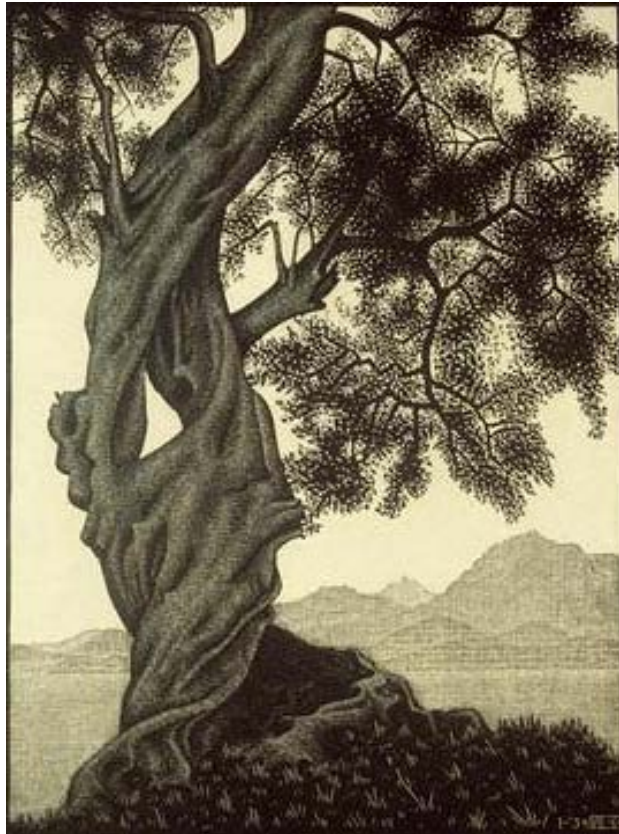


# Tu B'Shevat Seder

2007 / 5767



“God bless the olive tree; in all the world, there is none more beautiful and succulent than the olive of my land”

**Trees of Hope**  
**Bay Area Women in Black**  
**Brit Tzedek v'Shalom**  
**Jewish Voice for Peace**

Music Throughout

Opening – HINE MA TOV

Hineh ma tov u'ma na'yim,  
shevet achim gam yachad  
Hineh ma tov u'ma na'yim,  
shevet achiot gam yachad

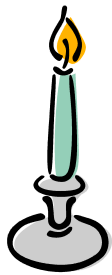
Hineh ma tov, shevet achim gam yachad  
Hine ma tov, shevet achiot gam yachad

*Psalm 133 Trans. How good and pleasant it is  
for brothers and sisters to live together in unity*

Welcome –

Introduction to Seder –

**Lighting the Candles –**



*We ask all the children to come up and help us light the candles.*

We begin our seder by lighting candles, taking a moment to appreciate our connection with trees, and all that we receive from them.

Please say together:

*As we light the candles and welcome tu b'shevat, may we appreciate all that trees give to us.*



***Blessing, please say together:***

Barukh ata adonai, asher khanan otanu b'vina l'havkhin bein tov u'vein ra  
u'va'yekholet livkhor ba'tov.

***Blessed are you adonai, who grants us the insight to distinguish between good and evil, and the ability to choose good.***

Tu-B'Shevat, the new year of the trees, is a holiday which celebrates the unity of all and calls us to both reflect and act. Around 1600 the Kabbalists who lived in Safed created a "Tikkun," a fixing of the world for Tu-B'Shevat in a form of a Seder (which means order.)

In this seder we choose to remember the interconnectedness and interdependence we have with all of life: trees and fauna, rivers, oceans and seas, the sky, stars, planets, moon and sun, the animals, insects, reptiles and humans...all living and intricate organisms.

It is appropriate now when our world seems fractured and broken, to come together, celebrate the unity of all and support the work of **Rabbis for Human Rights**, an organization which acts to bring peace and to repair this world through its work for Justice.

This Seder is also a celebration of hope. Of the possibility that the efforts of all peace-makers do make a difference and help to repair our world.

The order of the Tu B'Shevat Seder is embedded in the Kabbalistic concept of "the four worlds." The Kabbalists defined four levels of meaning in all experience, and they termed those levels "worlds."

The Four worlds are:

<b>world</b>	<i>translation</i>	<i>element</i>	<i>essence</i>
<b>ATZILUT:</b>	<i>EMANATION</i>	<i>FIRE</i>	<i>SPIRIT</i>
<b>BERIAH:</b>	<i>CREATION</i>	<i>AIR</i>	<i>THOUGHT</i>
<b>YETZIRAH:</b>	<i>FORMATION</i>	<i>WATER</i>	<i>EMOTIONS</i>
<b>ASSIYAH:</b>	<i>ACTION</i>	<i>EARTH</i>	<i>DEEDS</i>

During the Tu-B'shevat Seder we will reflect on the connection between the four worlds. We will travel from the world of Atzilut, where all is one, through the worlds of Beriah, where we plant seeds of hope, to the world of Yetzirah, the world of the emotions where we're caught up in a continuing cycle of violence and injustice, to the world of Assiyah, where we work for "Tikkun Olam" for the repairing of this broken world.

In our Tu B'Shevat Seder the world of Atzilut is represented by red grape juice: a symbol of the spiritual world. The material world of Assiyah is represented by white grape juice. The two intermediate worlds are represented by a mixture of red and white. The worlds are also represented by fruit. The part of the fruit that can be eaten represents the spiritual, the inedible parts (the pits) represent the physical and the shells serve as protection for the fragile holiness inside.



**Atzilut**

**אצילות**

*The World of Spirit*

We start our Seder in the world of Atzilut. Spirit. This world's symbolic element is fire, the source of energy and all living things, from which everything comes and in which we all - human, plants, animals and minerals - are one, all sharing the same universe, the same air; the beating of the heart.

**Song: HEART BEAT**

One heart, one beat  
Great heart beat by beat....

Straight paths, crooked paths  
Great heartbeat by beat....

Soul of life, ocean deep, Great heart beat  
by beat  
Return us to your mystery, Great heart  
beat by beat

One, one heart, one beat, one heartbeat....

Soul of eternal tides, Great heart beat by  
beat  
Refresh, refill, renew our lives, Great  
heart beat by beat

One heart beat, one heart beat....

Eternally giving ever dying, ever living....

(Linda Hirschhorn & Vocolot (c 2001)



Two men were fighting over a piece of land. Each claimed ownership and bolstered his claim with apparent proof. To resolve the dispute, they went to the rabbi. The rabbi listened but couldn't come to a decision – each one seemed to be right. Finally he said, “Since I cannot decide to whom this land belongs, let us ask the land.” He put his ear to the ground, and after a moment straightened up. “Gentlemen, the land says it belongs to neither of you – but that you belong to it.” (*Talmud*)

***Please touch the olive branch on your table, or touch someone who is touching the olive and say together:***

We raise the olive branch a symbol of responsibility, identification, and hope:

We raise this branch in sorrow because each and every year olive trees, the source of livelihood for Palestinian families, are intentionally chopped down, burned and uprooted.

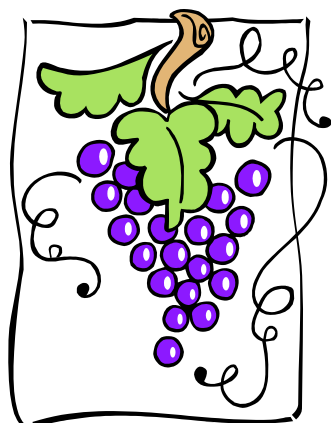
We raise this branch as a sign of identification with those Israelis and Palestinians who are doing everything in their power to change this reality and make enemies into friends by planting, pruning, plowing and harvesting together, despite the voices of hate and incitement from both sides.

May it be Your Will that the fruit of the olive, symbol of the World of Yetzirah, inspire us to create justice and peace out of the basic materials of soil, the fruit of the soil, and the human spirit so that we will reconnect the olive branch to the root of its soul.

***From Rabbi Arik Ascherman, Executive Director of Rabbis for Human Rights***



There's a fire alive within every living cell of every being. This spark of light is our connection to the divine. For the world of Atzilut we drink a cup of red grape juice – the color of fire, the color of spirit.



**(Please pour a cup of red juice, but don't drink it yet...)**

Teaching the Melody of the Blessings:

**Blessing for the grape juice**

**נברך את עין החיים, מצמיחת פרי הגפן**  
**N'varekh et eyn ha'khayim, matzmikhat pri hagafen**  
Let us bless the source of life, that ripens fruit on the vine

**Le'Chayim!!! (to Life! – Please drink!)**

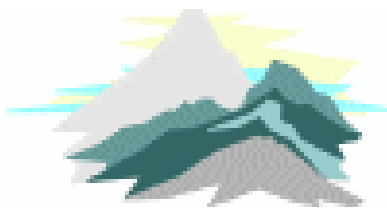
In Atzilut we can imagine the world the way we want it to be, whole and healed. We can see how the light in each of us, could one day be joined into one fire.

Since Atzilut is pure spirit, we don't eat fruit. We pause, we become aware of the spirit in us that flows through us. We pass incense, and we bless this universe, this world that is so full of good smells and gifts.

**Blessing for the smell:**

**נברך את עין החיים, בוראת מיני בשמים**  
**N'varekh et eyn ha'khayim, bo-ra-at miney besamim**  
Let us bless the source of life, who creates all good fragrances.

**(Pass the herbs)**



**Beriah**

**בריאה**

***The world of Thought and Air***

**Ruach רוח**

In both Arabic and Hebrew the word RUACH means “breath” and “spirit”. We breathe in, we become aware of our breath and are filled with ruach.

The Bible states that Elijah stood on Mount Horeb waiting to hear God. He waited through a great storm that tore rocks from the mountain; he waited through an earth quake; he waited through a fire. God did not appear in any of these natural phenomena. After waiting on the mountain for a long while, Elijah finally heard God's voice in a whisper of the soft wind. (I Kings 19:9-14)

Let us focus our hearts and our thoughts on the spark of the Divine glowing within each and every one of us. Let us take in breath provide the air we need to fan that fire within.

## **Meditation –**

### **Reading**

#### **From Rabbi Arik Ascherman**

*When we gather on Tu B'shvat, and as RHR does day after day so that Israelis and Palestinians can plant trees together, perhaps our trees will become again Trees of Life. When we not only hear the cries, but right the wrongs done to Palestinians suffering under Occupation and to our fellow Israelis for whom we have ceased to feel communal responsibility, perhaps we will build a society and a world in which all can sing with joy, Mi Khamokah Be'ilim Adonai (Exodus 15:11, Daily Prayer Book).*

*(February 1, 2007)*



### **Song: Mi Khamokha**

Mi khamokha ba-elim adonai,  
mi kamokha nedar ba-kodesh,  
nora t'hilot, oseh feleh

*Who is like you among all powers? Who is like you transcendent holiness? Awesome in splendor, doing wonders.*

### **Reading:**

#### **From Rabbi Arik Ascherman**



*RHR has not been waiting for Tu B'Shvat, but has been busy planting trees over the last few weeks. As always, there are more farmers who are asking for our help than our resources allow. On January 14th we planted trees with residents of Kariyut on their lands next to route 60. We planted all of the 600 trees that we had brought, and asked the army to make sure that they didn't disappear in the middle of the night. The following week we planted 600 trees on lands adjacent to the Kedumim settlement. Over the next few weeks we will plant trees on land where trees were cut down to build the Separation Barrier. There will be trees planted inside the expanded fence of the Itamar settlement to replace trees which have been burnt or chopped down. (The settlement has a fence, but they built an expanded fence without permission.)*

*(February 1, 2007)*

“When a tree that bears fruit is cut down, its moan goes from one end of the world to the other, yet no sound is heard.” (*Pirke de-R. Eliezer 34*)

**(Please pour the juice which is mostly red but don't drink it yet...)**



“Producing olives and olive oil from the trees, which can live for as long as 2,500 years, is a critical part of the Palestinian economy and culture and are a major source of income for many families.”  
(*San-Francisco Chronicle October 23, 2002*)

To symbolize the world of Bryiah we drink a cup of juice which is mostly red: we are still in the spiritual world of thinking and planning. This juice, however, has some white in it: We start to think about our human actions and the effect these actions may have on others.

**Blessing for the grape juice**

**נברך את עין החיים, מצמיחת פרי הגפן**

**N'varekh et eyn ha'khayim, matzmikhat pri hagafen**  
Let us bless the source of life, that ripens fruit on the vine

**Le'Chayim!! (drink!!)**

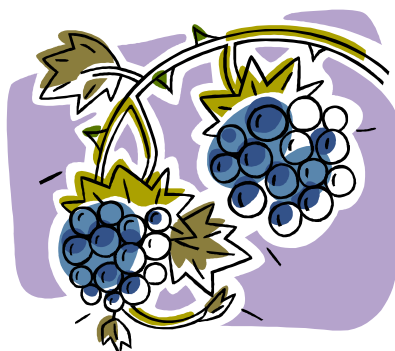
**Eating of Fruit:** The world of **Bryiah** is symbolized by fruit that are soft all the way through such as grapes or raisins.

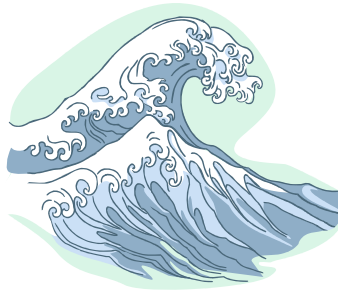
**Blessing for the grapes/raisins:**

**נברך את עין החיים, מצמיחת פרי הגפן**

**N'varekh et eyn ha'khayim, matzmikhat pri hagafen**  
Let us bless the source of life, that ripens fruit on the vine

**(Please eat a grape or raisin!)**





**Yetzira**

**הַרְיָצִי**

***The world of Emotions and Water***

The world of Yetzirah is the world of our emotions, the world of observation and reflection. We observe the world that we live in. We look at the places where our world is broken and needs mending. We point at injustices in order to do the important work of Tikkun Olam, of repairing the world.

**“When, in your war against a city, ...you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. .. Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you under siege?”**  
(Deuteronomy 10:19-20)

***Wassem, Saad and Abdel,***  
***July/August 2003***

*“We are all farmers in Arrobonny. I for one started planting 50 years ago. I was a small boy. I loved to grow things. I had land and a water reservoir on my land to water my orchard of olive trees and my vegetables. They have taken everything and now I have nothing. There are around 17,000 dunums on the other side of the wall-our farms and orchards. They [the Israeli Authorities] said that we would be able to get to them, but there is only one gate and it is complicated. You need permission from several bodies every time you want to access your land. I managed to relocate all the trees this side of the road. They would not allow me to get my trees from the other side of the road. It took 50 years to grow our olive trees and in 3 minutes everything was gone.”*

*Arrobonny (Jenin District) West Bank*



## Reading

*From Rabbis for Human Rights Annual Report 2006*

*This year, RHR won a major High Court appeal regarding the state's obligations to provide and protect the access of Palestinians to the agricultural lands. Our Olive Tree Campaign is now helping over 30 villages whose ability to harvest, plow, plant and perform other vital tasks related to their agricultural livelihoods is denied or limited because of settler violence, army restrictions and/or the Separation Barrier.*

*Unfortunately, the High Court ruling was general, leaving room for evasion by security forces. Despite RHR intervention, the process of coordination can be time consuming, tedious and humiliating, leading some Palestinians to give up and others to miss windows of opportunity for certain agricultural needs. Last year security forces provided preliminary protection when farmers came to plow, but when settlers descended and began to threaten them the forces abandoned their protective stance and even threw percussion grenades at RHR and the farmers. Over the past year, settlers have even expanded the area in which they attack any Palestinian who 'dares' to enter.*

***The struggle in the upcoming year will be to translate the High Court decision into change on the ground***

**Mohyeddin Hassoon, Field Worker, Rabbis for Human Rights**

SUPPORT-

**Belly Dancing**



Reading –

**FOR MY TREE IN ISRAEL** (Julia Vinograd)

There is blood on my tree,  
on the tree with my name in Israel.

The tears of tear-gassed crowds water the  
roots,  
and the tears of rage  
and the tears of grief for the dead.

Is this the tree I planted to bring forth life  
from the desert?  
The broken bones of hands throwing rocks  
and the rocks they threw pile around my tree,  
the tree with my name in Israel.

It did not begin like this.  
Everyone in my class planted a tree in Israel,  
filled out a form and sent a letter  
with our names.

I could've had pictures sent me of the tree  
growing as I grew  
but I didn't want to know what it looked like.

The tree didn't know what I looked like.  
We shared a name, it was my name,  
it was enough.

And now there is blood on my name  
on my tree in Israel.

Do not speak to me of self-defense,  
of necessity and nations and history.

There is no water in such words  
and I need a glass of water before I sleep.

Do not explain, it may be true but it doesn't  
help,

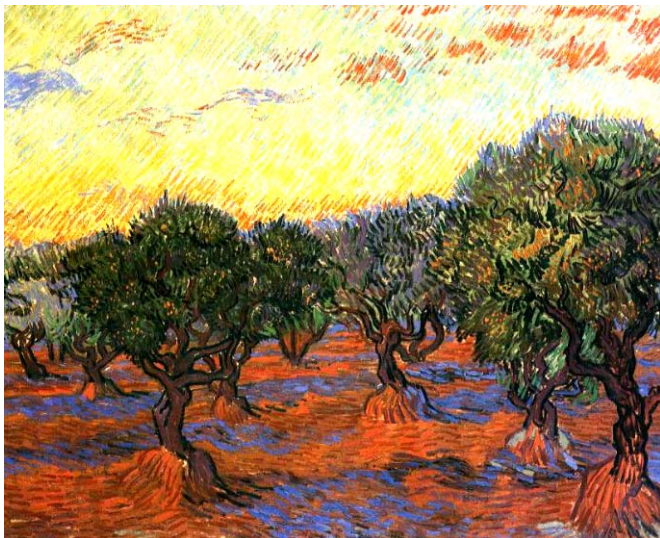
It is not in the same language  
in which my tree talks to the wind.

There must always be an Israel  
because my tree is there  
and they shall never come with axes  
and cut down my name.

But there is blood on my tree  
and the smell of blood

And I want my name to be good again.

I want my good name to grow in Israel  
and put out damp new leaves every spring,  
as soft as kisses.



**Song:**  
**ELI, ELI**

Oh hear my words, I pray that these  
things never end  
The sand and the sea, the rush of  
the waters  
The crash of the heavens, the prayer  
of my heart

Eli, Eli, shelo yigamer l'olam  
Hachol vehayam rishrush shel  
hamayim  
B'rak hashamyim t'filat ha'adam

(Words by Hannah Senesh; music by David Zehavi)

**(Please pour grape juice which is mostly white)**

**Blessings:**

For the world of Yetzirah we drink a cup of mostly white grape juice, which has a tinge of red in it. The white represents the action taken by humans and the red reminds us the spark of spirit that exists in all.

**Blessing for the grape juice**

**נברך את עין החיים, מצמיחת פרי הגפן**  
**N'varekh et eyn ha'khayim, matzmikhat pri hagafen**  
Let us bless the source of life, that ripens fruit on the vine

**Le'Chaiim (drink!!)**

**Fruit:** fruits that are hard on the inside and have a soft outer coat, such as Olives, and dates symbolize the world of Yetzirah. While we name the hard facts of injustice, we remember that all humans are connected, that we all share a spirit which moves us, that all have the capacity to love, to feel compassion and to change.

**Blessing for the fruit:**

**נברך את עין החיים, בוראת פרי העץ**  
**N'varekh et eyn ha'khayim, boret pri haetz**  
Let us bless the source of life, you create the fruit of the tree

**(Please eat an olive or date)**



**Assiyah**

**עשייה**

***The world of Action***

The world of Assiyah concludes our Seder. It is the world in which we are called on to do everything in our power to for Tikun Olam. In this world we acknowledge those people who are spending their nights and days in the fight for peace and Justice.

## Honi and the Carob Tree

One day Honi the sage was walking through the fields. He happened upon an old man planting a carob tree. Honi asked the man, "Why are you planting that carob tree? You will never get any fruit from it." Honi knew that it takes seventy years or more for a carob tree to bear fruit. The old man continued planting as he said to Honi: "Just as my grandfather planted trees so that I would enjoy their fruit, so I am planting this tree for my grandchildren."  
*(Babylonian Talmud)*



### **Reading:** **From Rabbi Arik Ascherman**

*We do not plant simply to feel good or for humanitarian purposes. At least as important, I invite you to participate in the planting of hope. Believe with us that we are planting atzei khayim, trees of life for all who hold them fast.*

*The work of all of us who work for peace and human rights are acts of faith. We believe that one day our actions will bear fruit. We don't know if this will occur in one or two or ten years, but we believe. We do it not only for ourselves, but for our children and grandchildren -both Jewish and Palestinian. At the same time, we don't know which of the seedlings we plant will survive and which will not. ... Even when we succeed for a moment, we are aware of the tremendous power of the current reality to kill seeds of hope.*

### **Song: Hold On**

Hold on to what is good  
Even if it is a long way from here  
Hold on to what you believe  
Even if it is a tree which stands by itself  
Hold on to what you must do  
Even if it is a long way from here  
Hold on, hold on to life  
Even if it is easier letting go  
Hold on to my hand  
Even when I have gone away from you  
Hold on to my hand  
Even when I have gone away from you  
Hold on  
Hold on....



words: Pueblo poem  
Music: © Judith-Kate Friedman

**(Pour a cup of white grape juice)**

By coming here tonight and participating in this unique Tu B'shvat Seder we are all in **Assiyah** – we are taking Action through celebrating our connection to the earth, and our supporting the work all peace activists.

For the world of Assiyah, we drink a cup of juice, which is completely white, with a promise to do whatever is in our power to bring forth justice and peace.

### Blessing for the grape juice

**נברך את עין החיים, מצמיחת פרי הגפן**  
**N'varekh et eyn ha'khayim, matzmikhat pri hagafen**  
Let us bless the source of life, that ripens fruit on the vine

### Le'Chayim!! (drink!!)

**Fruit:** The world of Assiyah is symbolized by fruits and nuts, such as almonds, that are hard on the outside and soft within. We acknowledge that while our work for justice seems at times futile and is always hard, we also know that in it we touch the spirit of others. We connect to the spirit which is the source of all.



### Blessing for the fruit:

**נברך את עין החיים, בוראת פרי העץ**  
**N'varekh et eyn ha'khayim, boret pri haetz**  
Let us bless the source of life, you create the fruit of the tree

### (Eat an almond!!)

Thank you -

*Thank you for coming tonight, for taking the time to come together and create a community here and to support, with our spirits and our resources the work of building peace and most importantly of planting hope, seed by seed, in the Middle East.*

### Song:

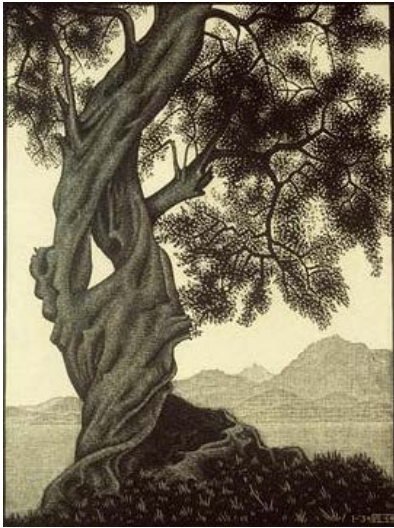
#### Od Yavo Shalom Aleinu

Peace is yet to come to us  
And over all humanity  
Salaam ("Peace" in Arabic)  
Over us and over all the worlds  
Salaam, Salaam

Od Yavo Shalom Aleinu  
Ve-al kulam  
Salaam  
Aleinu ve-al kol ha-olam  
Salaam, Salaam

(Words and Music – Sheva)

***Thank-you and see you next year!***



**Trees of Hope Committee**

(415) 789 7685

[treesofhope@mindspring.com](mailto:treesofhope@mindspring.com)

**Rabbis for Human Rights**

Yitzhak Elhanan 2, Jerusalem, Israel 92141

Tel: 972-2-563 7731

email: [info@rhr.israel.net](mailto:info@rhr.israel.net)

<http://rhr.israel.net>

**Rabbis for Human Rights – North America**

P.O. Box 1539

West Tisbury MA 02575

Phone: 508/696-1880

Email: [office@rhr-na.org](mailto:office@rhr-na.org)

<http://rhr-na.org>