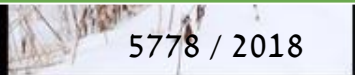




הגדה של ט"ו בשבט
A Haggadah for Tu BiShvat



Olam Chesed Yibaneh / עולם חסד יבנה

Menachem Creditor

♩ = 80

Voice

O - lam che - sed yi - ba - neh yai dai dai dai dai dai dai.

O - lam che - sed yi - ba - neh yai dai dai dai dai dai.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a tempo marking of ♩ = 80. It consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Voice' and contains the melody with lyrics. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'O - lam che - sed yi - ba - neh yai dai dai dai dai dai dai.' The first line of music ends with a double bar line and repeat dots. The second line of music also ends with a double bar line and repeat dots. There are measure numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 indicated above the notes.

I will build this world from love, yai dai dai...
And you must build this world from love, yai dai dai...
And when we build this world from love, yai dai dai...
Then God will build this world from love, yai dai dai...

(Other qualities we might build with: emet, truth; gevurah, strength; tzedek, justice; shalom, peace...)

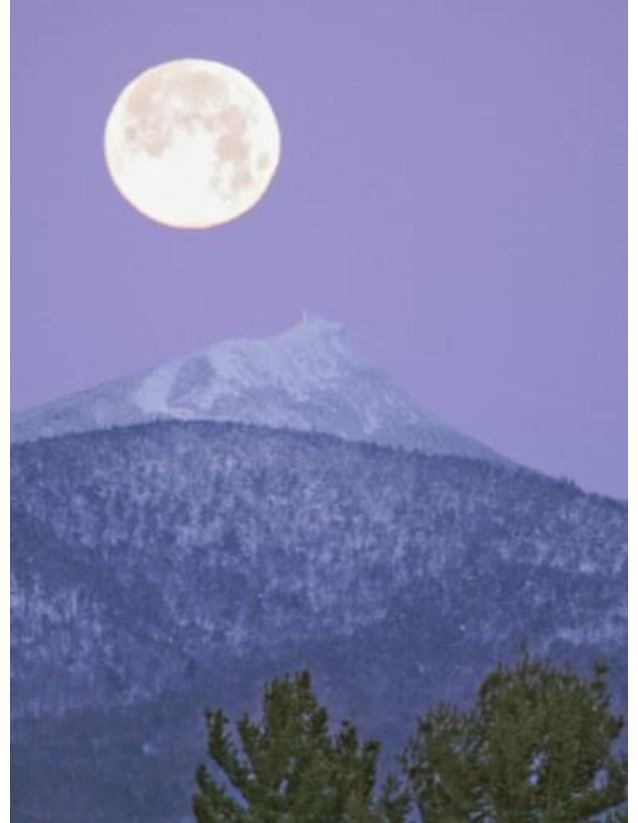
What is this day?

On the earth's calendar: midwinter full moon.

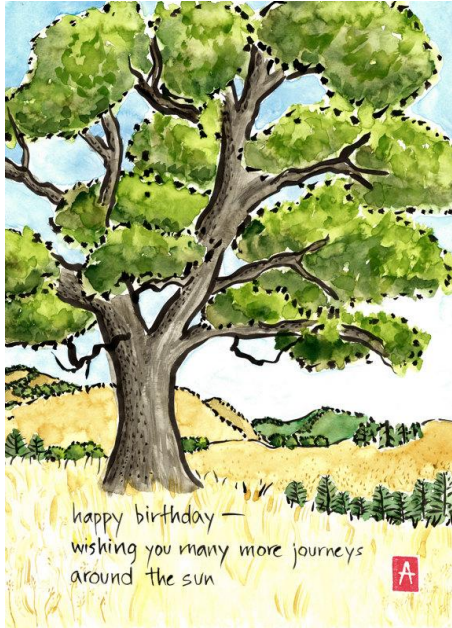
200s CE: a tax day for tithing fruit trees.

1700s CE: a mystical celebration.

Today: an opportunity to open and grow.



What is this day?



In Leviticus we read that in ancient days:

- *new trees were kept un-harvested for three years;*
- *fruits of four-year-old trees were set aside as gifts to God;*
- *we consumed tree fruits only starting in the fifth year.*

Talmud evolved Tu BiShvat as the birthday of all trees to help fulfill these traditions.

Today, we honor Tu BiShvat to renew our spirits and prepare ourselves, and the world, for spring's arrival.

Tree of life

Tradition teaches that Torah is “a tree of life to all who hold fast” (Proverbs 3:17-18), and that God and Torah (and we) are One (Zohar) ...

... so perhaps we can imagine - like the kabbalists of Tzfat before us - that the creative force of nature is like a tree ...

... with roots in creation and branches spreading far and wide ...

Today we invoke this spirit of the Tree of Life.



Repair



The kabbalists created the seder of Tu BiShvat as a “tikkun” – a ritual of repair.

By eating fruits and nuts with mindfulness, we strive to repair our own spiritual brokenness and the brokenness of a world which is not yet as we and God most wish it to be.

The sap begins to rise



In Hebrew, the word for sap is *saraf*, which means fire. The Hebrew month of Shvat is a time to warm the world, and Tu BiShvat is a day to welcome and honor the sap - the water in trees that allows life to return. Tu BiShvat represents the rising life force as our year moves toward spring.

-Rabbi Jill Hammer

What rises in you?

On this day, says tradition, sap begins to rise from the ground, and trees begin to nourish themselves to bloom anew.

We cannot see the sap rising with our eyes:
To see the sap rise, we need a different kind of vision.

Share with a neighbor:

**What spiritual sap do you yearn to see rising in you?
For what new growth do you hope as spring approaches?**



Preparation (by Marge Piercy)

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.
Rhododendron 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, picking 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 trees, spreading seeds
of favorites along fences. On the earth closed
to us all 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.

*-from *The Art of Blessing the Day**



When reciting a blessing...

A person should intend [on Tu BiShvat], when reciting a blessing, to channel divine life-energy to all creations and creatures - inanimate, plant, animal and human.

Believe with perfect faith that God gives life to them all, that there is a spark of divine life in everything - giving it existence, enlivening it, causing it to grow.

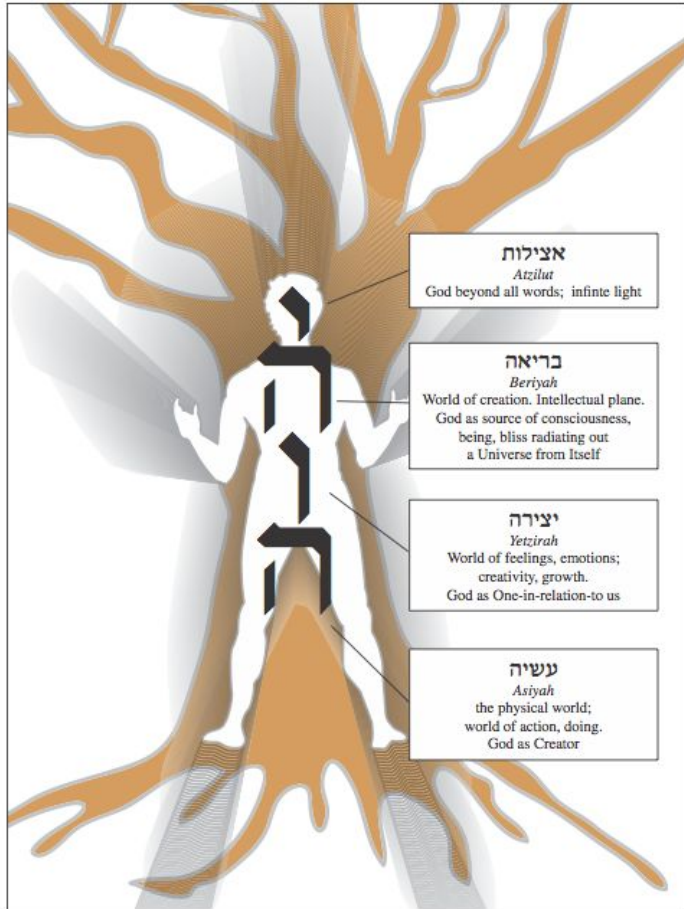
-Rabbi Avraham Yaakov of Sadiger (19th century)

Lifting Our Hands

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

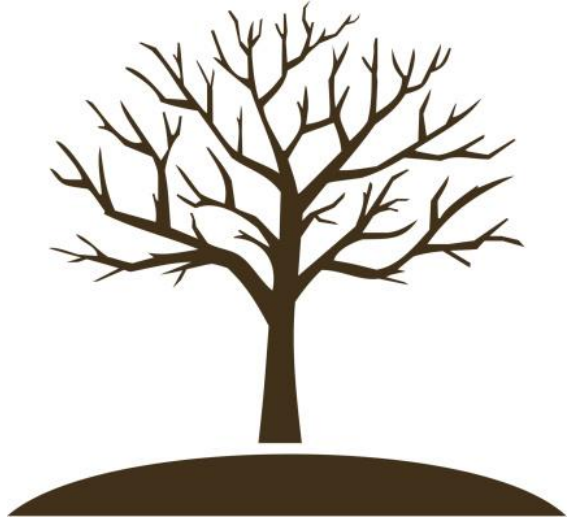
*Baruch atah, יהוָה Eloheinu, melech ha'olam,
asher kidshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu al netilat yadayim.*

A Fountain of Blessing are You, יהוָה our God, Sovereign of all,
who makes us holy in connecting command,
enjoining us to lift our hands in holy service.



We begin our journey now
through the Four Worlds
up the Tree of Life
through the seasons of the year
embodying the Name of God written in us.

(Four worlds image designed by Hazzan Shoshanna Brown; created by Les Schachter.)



1

winter / earth / action

עולם העשייה / *Assiyah*, The World of Action

We live in the world of *assiyah*, action and physicality.

This is the tangible world
of flesh, stone, wood.

Here the spark of the Divine
is hidden by the shell of appearance.

עולם העשייה / *Assiyah*, The World of Action

Assiyah is associated with winter.

In winter the ground is frozen,

but we know it contains the life of the spirit below.

The white wine or juice we drink

symbolizes winter's pale light and snow.



Blessing over juice or wine

(first cup: white grape juice or wine)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch atah יהוָה Eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei pri hagafen.

A Fountain of Blessing are You, יהוָה our God,

Sovereign of all, creator of the fruit of the vine.

Protective shells

In winter we layer ourselves in protective clothing.

The fruit we eat for the world of *assiyah* likewise has a protective covering.

Removing these hard shells exposes a vulnerable inside.



2-minute meditation: shell

Close your eyes. Imagine that you can see your protective outer “shell.”

What does it look like?

When does it serve you well, and when does it inhibit you?

Midwinter blooms in Israel: the almond tree

I said to the almond tree,
“Sister, speak to me of God,”
and the almond tree blossomed.

–*N. Kazantzakis*



Our shells protect us

The shell that conceals these fruits also protects.

We know what that feels like.

In the world of school, work, and everyday activity,
our spiritual selves require protection.

As we eat these fruits representing *assiyah*, may our
“shells” maintain integrity to keep us safe and whole...

...and may we discern safe and holy times to open.



We are all like pomegranates



In Song of Songs we read: “Come, my beloved, let us see... if the pomegranates are in bloom.”

The Gemara teaches that we should strive to see how even those who seem “empty” of goodness are filled with *mitzvot*, just as a pomegranate is filled with seeds.

May we be blessed to see the good in each other and to cherish each others' sweetness.

Blessing over tree fruits

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ

Baruch atah יהוה Eloheinu melech ha'olam,

borei pri ha'etz.

A Fountain of Blessing are You, יהוה our God,

Sovereign of all, creator of the fruit of the tree.



2

spring / water / emotion

עולם היצירה / *Yetzirah*, the World of Formation

We live in the world of *yetzirah*:

change, emotion, transformation.

In this world we turn clay into bricks,

iron into plows, words into poetry.

In this sphere we celebrate

creative power: both ours, and God's.

עולם היצירה / *Yetzirah*, the World of Formation



Yetzirah is the world of emotions and heart.

Here we experience change & creativity, flux & flow, spring & water.

To symbolize this realm, we drink white with a dash of red.

This deepening of color reminds us how the natural world wakes and becomes vibrant in the spring.



Bloom

Your voice knocks.
Like a magnolia
I open.

–Rabbi Rachel Barenblat

As we drink the second cup of wine or juice

may we, like spring flowers, blossom into our full potential.

We add a bit of red wine or juice to the white and recite together:

Blessing over juice or wine

(second cup: white with a splash of red)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch atah Adonai יהוה melech ha'olam, borei pri hagafen.

A Fountain of Blessing are You, יהוה our God,

Sovereign of all, creator of the fruit of the vine.

We still have hard places inside.

The world of *yetzirah* is connected with springtime.

We eat fruits without protective shells, anticipating how, in spring,
we will remove our coats and bask in the sun.

Still, these fruits contain pits; we may still have hardness around our hearts.

We still feel the need to protect what makes us vulnerable.

2-minute meditation: stone

Close your eyes. Imagine that you can see the stone you carry deep inside.

What does it look like?

What is bound up in the tight place hidden inside you?

Hope

One of the tree fruits on our table now is the olive, a sign of hope.

When the great flood began to subside, Noah sent out a dove.

“The dove came back to him toward evening, and there in its bill was a leaf it had picked from an olive tree.” (Gen. 8:11).

As we eat the fruit of *yetzirah*, may our hearts open to hope.



Blessing over tree fruits

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ

Baruch atah יהוה Eloheinu melech ha'olam,

borei pri ha'etz.

A Fountain of Blessing are You, יהוה our God,

Sovereign of all, creator of the fruit of the tree.



3

summer / air / thought

עולם הבריאה / *Briyah*, the World of Creation

We live in the world of *briyah*: thoughts and ideas.

We think, we plan, we contemplate.

As God imagined us into being
so we imagine new worlds into being.

Briyah is the world of the mind.

עולם הבריאה / *Briyah*, the World of Creation

Briyah is the realm of thought,

associated with the season of Summer and the element of air.

One name for God is “The Breath of Life.”

We breathe out what the trees breathe in;

the trees breathe out what we breathe in;

God breathes in us and through us.

Briyah is the world of the holy breath of creation.



Warming up

In the world of *briyah*, we drink red wine or juice
with a dash of white, reminding us that as the land becomes warmer
and the colors of the fruits deepen as they ripen,
we too will become warmer and more open.

We add a bit of white wine or juice to the red and recite together:

Blessing over juice or wine

(third cup: red with a splash of white)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch atah יהוה Eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei pri hagafen.

A Fountain of Blessing are You, יהוה our God,
Sovereign of all, creator of the fruit of the vine.

Softening within



In our deepest relationships, may we
be like the fruit of *briyah*, with no
inner stone and no outer façade.

May our outsides match
our innermost hearts.

Sweetness of wisdom

The rabbis asked, “Why are the words of Torah compared to the fig tree?” They answered, “Since all the figs do not ripen at the same time, the more one searches the tree, the more figs one finds in it.” (Eruvin 54a) So it is with the words of the Torah – the more we study them, the more sweet morsels we find.



2-minute meditation: softness

Close your eyes. Imagine that you are soft all the way through: no shell, no stone.

How does that feel?

What reverberates in you, what flows through you, when you soften like this?

Fruits with no shells or stones

As we eat the fruits representing *briyah*,

may we find healing in our intellectual lives.

May our thoughts be a source of light and hope.

We recite together the blessing for the fruits of *briyah*:

Blessing over tree fruits

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ

Baruch atah יהוה Eloheinu melech ha'olam,

borei pri ha'etz.

A Fountain of Blessing are You, יהוה our God,

Sovereign of all, creator of the fruit of the tree.



4

fall / fire / spirit

עולם האצילות / *Atzilut*, the World of Essence

We live in the world of *atzilut*, essence and spirit.

Physics tells us that what seems solid
is actually filled with atoms and the spaces they contain.

Atzilut affirms this knowing:

creation may seem ordinary

but it's suffused with Mystery.

עולם האצילות / *Atzilut*, the World of Essence



Atzilut is the world of essence and spirit,
associated with the season of Fall and the element of fire.

To represent *atzilut*, we drink deep red wine or juice.

The pure red liquid represents the full bloom of nature before winter.

As nature expends energy in an explosion of color, the cycle is complete.

Like trees

As we drink the fourth cup
of pure red wine or juice,
may we become strong, like healthy trees,
with solid roots in the ground
and with our arms open to love.
We take up a cup of red wine or juice
and recite together:



Blessing over juice or wine

(fourth cup: purple grape juice or red wine)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch atah יהוה Eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei pri hagafen.

A Fountain of Blessing are You, יהוה our God,
Sovereign of all, creator of the fruit of the vine.

2-minute meditation: spark

Close your eyes. Feel the spark of spirit that burns deep within you.

Cup your hands around that light.

What do you want to illuminate with that light as spring draws near?

Essence

Atzilut is the world of spirit or essence.

Some choose to savor a spoonful of maple syrup at this moment in the seder: the concentrated essence of the maple tree.

Others choose a sip of etrog spirits, made with the fragrant peels from last autumn's Sukkot.

If you opt for one of these, a blessing follows...



Blessing over Maple Syrup or Etrog Vodka

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָה בְּדַבְּרוֹ

Baruch atah יהו"ה Eloheinu melech ha'olam,

shehakol nihiyeh bidvaro.

A Fountain of Blessing are You, יהו"ה our God,
Sovereign of all; You create all things with Your word.

Taste and see

Psalm 34:8: "Taste & see that God is good."

We make our way into the woods
alongside the road, trees webbed
with plastic tubing, clear
and pale green against the snow.

Down to the beaver dam, pond
punctuated with cattails,
galvanized tin bright
against grizzled trunks.

Dip a finger beneath the living spigot.
At every sugar shack across the hills
clouds of fragrant steam billow.
And after long boiling, this amber...

Where I grew up, the air is soft
already, begonias thinking
about blooming. Here, this
is what rises, hidden and sweet.

-- Rabbi Rachel Barenblat

Secret blessing of the heart

In the world of *atzilut* we eat no fruit,
for the world of essence cannot be represented...

In this spiritual world, we become aware
of divine love, mercy, and wisdom

Perceived with our hearts, not our physical senses -
achieving an inner vision that, at last, can see the sap rise.

We can speak, at last, the secret blessing of the heart.

**What's your deep yearning or blessing, whether
in**

the realm of Action

Assiyah

the realm of Emotion

Yetzirah

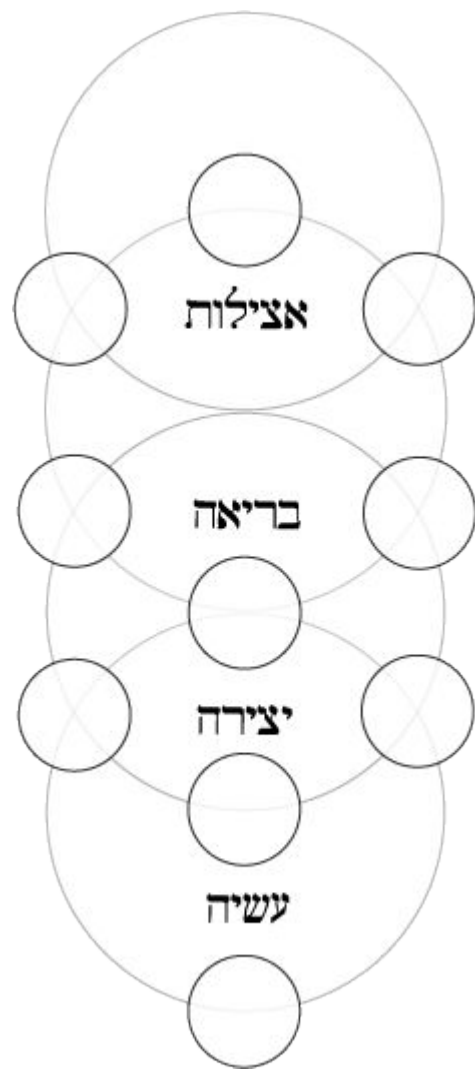
the realm of Thought

Briyah

the realm of Spirit

Atzilut

**that is ready, at last, to bring into
the light of the coming spring?**



A Prayer of Reb Nachman of Bratzlav

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 be alone,
and enter into prayer, to
talk with the One to whom I
belong.



A Prayer of Reb Nachman of Bratzlav



May I express there everything in my heart,
and may all the foliage of the field – all
grasses, trees, and plants – awake at my
coming, to send the powers of their life into
the words of my prayer so that my prayer
and speech are made whole through the life
and spirit of all growing things, which are
made as one by their transcendent Source.

May I then pour out my heart before your
Presence like water, O Lord!

A Prayer of Reb Nachman of Bratzlav

May it be Your will, O God of our ancestors, that through our eating of the fruits You have created, the trees be filled with the glory of their ability to renew themselves for new blossoming, from the start of the year to its end, so that our lives too will be renewed and filled with goodness, blessings, and peace.

And we say together: AMEN.

Blessing our bread

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

Baruch atah יהוָה Eloheinu melech ha'olam, hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz.

A Fountain of Blessing are You, יהוָה our God, Sovereign of all,
who brings forth bread from the earth.


The Festive Meal


enjoy
YOUR
meal


After we eat, we bless

Brich Rachamana (Sanctuary)

Text: Talmud (Aramic), R' Shefa Gold (English)

Voice 
Brich ra - cha ma - na, mal - ka - d' al - ma, ma - a -
You are the source of life for all/that is, and your

Vo. 
re - ei d' hai pi - a - ta brich ra - cha ma - na mal - ka - d'
bless - ing flows through me - e - e - e, you are the source of life for

Vo. 
al - ma, ma - a re - ei d' hai pi - ta.
all/that - is and your bless - ing flows through me.

A tale of Honi

One day Honi was journeying and he saw a man planting a carob tree. He asked, "How long does it take for this tree to bear fruit?" The man replied: "Seventy years." Honi asked him: "Are you certain that you will live another seventy years?" The man replied: "I found carob trees in the world; as my forefathers planted those for me, so I plant for my children." (Ta'anit 23a)



In order to grow



When fruit trees are pruned, they receive more sunlight and bear more fruit.

What do you need to prune away in order to become more fruitful?

In order to grow

What structures do you need
in order to sink your roots deep & grow?

What can you build that will support growth
so the world can be better-nourished?

Share your answers aloud with a neighbor.



Olam Chesed Yibaneh / עולם חסד יבנה

Menachem Creditor

♩ = 80

Voice

O - lam che - sed yi - ba - neh yai dai dai dai dai dai dai.

O - lam che - sed yi - ba - neh yai dai dai dai dai dai.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of 80 beats per minute. It consists of two staves. The top staff is for the voice, and the bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'O - lam che - sed yi - ba - neh yai dai dai dai dai dai dai.' The score includes a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature of 4/4. The melody is simple and repetitive, with a focus on the phrase 'yai dai dai dai dai dai dai'.

I will build this world from love, yai dai dai...
And you must build this world from love, yai dai dai...
And when we build this world from love, yai dai dai...
Then God will build this world from love, yai dai dai...

*(Other qualities we might
build with: emet, truth;
gevurah, strength; tzedek,
justice; shalom, peace...)*

Closing words of wisdom

God led Adam 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 or destroy My world –

for if you do, there will be no one

to repair it after you.” (Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13)

Closing words of wisdom

Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai taught:

“If you have a sapling in your hand and someone tells you

the Messiah has arrived, first plant the sapling

and then go out to welcome the Messiah.” (Avot d’ Rabbi Natan B31).

May we all plant saplings in days to come

whether or not we think the Messiah is near.





About this haggadah

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