, the One Who is without end. This was done through meditation, mindfulness, song, and ecstatic prayer.

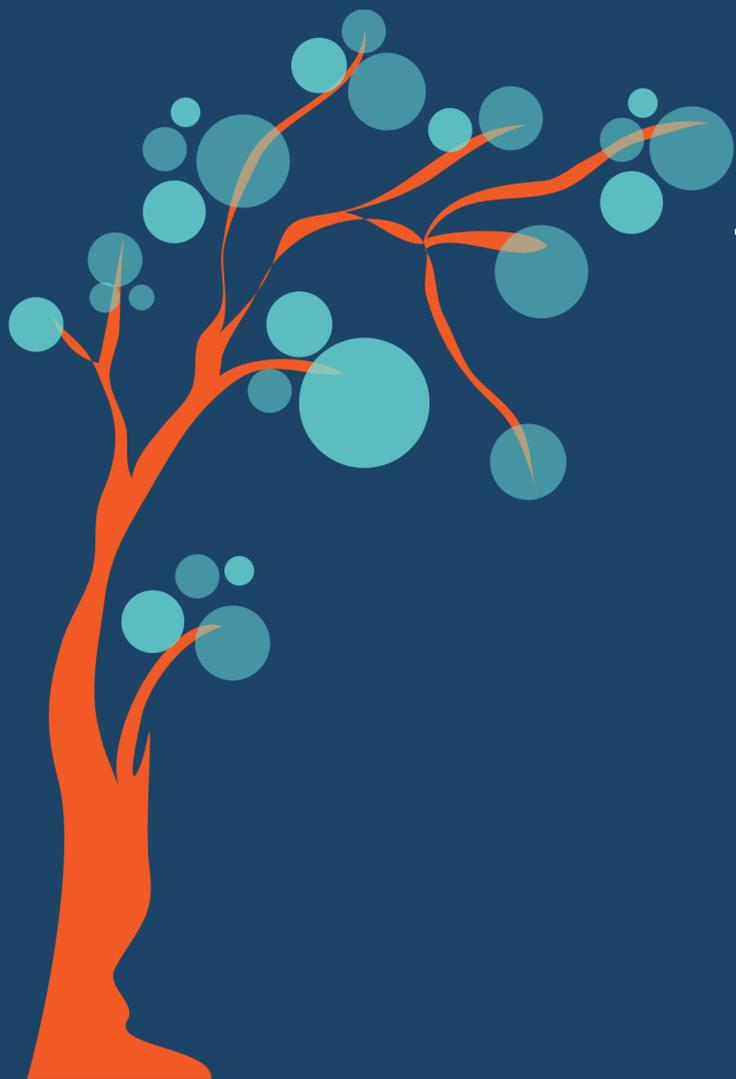
Today our seder emulates the same spiritual ascent with its own interpretation and path toward the Heavens. In our seder, we move through four "worlds" represented by Kabbalistic terms of deep significance: asiyah, or action; yetzira, or formation; briyah, or knowledge; and atzilut, or spirit.

Each world is meant to build on the one that came before it, and the imagery is one of a plant growing from a protected seed to a full and blossoming tree reaching for the light of G-d.

To illustrate this symbolic and spiritual growth, we drink four cups of wine with different qualities (from pure white to almost completely red) and eat fruits and nuts that embody the mystical qualities inherent to each "world."

Like the Pesach seder, there is really only one rule: to ask, to question, and to grow! As we learn in the Mishnah of Pirkei Avot, the bashful child never learns. Some of the ideas, practices, and text studies in this seder will be difficult, awkward, and challenging, but if we ask questions and look for clarity, then we will all be on the journey together, ready to tackle any obstacle as it comes.

After all, you didn't expect the climb to the Spiritual World to be easy, did you?



A BLESSING

We begin our seder by offering a blessing to the Creator of all things, Who shaped the Heavens and the Earth, Who created Adam (humankind) from Adamah (soil), and allowed us to be partners in the story of Creation. With this blessing, we give thanks for being together as a communal family, a family

made up of different individuals from different backgrounds with different stories, who nonetheless unite in harmony. May our prayers and intentions this evening elevate the notes of our hearts to create chords of peace, dignity, and holiness.

Together we say: Amen.

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheynu Melech Ha'Olam
Oseh Ma'aseh Vereishit*

ברוך אתה יי אלקינו מלך העולם
עשה מעשה בראשית

Blessed are You, Adonai, Eternal God,
Fashioner of all Creation

THE FIRST CUP

Our first cup of wine is pure white. Like the snow of winter, like the light of creation, it symbolizes the spiritual moment of genesis, the time to start anew, to begin like a clean page waiting for ink.



Fill your cup slowly. Watch the wine fill your glass and allow the warmth of your heart to fill your body.

THE BLESSING OVER THE WINE

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheynu
Melech Ha'Olam Borei Pri Ha'Gafen

ברוך אתה יי אלקינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן

Blessed are You, Adonai, Eternal God
Ruler of the Universe, Creator of
the Fruit of the Vine.



THE EARTH WORLD - ASIYAH

The Tu B'Shvat seder is divided into four worlds or spiritual realms. The first world is Asiyah, the world of action, of earth, of the physical.

We honor this world by accepting our limitations. We eat fruit or nuts with a hard outer shell but with an edible and sustaining interior. In doing so, we recognize our own shells, the tough defenses we put up in hopes that we can protect the vulnerability of our inner selves.

But just like the walnut or the pomegranate, we must break through the shield to expose the fruit that lies inside. We do this through action, through chesed, through radical loving-kindness, through giving, through singing, through praying, through putting the hands that G-d has given us into the earth of action, justice, and tikkun. By stirring our hearts, we break through even the firmest of shields, and our fruit feeds our soul with the song of limitless potential.

"OUR GOAL SHOULD BE TO LIVE LIFE IN RADICAL AMAZEMENT. ...GET UP IN THE MORNING AND LOOK AT THE WORLD IN A WAY THAT TAKES NOTHING FOR GRANTED. EVERYTHING IS PHENOMENAL; EVERYTHING IS INCREDIBLE; NEVER TREAT LIFE CASUALLY. TO BE SPIRITUAL IS TO BE AMAZED."

-RABBI ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL



AVODAT ASIYAH - THE SERVICE OF ACTION

Deep Inside My Heart

Deep inside my heart, I've got this everlasting light.
It's shining like the sun. It radiates on everyone!
And the more that I give, the more I've got to give.
It's the way that I live, and it's what I'm living for!

פתח לבי

*P'tach libi b'Toratecha
u'mitzvotecha tirdof nafshi*

פתח לבי בתורתך ומצותך
תרדוף נפשי

"Open my heart to Your Torah
And to your Mitzvot that my Soul May
Follow Them"



*Take: Pomegranate, banana, persimmon, orange, walnut, peanut,
pistachio, etc.*

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melech Ha'Olam, Borei
Pri Ha'Etz*

ברוך אתה יי אלקינו מלך העולם בורא פרי האץ

Blessed are you, Adonai, Eternal G-d, Ruler of the
Universe, Creator of the Fruit of the Tree

MIDAH OF SAVLANUT

AN EXERCISE IN PATIENCE

Before you eat, place the fruit or the nut on the table in front of you. Examine it carefully. What color is it? Not red, brown, or yellow, what color is it REALLY? Examine the grooves and the bumps, the smooth layers, and the indentations.

Take a deep breath. Now pick up your food, and slowly let your hand explore it. What does it feel like? Is it rough? Does it feel different in your palm than it does with the tips of your fingers? Is it heavy or light?

Crack open the shell. Feel the weight break away. Now look again at the inside. Are the colors the same or different? Do you smell anything different now that the fruit or the nut has been opened?

Finally, put the food in your mouth. Let it sit on your tongue, then, slowly, let it roll around the inside of your mouth. When you are ready, begin to chew. Let the flavors explode on your taste buds. Try to identify every sensation as it happens, every new flavor, every new smell, the sound your food makes against your teeth.

Now swallow.

WE HAVE JOURNEYED THROUGH
THE FIRST WORLD.



THE SECOND CUP

Our second cup of wine is white with a drop or two of red added into our glasses. These splashes of crimson insert the fire of our souls into the buried seeds of our first cup, nourishing the body and allowing the roots to work their way under the snow and create a foundation for growth. The red wine is a spark to ignite the fire that will continue to grow throughout our seder.



If you need some more white wine in your cup add it now, and then when you're ready, add a drop or two of red into the pure white.

THE BLESSING OVER THE WINE

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melech
Ha'Olam Borei Pri Ha'Gafen

ברוך אתה יי אלקינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן

Blessed are You, Adonai, Eternal God
Ruler of the Universe, Creator of
the Fruit of the Vine.



THE WATER WORLD - YETZIRAH

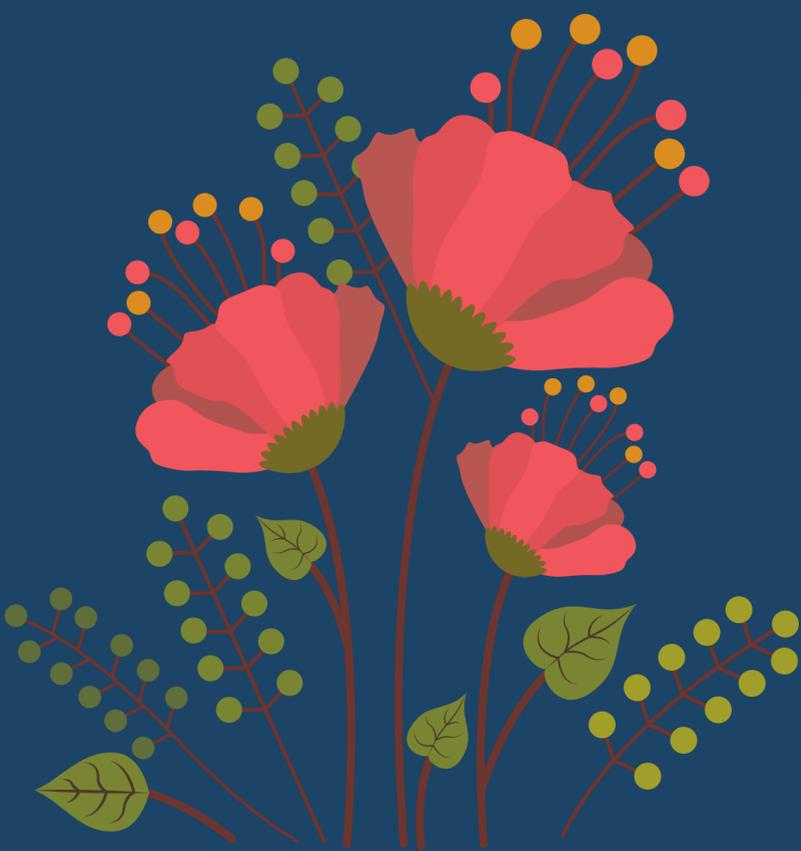
The second world is the world of yetzirah, of formation. It is represented by the element of water, acknowledging the formation of the world from the chaotic primordial waters of Bereshit.

In Babylonian mythology, the world was created through the slaying of the water monster known as Tiamat, in Jewish tradition, G-d speaks to the waters, allowing them to grow and change, and through G-d's word, the waters become calm and give way to life. Our tradition teaches us that the words of Torah lead to paths of peace and ways of pleasantness. The idea of Creation through violence or anger is anathema to Jewish theology.

In this world, we eat fruits with an edible exterior and with pits or seeds in the center. We work our way inward in order to plant the sparks of our future selves.

AS OFTEN AS YOU CAN, TAKE A TRIP
OUT TO THE FIELDS TO PRAY.
ALL THE TREES, FLOWERS, AND GRASSES
WILL JOIN YOU. THEY WILL ENTER YOUR
PRAYERS AND GIVE YOU STRENGTH TO
SING PRAISES TO G-D..

-REBBE NACHMAN OF BRATSLOV



AVODAT YETZIRAH- THE SERVICE OF FORMATION

With a partner or in a small group, come up with a six word plan of Jewish action or g'milut chasidim (call of loving kindness) that you would like to see in the next year at Shaarey Zedek. Use the paper and utensils in front of you, and feel free to beautify your plan with illustrations and color!

Examples:

Jewish garden with plants from Israel!

House the homeless, build a mishkan!

Cats and dogs need ahavah too!

Welcoming guests, better than ever before...

Deserts belong in Israel, not Detroit...

People of wells for water justice!



Take: Olives, dates, apricots, avocado, peaches, etc.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melech Ha'Olam, Borei
Pri Ha'Etz*

ברוך אתה יי אלקינו מלך העולם בורא פרי האץ

**Blessed are you, Adonai, Eternal G-d, Ruler of the
Universe, Creator of the Fruit of the Tree**

MIDAH OF TALMUD

AN EXERCISE IN TORAH STUDY

Avot D'Rabbi Natan 31b

אם היתה נטיעה בתוך ידך ויאמרו לך "הרי לך
המשיח", בוא ונטע את הנטיעה ואחר כך צא והקבילו.

If you have a sapling in your hand, ready to plant it into the earth, and someone calls out to you, "Hurry! Hurry! Mashiach is here!" go and finish planting your sapling and then go greet the Messiah.

Questions for Reflection

1. What does this passage mean? What is the takeaway (nafka minah)?
2. What does Mashiach represent in this statement?
3. What saplings are currently in your hands, and what's keeping you from planting them?
4. How can this learning, and this seder in general, help you plant your trees? Write these down and give them to the Rabbi if you would like to continue the conversation at a later date!

WE HAVE JOURNEYED THROUGH
THE SECOND WORLD.



THE THIRD CUP

Our third cup of wine is mostly red with a bit of white. As the fire of our seder grows, so too does the fire of our souls. We remove ourselves even further from the grounded place from which we started, and we focus our hearts on the seeds of our intentions as they bud and blossom, stretching their branches to the heavens.



If there is any remaining wine in your glass, fill the empty space with red wine. If not, start with a splash of white and then fill with red.

THE BLESSING OVER THE WINE

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheynu
Melech Ha'Olam Borei Pri Ha'Gafen

ברוך אתה יי אלקינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן

Blessed are You, Adonai, Eternal God
Ruler of the Universe, Creator of
the Fruit of the Vine.



THE AIR WORLD - BRIYAH

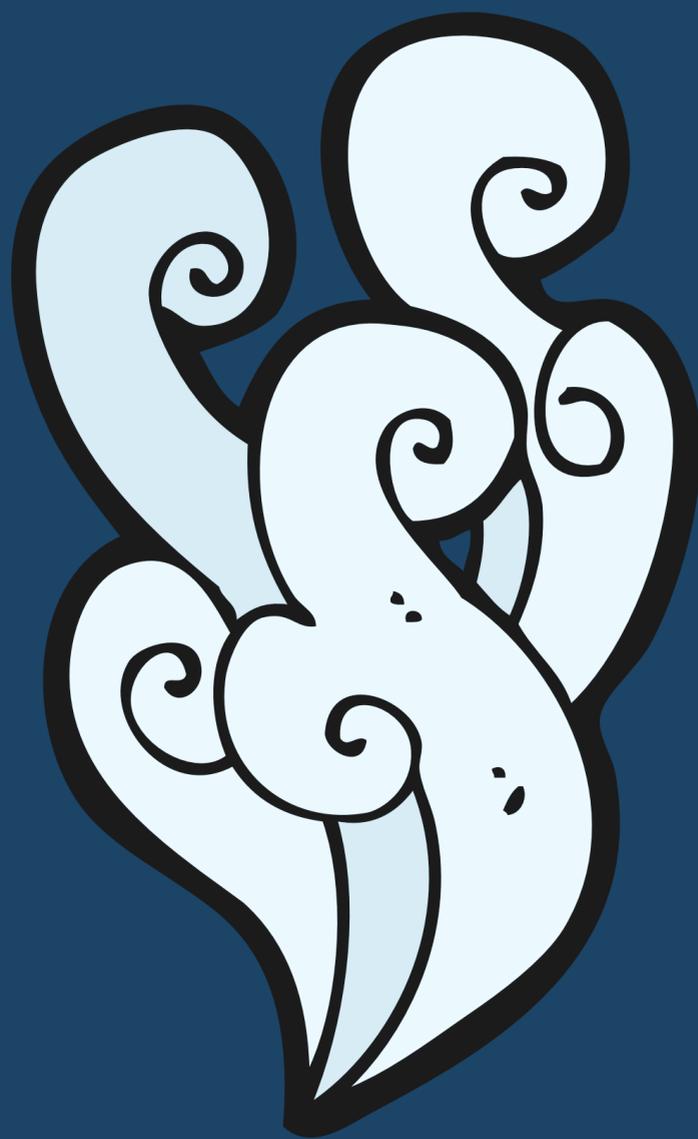
The third world is the world of briyah, knowledge. At this point in our seder, our seeds have broken through the snow; they have burst from their shells, and now, roots firmly planted, they sprout and yearn for light.

In Judaism, that light is called "Zohar." It is an ancient Hebrew word that means 'splendor' or 'radiance,' and the mystics believe that it is the emanation of the Divine sparks that are scattered throughout the world.

Because "Zohar" cannot be limited or bound, we honor it by eating fruits that are unencumbered and edible throughout. In doing so, we hope to emulate their natural state and to live wholly and purely, free from the tethers of judgement, insecurity, and self doubt, and only to breathe the air of freedom and spirit.

THE SEA OF KNOWLEDGE RAGES,
ITS WAVES BEAT IN ME,
THOUGHT MOUNTS UPON THOUGHT
LIKE A WALL,
AND G-D STANDS ABOVE IT.

- RABBI ABRAHAM ISAAC KOOK



AVODAT BRIYAH- THE SERVICE OF KNOWLEDGE

The niggun is an ancient tool of transcendence. When our words seem inadequate, when they cannot fully express the love, the pain, the gratitude bursting from our hearts, our prayers turn to ruach, to breath.

A niggun has no beginning or end. It is always being sung, we are simply invited to join it, to visit, to welcome it into our community, and then to say goodbye and let it continue on its endless journey.

Close your eyes, open your heart, breathe, and join.



Take: Blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, figs, etc.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melech Ha'Olam, Borei
Pri Ha'Etz*

ברוך אתה יי אלקינו מלך העולם בורא פרי האץ

Blessed are you, Adonai, Eternal G-d, Ruler of the
Universe, Creator of the Fruit of the Tree

MIDAH OF SHALOM

AN EXERCISE IN PEACE

When G-d created Adam, he was lifeless, an inanimate statue of earth and soil. But then HaShem breathed into Adam the breath of life, sending the Ruach Ha'Kodesh, the Divine Air, into his nostrils, and he became alive in flesh and spirit.

Now it is our turn.

Sit up straight but comfortably in your chair, your feet on the ground. Put your hands in your lap or at your side. Close your eyes.

And now, focus on each and every breath. Each inhale, each exhale, a gift of the Breath of Life. Feel your body as it becomes relaxed, starting with the very top of your head. Through your eyes. Into your jaw. Your shoulders, your chest, your arms, the heaviness drifting away with the lightness of shalom, of peace.

Keep focusing on your breath. If you find yourself getting distracted, treat yourself with kindness and patience, and return to your breath. Feel your stomach lighten. Your hips, your thighs, your legs, your feet, and every bit of weight leaving through the very tips of your toes.

Breathe. Become your breath, and only your breath. For when G-d created the heavens and the earth, G-d created you, a breath unlike any other, an air of holiness, a spark of the Divine.

When you are ready, open your eyes.

WE HAVE JOURNEYED THROUGH
THE THIRD WORLD.



THE FOURTH CUP

The final cup is red with a single drop of white. It is pure fire with the tiniest anchor of the self, the origin, the place of beginning. With the fourth cup we reach the highest rung of our ascent, and we find ourselves consumed by the spiritual flames of peace. At this level, we exist solely in the here and the now, filled with gratitude, wonder, and awe for all that is.



If your cup has some wine left in it, fill the remainder with red. If your cup is empty, start with a single drop of white, and fill the remainder with red.

THE BLESSING OVER THE WINE

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheynu
Melech Ha'Olam Borei Pri Ha'Gafen

ברוך אתה יי אלקינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן

Blessed are You, Adonai, Eternal God
Ruler of the Universe, Creator of
the Fruit of the Vine.



THE FIRE WORLD - ATZILUT

The fourth and final world is the world of the Spirit. It exists where words cannot. It is experienced through the senses, removed completely from the physical realm.

In the world of the Spirit, eating is impossible, and so we turn to the fire of smell, letting the aroma of herbs, spices, and/ or spirits enter our nostrils and elevate our souls.

NEVER ONCE IN MY LIFE
DID I ASK GOD
FOR SUCCESS OR WISDOM
OR POWER OR FAME.

I ASKED FOR WONDER,
AND HE GAVE IT TO ME.

- RABBI ABRAHAM JOSHUA
HESCHEL



TREES ON FIRE

Once you have smelled the spices and herbs, the seder is concluded. There is nothing left, but to reflect. If you are so moved, after your experience, use the space below for your thoughts, your questions, your poems or your pictures.

For Eden and Sasha...

May your branches forever bloom with flowers of love, peace, kindness, and Torah

Uncle Yoni



Tu B'Shvat Haggadah, 5778