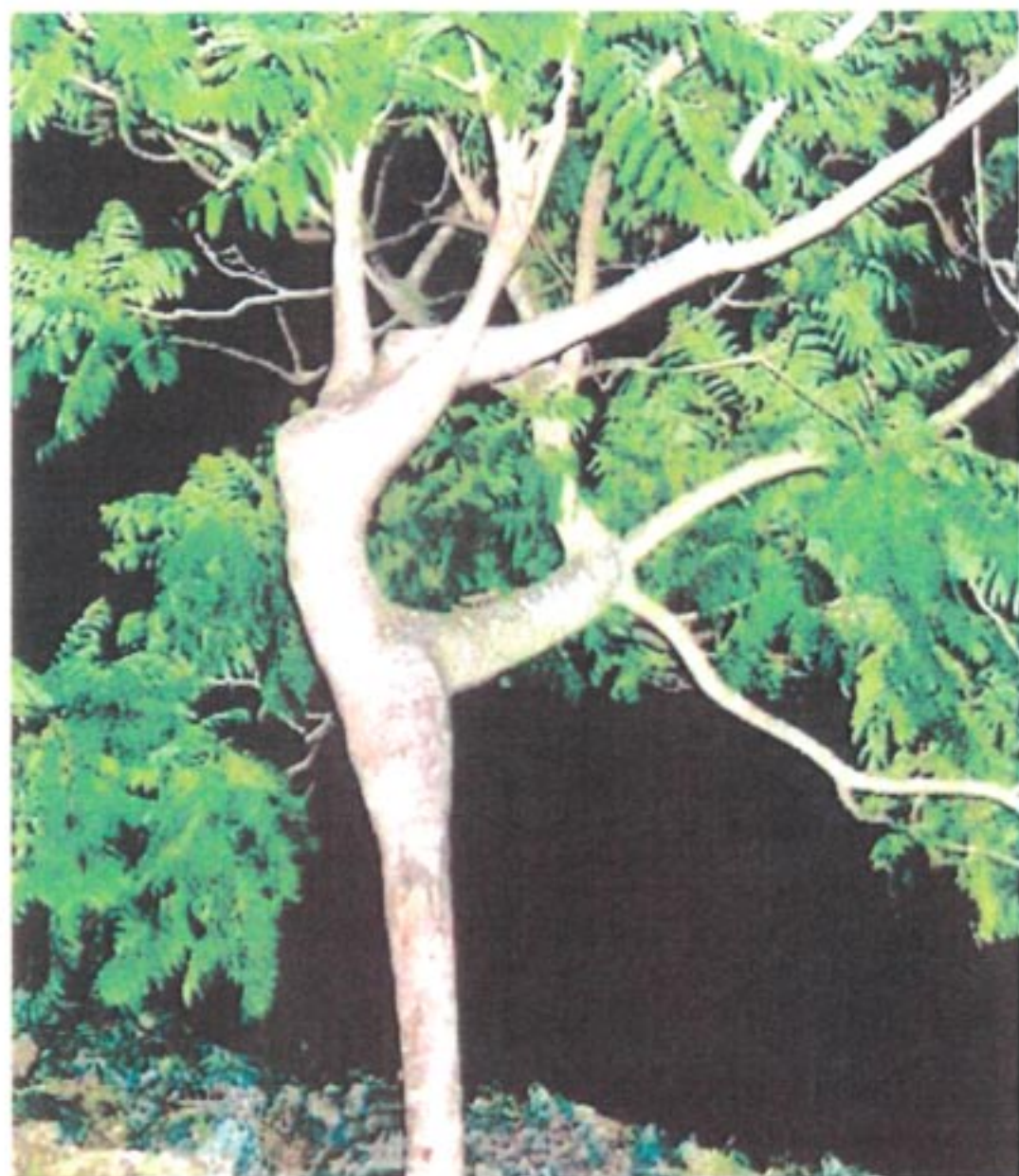


הגדה של ט' ו' בשבט



A Tu b'Shvat Seder

The Jewish Women's Center of Pittsburgh, Inc.

Tonight we celebrate Tu B'shvat, the New Year of the Trees. The Torah is referred to as Eitz Chayim, the Tree of Life, which is an important feminine symbol in Judaism. Each of us is an eitz chayim, reaching for light, breaking through the hard soil, striving for independence, yet recognizing our dependency on all living growth around us. We are also fruitful trees of life. We bear children, as the Torah bears wisdom and trees bear fruit. A woman's children are often referred as the "fruit of her womb". On Tu B'shvat we recognize the wonderful female connection to the life-giving cycles of nature. Important Biblical women have names signifying trees. Esther is also called Hadassah, from hadas, a myrtle. In Genesis 35:8 the alon bachut, weeping oak, is the place where Deborah, Rebecca's beloved nurse dies. Tamar is a date palm tree, and it is the name of Judah's wife (Genesis 38), King David's daughter (2 Samuel 13) and Avshalom's daughter (2 Samuel 14). Deborah the judge heard cases while sitting under Tamar Devorah, Deborah's date palm tree. The mazal (astrological sign) for the month of Shvat is Aquarius, D'li. (a vessel filled with water. Woman is a vessel – for wisdom, for fertility, for childbearing, for sustenance, for nurturing and for beauty. On this holiday, may we draw deep into the Well, and look towards the trees to find what we need to sustain us.



Shorashim

Fran Avni

"Roots" she cried "oh I am like a branched tree,
Leaving blossoms in the air, midway twixt earth and sky
And there hang I.....Nothing holds me"

Shorashim (shorashim)
Etz Chayim (etz chayim)
Beyn Adama (ben adama)
U'Veyn Shamayim (u'veyn shamayim)
Ba'avir (Ba-avir)
T'luya ani (t'luya ani)
Mah yach-zik oti (mah yach-zik oti)

Shorashim!

Roots, Tree of Life, I am hanging in the air between the land and
the sky. What will hold me? Roots!

A Seder for Tu b'Shevat

Greeter: Welcome. Tu b'Shevat is the Jewish New Year of the Trees. By way of introduction, let's connect ourselves to our own family tree.

Hinei Ma Tov

*Hi-nei ma tov u'ma na-im
she-vet a-chi-yot gam ya-chad.*

How good and pleasant it is for
sisters to dwell together in unity.

In the Hebrew numerical system, the letters "tet" and "vav", (which can be pronounced together as "tu") represent the numbers, nine and six, respectively, for a total of 15. Therefore "Tu b'Shevat is the 15th day of the month of Shevat.

Tu b'Shevat was the date set for the tithing of fruit, and the date defining the end of the fruit crop of the previous year.

Tu b'Shevat is one of four new years in the Jewish calendar. The others are: the first of Nissan for counting the reigns of kings and the three festivals; the first of Elul for the tithing of animals, and the first of Tishre for the judgment of mankind, the tithing of grain, and the counting of shmitah,

Together: Tonight, in this Tu b'Shevat seder, as in the Passover seder, we will drink four cups of wine, ask four questions, and sample special foods related to the festival.



1. Why do we celebrate the New Year of the Trees in the middle of winter?

In Israel, winter is usually a time of heavy rains and rushing, surging creeks and rivulets. At about the middle of the month of Shevat, the severe rainstorms cease, and soon thereafter, signs of spring begin to appear. Although two more months of winter remain, buds begin to swell on the trees, the enduring symbol of God's promise of renewed life.

THE ANCIENT NEW YEAR OF THE TREES, OR ROSH HASHANAH L'ILANOT, WAS THOUGHT TO BE SACRED TO THE WOMEN OF ISRAEL. IT CELEBRATED THE NEW YEAR OF GOD'S FEMALE ASPECT, THE SHECHINAH.

ACCORDING TO SOME TRADITIONS, NOAH'S ARK LANDED IN THE MONTH OF SHEVAT, AND THE DOVE (A LONG-ESTABLISHED NEAR EASTERN SYMBOL OF GOD'S FEMININE QUALITIES), RETURNED TO THE ARK WITH AN OLIVE BRANCH IN HER BEAK. SHE HERALDS NEW LIFE AND THE PROMISE OF A WORLD THAT WILL ONCE AGAIN BLOOM AND PROVIDE NURTURE, AS GOD PROMISES NEVER AGAIN TO DESTROY ALL LIVING CREATURES (GENESIS 8:21).



2. What is the significance of Tu b'Shevat in our time?

In Israel, since the beginning of agricultural settlements in the late 19th century, the New Year of the Trees has acquired great significance, symbolizing the revival and redemption of the land. *Tu b'Shevat* is celebrated with songs, and trees are planted to honor or memorialize loved ones.

Tu b'Shevat has also become a day of commitment to protecting the environment. Judaism teaches that the earth is the Creator's, and that we are to be partners and co-workers with God in preserving our planet and its resources.

An ancient midrash has become all too relevant today:

IN THE HOUR WHEN THE HOLY ONE CREATED THE FIRST PERSON, GOD SHOWED HIS CREATION THE TREES IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, AND SAID:

"SEE MY WORKS, HOW FINE THEY ARE; NOW ALL THAT I HAVE CREATED, I CREATED FOR YOUR BENEFIT. THINK UPON THIS AND DO NOT CORRUPT AND DESTROY MY WORLD. FOR IF YOU DESTROY IT, THERE IS NO ONE TO RESTORE IT AFTER YOU."

ECCLESIASTES RABBAH 7:28



Another image connected to the story of the Garden of Eden is the Tree of Life. The *siddur* compares the *Torah* to a tree, *Etz Chayim*. Just as we take sustenance from a tree, so our Way of life sustains us in strength and beauty.



The 16th century mystics of Safed understood the emanations of God in the form of an inverted Tree, whose roots (above) are invisible and inexplicable to us and whose trunk and branches reach (down) toward us. Through this Tree there courses the ultimate flow of universal life. It originates in the unimaginable *Ein Sof* or Infinite One, and becomes progressively more in touch with our world, in which creation is continually taking place.

The New Year of the Trees is regarded as a holy time. By saying blessings and partaking of many kinds of fruits, we have the opportunity to thank God for the wonder of renewed life, and to reawaken our own spiritual connections. In addition, we honor the land of Israel by enjoying her fruits, especially those of the seven species: WHEAT, BARLEY, GRAPES, FIGS, POMEGRANATES, OLIVES AND DATES.

FOR TREES

Peter and Ellen Allard

This lovely tree standing before us
planted by someone a long time ago.
Someone with hope, a hope for tomorrow
with a dream of the future right here in this tree.

Chorus.

So raise your hands up high for all the world to see
Everyone stand up for the trees

The thing about trees
That is so amazing
In living they give us all that we need
They give us food,
Shelter and beauty
And they give us the air that we breathe Chorus

Some trees are huge
Some trees are tiny
Some scrape the sky
And some scrape your knee
Some live a long time
With rings that can prove it
Some formed the table
Where we wrote this song Chorus

This lovely tree standing before us
Planted by someone A long time ago
Someone with hope,A hope for tomorrow
With a dream of the future
Right here in this tree Chorus

The New Year of the Trees

It is the New year of the Trees, but here
the ground is frozen under the crust of snow.
The trees snooze, their buds tight as nuts.
Rhodedendron leaves roll up their stiff scrolls.

In the white and green north of the diaspora
I am stirred by a season that will not arrive
for six weeks, as wines on far continents prickle
to bubbles when their native vines bloom.

What blossoms here are birds jostling
at feeders, pecking sunflower seeds
and millet through the snow: tulip red
cardinal, daffodil finch, larkspur jay,

the pansybed of sparrows and juncos, all hungry.
They too are planters of tree, spreading seeds
of favorites along fences. On the earth closed
to us all as a book in a language we cannot

yet read, the seeds, the bulbs, the eggs
of the fervid green year await release.
Over them on February's cold table I spread
a feast. Wings rustle like summer leaves.

-Marge Piercy

3. *Why do we drink four cups of wine tonight?*

We will drink four cups of wine of different colors during the course of our Seder. The colors symbolically take us through the seasons and the colors of the year; from winter whites to a touch of spring red, from rosy summer to the full redness of autumn.

Our first cup of wine is white, symbolizing winter. As we drink it, we recall that nature has been dormant for many months, awaiting the warmth of spring and its annual renewal of life.

(Pour yourself a glass of white wine or grape juice)

As we raise the glass of wine in our hands, we bless God by reciting an alternative kiddush:

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת עֵין הַחַיִּים
מִצְמִיחַת פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן
וְנִשְׂזֹר אֶת סְרִיגֵי חַיֵּינוּ
בְּמִסְרַת הָעָם



*N'va-rech et ain ha-cha-yim
mats-mi-chat p'ri ha-ga-fen
V'nish-zohr et s'rigay cha-yai-nu
B-mah-so-ret ha-ahm.*

Let us bless the Source of life
that ripens fruit on the vines,
As we weave the branches of our lives
into the tradition of the Jewish people.

4. *Why do we eat different groups of fruit tonight?*

We eat different fruits to honor the Four Worlds in which we live simultaneously;

THE FIRST IS ASSIAH, OR ACTION, THE PHYSICAL WORLD AROUND US.

THE SECOND IS YETZIRAH, OR FORMATION, THE WORLD OF FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS.

THE THIRD IS B'RIYAH, OR CREATION, THE WORLD OF KNOWING, AND THE MIND.

THE FOURTH IS ATZILUT, OR EMANATION, THE WORLD OF SPIRITUALITY.

For Assiyah (earth, action), we eat nuts and fruits with a tough skin to remind us of the protection the earth gives. Through this act we acknowledge that we need protection in life, both physical and emotional.

Fruits in this group, which are inedible on the outside, but edible on the inside include: pomegranate, nuts, citrus fruits, and coconuts.

THOUGHT: SOME PEOPLE ARE HARD TO KNOW, BUT ONCE THEIR OUTER LAYER IS PEELED AWAY, YOU ARE REWARDED.

We take up a citrus fruit, taste it and say:

The citrus fruit symbolizes the person that has both knowledge of Torah and good deeds (Leviticus Rabbah 30:12). Through eating the citrus we remind ourselves that teaching alone is not sufficient, but must be combined with action (Pirkei Avot 1:14).

It is not enough to believe in justice. We must work determinedly to achieve justice.

*B'ru-cha at She-chi-nah
Bo-reyt p'ri ha-etz.*

**Blessed are You, Divine Presence,
Who creates the fruit of the tree.**

In Hebrew, the almond tree is called *sha-ked*, meaning "to watch, wake", because it blooms in winter and is thus the first fruit tree to bloom in the new agricultural year.

The shape of the menorah, which is a universally recognized symbol for Judaism, is based on the silhouette of the almond tree.

(Distribute almonds - the B'racha from the first fruit covers the almonds as well)

Hashkediya

*The almond tree is growing,
A golden sun is glowing;
The birds sing out in joyous glee
From every roof and every tree.*

ALMOND
ALMOND

הַשְׁקֵדִיָּה פוֹרְחָה.
וְשֶׁשֶׁסְּפוּ זוֹרְחָה.
צִפְרִים קְרָאִים כָּל יוֹם
כִּבְשָׁרוֹת אֶת בֵּית הַחַיִּים:
סִיּוֹ בְּשֶׁבֶט הַיָּדָיִם -
הֵן הָאֵילָנוֹת.

*Tu B'Shevat is here - the Jewish Arbor Day
Hail the trees' New Year - Happy Holiday!*

SONGS OF SONGS

Come with me, my love, come away.

For the long wet months are past,
and rains have fed the earth and left it bright with blossoms

Birds wing in the low sky, dove and songbird singing in the open air above.

Earth nourishing tree and vine,
green fig and tender grape, green and tender fragrance.

Come with me, my love, come away.

Free translation by Marcia Falk, "Love Lyrics from the Bible", Poem 9

Mother Earth, Well Worn, Sun Washed

*Mother earth, well worn, sun washed
Both slave and mistress am I beloved
Out of me, the humble and dejected
You grow, you push your roots through me
And like the blazing stars, like the flame of the sun
In long blind silences I run
Through your roots, in your branches
And half awake and half in a dream
I see the sky through you.*

By Anna Margolin, translated by Adrienne Cooper from Sarah's Daughter's Song

For she is a tree of life

In the cramped living room of my childhood
between sagging rough-skinned sofa that made me itch
and swaybacked chair surrounded by ashtrays
where my father read every word of the paper
shrouded in blue smoke, coughing rusty phlegm
and muttering doom, the rug was a factory
oriental and the pattern called tree of life.

My mother explained as we plucked a chicken
Tree of life: I was enthralled and Hannah
my grandmother hummed for me the phrase
from liturgy: Eitz chayim, hee l'machazikim
bo v'kol nitee-voteh ho shalom:
for she is the tree of life to all who hold her fast
and the fruit of her branches is peace.

I see her big bosomed and tall as a maple
and in her veins the beige sugar of desire
running sometimes hard, surging skyward
and sometimes sunk down into the roots
that burrow and wriggle deep and far among the rocks
and clay and the bones of rabbits and foxes
lying in the same bed at last becoming one.

I see her opening into flushed white
Blossoms the bees crawl into. I see her
Branches dipping under the weight of the yield,
The crimson, the yellow and russet globes,
Apples fallen beneath the deer crunch.
Yellow jackets in the cobalt afternoon buzz
Drunken from the cracked fruit oozing juice.

We all flit through her branches or creep
through her bark, skitter over her leaves.
Yet we are mice that gnaw at her root
who labor ceaselessly to bring her down.
when the tree falls, we will not rise as plastic
butterfly spaceships, but will starve as the skies
weep hot acid and the earth chafes dust.

-Marge Piercy

(Fill the second cup with white wine plus a few drops of red)

We now raise our cups and prepare to recite *kiddush* over our second cup of wine.

Our second cup of wine is white but tinged with red. The mixture of colors symbolizes the beginning of spring and the reawakening of the earth. In Israel, pink and white flowers dot the hills and mountains at this season. As we drink the wine, let us think of one special hope or wish we have for the coming spring.

We say the *B'racha* together:

נִבְרַח אֶת עֵין הַחַיִּים
מִצְמִיחַת פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן
וְנִשְׁזֹר אֶת סְרִיגֵי חַיֵּינוּ
בְּמִסְרַת הָעָם



*N'va-rech et ain ha-cha-yim
mats-mi-chat p'ri ha-ga-fen
V'nish-zohr et s'rigay cha-yai-nu
B-mah-so-ret ha-ahm.*

We take up wine made from grape, taste and say:
Through tasting the fruit of the vine we state that,
just as the tendrils of the vine encircle and latch on
to whatever they find in their way, it is incumbent
upon us to embrace and take in the sick, the elderly,
the broken and the worn out of our society never
abandoning them.

For Yetzirah (heart, formation), we eat fruits with a tough inner core. Through this act we acknowledge the need to fortify our hearts. With a strong heart and a pure vision, our lives grow richer and deeper

Fruits of this group, which are edible on the outside with a hard inner pit include: dates, olives, cherries, peaches and avocados.

We set out this bowl of dates in honor of Tamar, which means "date palm tree" in Hebrew.

ALL WE KNOW OF THE STORY OF TAMAR IS IN GENESIS 38. TAMAR IS THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW OF JUDAH, FOUNDER OF ONE OF THE TWELVE TRIBES. SHE IS TRYING TO FOLLOW THE ANCIENT ISRAELI LAWS OF LEVIRATE MARRIAGE. WHEN HER HUSBAND DIES, TAMAR MARRIES HIS YOUNGER BROTHER - A CUSTOM THAT WILL ENABLE HER TO PRODUCE AN HEIR TO CONTINUE HER FIRST HUSBAND'S NAME. BUT WHEN HER SECOND HUSBAND DIES, THE SUSPICIOUS JUDAH REFUSES TO GIVE HIS ONLY REMAINING SON TO HER. HE FEARS THAT TAMAR HAS CAUSED THE DEATHS OF HIS TWO OTHER SONS. TAMAR THEREFORE RESORTS TO DISGUISE AND TRICKERY, SEDUCING JUDAH IN ORDER TO BEAR A CHILD. WHEN JUDAH DISCOVERS THE TRUTH, HE PRAISES TAMAR FOR HER DETERMINATION. FROM THEIR OFFSPRING WILL DESCEND THE MESSIAH.

The tree metaphor may be the best clue to the connection between Tamar's story and her name. Like the date tree which bears her name, Tamar had to reach deep down within herself to draw up the sustaining force which would make her fruits grow. As the tree draws up water, Tamar drew up an inner strength that was able to sustain her and that will sustain future generations.

May we know the sweetness in this fruit which comes from the *tamar* and the earth.

(Pass around the bowl of dates - and say together:)

B'ru-cha at She-chi-nah
Bo-reyt p'ri ha-etz.

Blessed are You, Divine Presence,
Who creates the fruit of the tree.

Psalm 92

Tzadik katamar yifrach, yifrach (2x), Ke-erez bal'vanon yisgeh.
Shetulim be-vet adonai, Be-chatzrot elohenu yafrichu.
Ode yanuvun besayvah, Deshaynim ve-ra'ananim yeheyu,
Lehagid ki yashar adonai, Tzuri ve-lo avlatah-bo.

The righteous bloom like a date palm, they thrive like a cedar in Lebanon;
Planted in the house of the Lord, they flourish in the courts of God.
In old age they still produce fruit; they are full of sap and freshness,
Attesting that the Lord is upright, my rock, in whom there is no wrong.

(Pass olives- the previous B'racha covers the olives as well)

Yetzirah, is the world of formation and birth. Its symbol is water, which gives shape to all matter. From water, the heart pours forth blessing and emotion.

Blessing - B'racha - comes from

B'reicha - a pool-

Each person has her own pool inside,

which is her pool of Blessing.

Shlomo-Carlebach

In summer, when fruits and vegetables are abundant, we are reminded of the richness of life. For our third cup we drink red wine with a splash of white.

(Pour a glass of red wine, and add just a little white wine)

We now raise our cups and prepare to recite kiddush over our third cup of wine.

נִכְבֵּד אֶת עֵין הַחַיִּים
מִצְמִיחַת פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן
וְנִשְׂאֵר אֶת סְרוּגֵי הַיַּיִן
בְּמִסְרַת הָעֵם



*N'va-rech et ain ha-cha-yim
mats-mi-chat p'ri ha-ga-fen
V'nish-zohr et s'rigay cha-yai-nu
B-mah-so-ret ha-ahm.*

Let us bless the Source of life
that ripens fruit on the vines,
As we weave the branches of our lives
into the tradition of the Jewish people.

For B'riyah (air, mind, creation), we eat fruits that are completely edible. In this world, where God's protection is close at hand, we can let go of all barriers and try on freedom. As co-creators with God, each of our thoughts becomes action.

Fruits in this group include: figs, carob, grapes, berries, apples and pears.

THOUGHT: IN WHAT WAYS DO WE CREATE THE REALITY OF OUR LIVES?

RABBI CHIYYA BEN ABBA SAID IN THE NAME OF RABBI YOCHANAN: WHOEVER KEEPS THE FIG TREE SHALL EAT OF ITS FRUIT. THE FRUIT OF THE FIG TREE DOES NOT RIPEN ALL AT ONCE. THE MORE ONE SEARCHES, THE MORE FIGS ONE FINDS IN IT. SO IT IS WITH THE WORDS OF THE TORAH. THE MORE ONE STUDIES THEM, THE MORE RELISH ONE FINDS IN THEM. (ERUVIN 54,A,B)

(Distribute the figs. Before we taste the fruit, we recite the B'rachia)

*B'ru-cha at She-chi-nah
Bo-reyt p'ri ha-etz.*

Blessed are You, Divine Presence,
Who creates the fruit of the tree.

Air is the stuff hopes and dreams are made of.

Air is the word, manifesting as the world.

Close your eyes and take a breath...

*As you inhale, know you are being breathed
by the earth.*

*Let the breath out and visualize your next step
To beautify the Garden.*

HONI AND THE CAROB TREE

A long time ago, Honi, the Circle-Drawer, walked in the land of Israel, when he met a man planting a carob tree with his grandchild.

"Old man," chided Honi, "don't you know you'll never live to eat the fruits of this tree?"

"I know that, but my grandchild will. As my grandfather planted for me, so I shall plant for her".

But Honi was not satisfied with this reply, even as he rested on the earth. He slept and slept for many years, and when he awoke he had a long white beard. He was amazed. He saw an old woman picking fruit from a tree nearby to give to a young child with her.

"Is that your fruit tree?" he asked.

"It is mine because my grandfather planted it for me. I tend it so that my grandson can have it also. We have already taken from this tree seeds to plant another one."

It was then Honi remembered what the old man had said to him long ago. He understood that God was giving him a lesson in planting not only for oneself but for generations to come.

I Will Plant for My Children

Jeff Klepper 1998

Honi looked at life from a circle he made
He spoke and he dreamed and he studied and he prayed
He would stand in his circle as he prayed for rain
And there he would remain

One day he was walking down the road by the sea
A man of seventy was planting a tree
Honi said, "My friend why do you labor so
When the fruits of your labors, you never shall know?"

And the man looked at Honi
A light shone in his eyes
He pointed to the trees reaching up to the skies
"When I came into the world
There was fruit here for me
Because my forefathers planted those trees"

Chorus

***So I will plant for my daughters
I will plant for my sons
And if you ask me why
As my fathers planted for me
I will plant for the ones yet to be***

Honi looked at life from a circle of love
He prayed from his heart for rain from above
He thought about that tree as the seasons turned
And the lesson he had learned

(chorus)

(Distribute carob - the previous B'rachia covers the carob as well)

If it is the first time you have eaten carob in over a year recite the Shehechianu:

*N'va-rech et ma-yan cha-yei-nu,
She-he-chi-ya-nu, v'ki-eh-ma-nu
v'hi-gi-a-nu laz-man ha-zeh.*

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

The last cup, completely red, symbolizes the glow of autumn. The crops are ready, and the leaves are full of color. Plants are preparing seed for the next cycle of nature.

It is the time of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur - a time to take stock of ourselves. It is the time of Succot and the celebration of the harvest. What goals do we plan as Jewish women? In what directions do we want to grow during the new year?

We recite the kiddush for the fourth cup of wine:

*N'va-rech et ain ha-cha-yim
mats-mi-chat p'ri ha-ga-fen
V'nish-zohr et s'rigay cha-yai-nu
B-mah-so-ret ha-ahm.*

Let us bless the Source of life
that ripens fruit on the vines,
As we weave the branches of our lives
into the tradition of the Jewish people.



The world of Atzilut (fire, spirit) is the ethereal world of emanation. It is a purely spiritual idea, and thus, we do not eat any fruit for this world.

*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.*

Just as the natural world goes through changes to achieve its full potential, we also need to change so that we can be free to grow. In doing so, we will become strong like healthy trees, with solid roots in the ground and our arms open to the love that is all around us.

THOUGHT: WHO OR WHAT IN YOUR LIFE, GIVES YOU ROOTS, AND GIVES YOU STRUCTURE, SO THAT YOU ARE FREE TO GROW?

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 grasses,
among all growing things
and there may I be alone,
and enter into prayer
to talk with the One
that I belong to.*

Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav



Advice From a Tree

Dear Friend
Stand Tall and Proud
Sink your roots deeply into the Earth
Reflect the light of your true nature

Think long term
Go out on a limb
Remember your place among all living beings
Embrace with joy the changing seasons
For each yields its own abundance
The Energy and Birth of Spring
The Growth and Contentment of Summer
The Wisdom to let go like leaves in the Fall
The Rest and Quiet renewal of Winter

Feel the wind and the sun
And delight in their presence
Look up at the moon that shines down upon you
And the mystery of the stars at night
Seek nourishment from the good things in life
Simple pleasures
Earth, fresh air, light
Be content with your natural beauty
Drink plenty of water
Let your limbs sway and dance in the breezes
Be flexible
Remember your roots
Enjoy the view!

Ilan Shamir

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