

Tu B'Shvat

Hinei ma tov u-ma na-im
Shevat achim gam yachad

Hashkediya porachat
Veshemesh paz zorachat,
Tziporim merosh kol gag
Mevasrot et bo hachag.

Tu B'Shevat higiya
Chag la'lanot.
Tu B'Shevat higiya
Chag la'lanot

The almond tree is blooming
And the golden sun is shining,
Birds atop each roof
Announcing the arrival of the festival.

Tu B'Shevat has arrived
(it's) the festival of trees.
Tu B'Shevat has arrived
(it's) the festival of trees.



First Cup of Wine: Winter, The World of Assiyah **White Wine and Fruits Whose Outsides Cannot Be Eaten**

Today it is still winter, and we need the most protection from the outside elements. In the Kabbalist world, we are also the furthest from perfection. With this fruit and cup, we have a rooted awareness of the tangible world around us. We are curled up, hidden behind our skins.

"I frequently tramped eight or ten miles through the deepest snow to keep an appointment with a beech-tree, or a yellow birch, or an old acquaintance among the pines." ~Henry David Thoreau

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the wine.

Tsadik katamar yifrach The righteous person shall flourish like the palm (tree)
Ke'erez bal'vanon yisgeh And thrive like a cedar in Lebanon (grow tall)

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First Fruits: Those with Protective Shells

If you remove one nut from a pile of walnuts, every nut in the pile will be shaken. Similarly, if one person sins, the whole community will suffer (Midrash Song of Songs Rabba 1).

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d Ruler of the Universe Creator of the fruit of the tree.

When G-d created Adam, G-d took him around all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him, "See how wonderful and praiseworthy all my creations are? Everything I have created, I created for you. Be careful not to destroy my world, for if you destroy it, there is no one who will fix it after you." (Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:19)

A few words about Tu B'Shvat from the Rabbi and a call to action by Jack Gorman, with links:

GreenFaith: <https://greenfaith.org/>

Dayenu: <https://dayenu.org/>

JCAN NYC: <https://www.jcan-nyc.org/>

NY Renews: <https://www.nyrenews.org/>

Critica: <https://www.criticascience.org/>

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Second Cup of Wine: Spring, the World of Yetzira, Formation

We now turn toward the inner, spiritual development. The fruit for this world has no outer shell but has an inner pit that we don't eat. The pit or seed is a means of growth and renewal. It symbolizes the earth's reawakening after the long winter. It is beginning to warm up, just a hint of what is to come, so we add a drop of warm red wine to our white cup.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the wine.

No part of the date palm is wasted: The fruit is eaten, the embryonic branches (lulav) are used for the Four Species of Sukkot, the mature fronds can cover a sukkah, the fibers between the branches can make strong ropes, the leaves can be woven into mats and baskets, the trunks can be used for rafters. Similarly, no one is worthless in Israel: some are scholars, some do good deeds, and some work for social justice. (Midrash Numbers Rabba 3.1)

Second Fruits—Those with pits

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d Ruler of the Universe Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Atzey zeitim omdim (4x) La, la, la, la, . . . Olive trees are standing (4x)

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Third Cup of Wine: Summer, the World of Beriah, Creation

In the third world, Creation, the tree has grown into a full being and is blooming. No protective shells are needed inside or out. We add more red wine to our cups. The world is overflowing, bursting with energy.

In order to serve God, one needs access to the enjoyment of the beauties of nature - meadows full of flowers, majestic mountains, flowing rivers. For all these are essential to the spiritual development of even the holiest of people. (Rabbi Abraham Ben Maimonides)

*I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.
A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;
A tree that looks at God all day
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;
A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.*

Joyce Kilmer, "Trees," 1914

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the wine.

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Third Fruits: Completely Edible

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Trees are Blowing in the Wind

Let's dig a hole;
Let's dig a hole and plant a seed.
Let's water it, oh, let's water it
'Cause it is *Tu B'Shevat*.
CHORUS (2X)

CHORUS:
Trees are blowing in the wind,
They're blowing: (2X)
Trees are blowing in the wind.

Look at the sprouts;
Look at the sprouts, they're coming up.
Let's water them, oh, let's water them
'Cause it is *Tu B'Shevat*.
CHORUS (2X)

Look at the leaves;
Look at the leaves, they're growing now.
Let's water them, oh, let's water them
'Cause it is *Tu B'Shevat*.
CHORUS (2X)

Look at the tree;
The tree is so much taller now.
Let's water it, oh, let's water it
'Cause it is *Tu B'Shevat*.
CHORUS (2X)

Just look at me;
Just look at me, I'm taller now.
Don't water me, please don't water me
'Cause it is *Tu B'Shevat*.
CHORUS (2X)



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Fourth Cup of Wine: Harvest, the World of Atzilut, Nobility

There is no fruit for this world. Our cups are now all red with just a drop of white remaining. Like the Mexican and Eskimo artists who add a little imperfection to every piece they make, we cannot embody this purity in anything physical. **We invite you to take your aromatic spices or your aromatic citrus fruit and inhale.**

"When in a war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down." (Deuteronomy 20:19)

"[The Torah compares humans to trees] because, like humans, trees have the power to grow. And as humans have children, so trees bear fruit. And when a human is hurt, cries of pain are heard throughout the world, so when a tree is chopped down, its cries are heard throughout the world."

Rashi

As we prepare to drink the fourth cup let us welcome Shabbat with Lecha Dodi.

Elohai neshama shenatata bi t'horah hi.

Oseh shalom bimromav, hu ya'ase shalom aleinu, ve'al kol Yisrael veimru amen
Oseh shalom bimromav, hu ya'ase shalom aleinu, ve'al kol Yisrael, ve'al kol
yoshvei tevel, ve-imru amen

May Adonai who brings peace to the heavens, make peace over us, all Israel, all humanity and let us say Amen.

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Berich rachamana Malka de'Alma marey dehay pita.
You are the source of life for all that is
and your blessing flows through me.