

*Jewish Yoga & Meditation
Manual*

SHEVAT

Jewish Yoga Course
Breathandsoul.net



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SUMMARY OF SHEVAT

12 DIMENSIONS OF SHEVAT

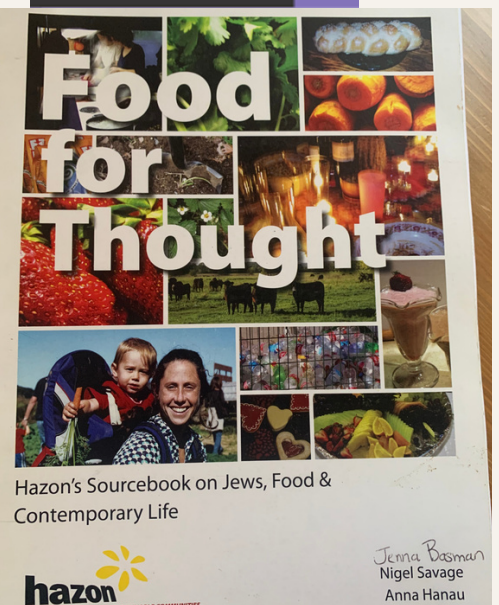
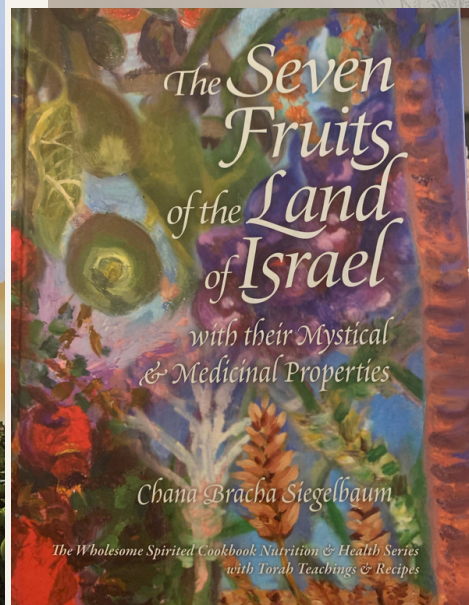
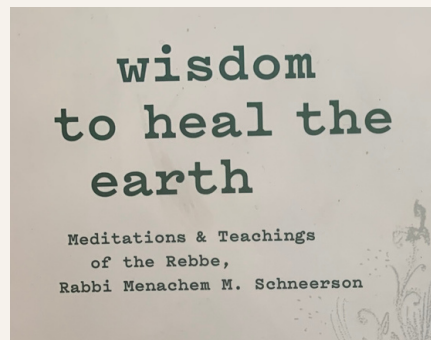
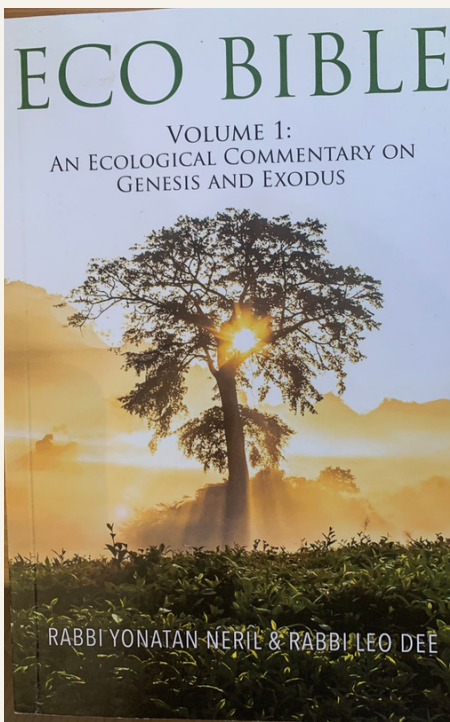
SEQUENCE OF <i>HASHEM'S</i> NAME	H-Y-V-H
TORAH VERSE	<i>Vayikra, 27:33 — Ha'mer Yemirenu V'ha-ya Hu...</i> 'If anyone makes a substitution, both the animal [and its substitute become holy.]'
LETTER	<i>Tzadi / Tzadik</i>
MONTH NAME	<i>Sheivet, (rod or staff)</i>
SENSE	<i>Le'itah (taste)</i>
ZODIAC	<i>D'li (Pitcher, Aquarius)</i>
TRIBE	<i>Asher</i>
BODY PART	<i>Kurkavan (esophagus)</i>
ELEMENT	<i>Avir (air), or Ru'ach (wind)</i>
PARSHIOS	<i>Va'era through Yisro</i>
SEASON	Winter
HOLIDAY	<i>Tu b' Shevat (15th of Shevat)</i>

המליך אות צ' בלעיטה וקשר לו כתר וצרפן זה בזה וצר בהם דלי בעולם, ושבת בשנה, וקורקבן בנפש זכר ונקבה

HE MADE THE LETTER TZADIK KING OVER STUFFING (EATING), AND HE TIED A CROWN TO IT AND HE COMBINED ONE WITH ANOTHER AND WITH THEM HE FORMED AQUARIUS IN THE UNIVERSE AND SHEVAT IN THE YEAR, AND THE STOMACH IN THE SOUL MALE AND FEMALE

Reading Recommendations

- Yoga with Trees by Jenny Garrison (book)
- Braiding Sweetgrass (book)
- Eco Bible by Rabbi Yonatan Neril (book)
- Eating as Tikun by Sarah Yehudit Schneider
- Food for Thought - Hazon's Sourcebook on Jews, Food & Contemporary Life by Nigel Savage
- The Month of Shevat by Rav Pinson (book)
- 2 Trees at Eden's Center- article link
- Seven fruits of the land of Israel by Chana Bracha siegelbaum (book)
- 7 Species & 7 Attributes -link
- Kavanot For Elevating the Acts of Eating- Abraham Sutton (pdf link)
- The mitzvah of “Bal Tashchit” and Environmental Awareness -link



Tree Teachings

Trees teach us the flow of seasonal cycling.

Spring reveals in us new life and blossoming.

Summer brings about full expression and light.

Fall shows us fruition, abundance and then letting go

Winter teaches us rest and hibernation

This cyclical ecological wisdom is woven throughout the Jewish Calendar. All seasons are woven into the human spirit.

May the trees be
our great teachers!

JENNA ZADAKA



Tu' B Shevat is the New year for the trees, celebrating the ascension of the 'Saraf' (Hebrew for 'sap') up the tree, infusing the Tree with a renewed life force.

Tu B'Shevat is when the trees begin to awaken from the death and coldness of winter. It is the earth's beginning of health, healing, and wakefulness.

The 'Saraf' is the heart of the tree that sweetens the tree's waters, and reveals itself into an expression. The tree's expression is fruit; our expression is some sort of breakthrough, insight, imagination, word, or action.

One lesson of trees is that the more rooted we are, the higher we can rise and express our greatest potential.

It says in Devarim, "Man is a tree of the field."

We both have roots, trunk, branches, fruit.

What are your roots?

What is your trunk?

What are your branches?

What are your fruit?



ROOT TO RISE

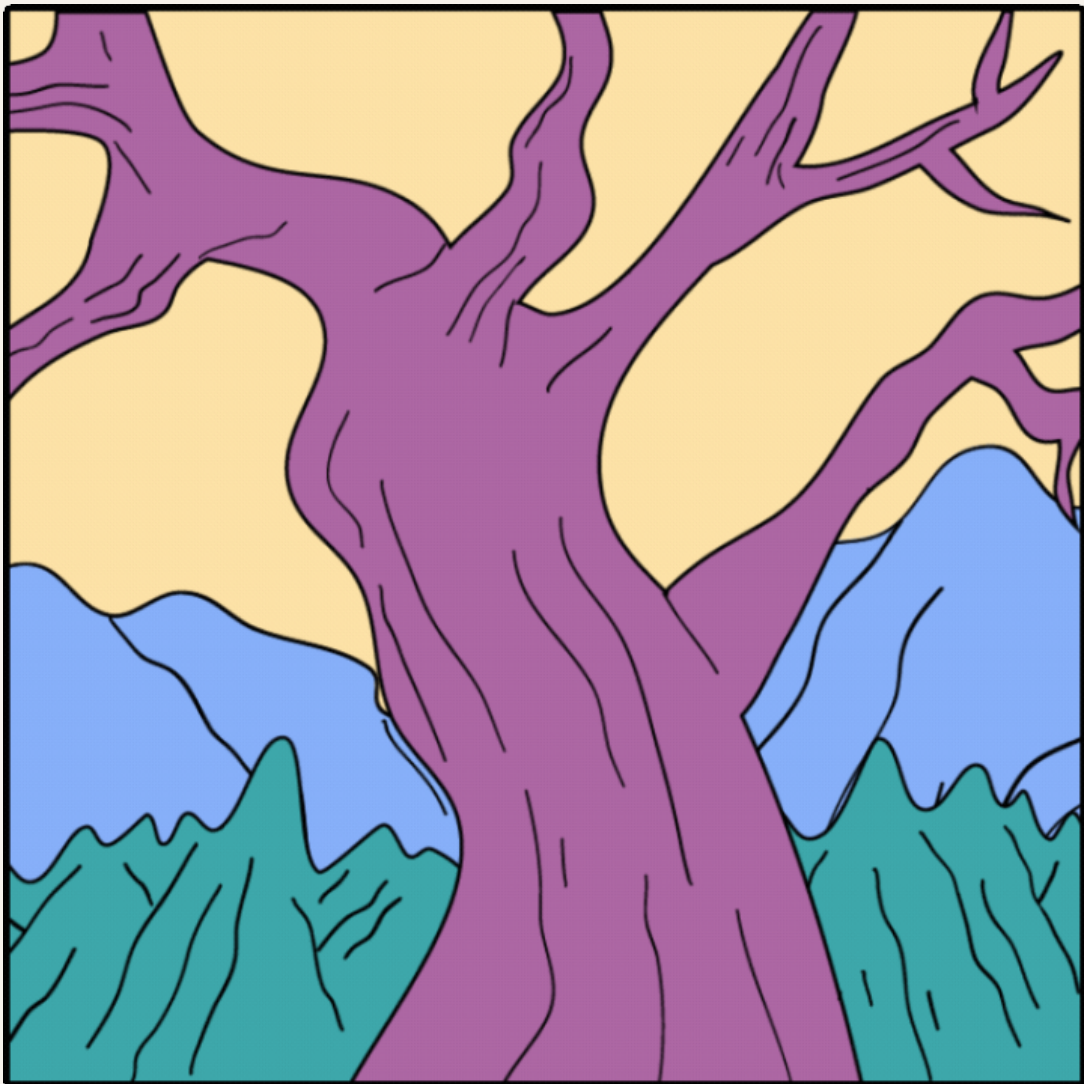
The more rooted we are: to our land, ancestors, traditions, rituals, heritage, the more we can rise through our trunk and give out our fruit: our sweet offerings to the world.

*What
are you
rooted
to?*



Twin Trees

Our breathing meshes with the breathing of trees in exchanging oxygen and carbon dioxide. Our respiratory system is even shaped like a tree! We hold an upright posture and vertical spine like a tree. We even share about 50% of our DNA with trees. The inside of a tree's ring resembles a human fingerprint.



WHAT ELSE IS PHYSICALLY SIMILAR ABOUT US AND TREES?

PRAYER TREE

A tree stands tall , reaches its branches long,
and opens its leaves to receive sunlight.
Reflecting the verse, "A man is a tree of the
field", we stand tall in prayer, raise our arms
to our Creator, and open ourselves to receive
the Light from Above.

“Paying attention is a
form of reciprocity
with the living world,
receiving the gifts
with open eyes and
open heart.”

Braiding Sweetgrass





**"TREES
ARE THE
EARTH'S
ENDLESS
EFFORTS
TO SPEAK
TO THE
LISTENIN
G
HEAVEN."**

Tagore

Jewish Tale

A man was travelling through the desert, hungry, thirsty and tired, when he came upon a tree bearing luscious fruit and affording plenty of shade, underneath which ran a spring of water. He ate of the fruit, drank of the water and rested beneath the shade.

When he was about to leave, he turned to the tree and said: “Tree, O tree, with what should I bless you? “Should I bless you that your fruit be sweet? Your fruit is already sweet. “Should I bless you that your shade be plentiful? Your shade is plentiful.

That a spring of water should run beneath you? A spring of water runs beneath you.

“There is one thing with which I can bless you: May it be G-d’s will that all the trees planted from your seeds should be like you . . .”

(Talmud, Taanit 5b)



JEWISH TALE

*For a song
version of this
beautiful Jewish
tale to listen
during your
yoga practice,
listen here:
[Ilan Ilan](#)*



Image: detail from an illustration by Chassidic artist Michael Muchnik.



Advice from a
TREE

Stand tall and proud

Sink your roots into the
earth

Be content
with your natural beauty

Go out on a limb

Drink plenty of water

Remember your roots

Enjoy the view!

Ilan Shamir

Tree Songs

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov teaches that before leaving for Egypt, Jacob taught the melody of the Land of Israel to his sons. This song of the land hums from the trees. (Likutei Moharan part 2, 63). Jacob taught his sons this song to bring the tune to Joseph in Egypt. The song of the trees is what brought a reconciliation between the brothers.

When feeling torn or at strife within your own self, a walk near the trees can restore peace and bring you back in tune with your innermost self.
(Inspired by Eco Bible).



TALMUD TALE

A tale in the Talmud tells the story of a tree:

"One day he [Honi the Circle Drawer] was journeying on the road and he saw a man planting a carob tree; he asked him, How long does it take [for this tree] to bear fruit? The man replied: Seventy years. He then further asked him: Are you certain that you will live another seventy years? The man replied: I found [ready grown] carob trees in the world; as my ancestors planted these for me, therefore I shall plant these for my children.

Babylonian Talmud, Ta'anit 23a



This story reminds us to ask, how much is our spiritual avodah and yoga practice about us, and how much is it about giving the fruits back out to the world?

Resiliency

"He shall be as a tree planted beside streams of water, which brings forth its fruit in its season. Its leaves do not wilt, and whatever it does prospers." Psalm 1:3

When we are dry or hollow, we cannot bring forth fruit. The imagery of the tree here is moist and watery. The hydration and life-giving waters of the tree is what allows it to grow, thrive, and survive droughts. On this verse, Rabbi Neril teaches that trees are one of the most resilient organisms against drought. One of the gifts of yoga is that when we are 'dried out' or uninspired, we can shift our energy and enter a new state of being. Yoga increases our resiliency: we don't get stuck when we know how to enter that "flow state". When jaded, we can receive the life-giving energy from the Trees to bounce back with freshness and aliveness. A walk through the forest, a meditation under the tree top, or a deep tree-hug can help us resiliently return to our inner chosen state of being.



Each one of us in a mini-tree.
We all produce fresh fruits and offerings to the world: through deeds and legacies. What is your fruit, and how does it sweeten the world?

Every year, a tree sheds its bark. We need to shed layers, also. Shevat is a time to ask ourselves, what doesn't serve me anymore? When we peel away the outer layers, what is left?

Torah is a “Tree of life for those who hold on to it”.
What does it mean to hold onto something? When in life are we gripping when we should let go, and when do we hold something that is precious?





YOGA APPLICATIONS

Progress through your yoga class from seed to full tree. Start on your back in seed pose. Then move to seated postures, growing the spine tall. Work your way to standing postures, and end with a full expression of Tree pose. Remember that a tree is both grounding and growing.

Infuse visualizations of nature and trees. How can we allow the tree of life to express through us?



Be The Tree

Bundle up and practice your yoga outside to tap into the healing power of nature, and breathe deeper near the trees. Gaze at the trees with a childlike wonder. Allow your sense of play to arise. Then, Be The Tree!

"Look around. If there is more than one tree to choose from, allow yourself to imagine your child self. Which tree would your child-self go to? Soften your gaze. Perhaps one particular tree has a soft glow around it, or is intuitively beckoning you in some way." Jenny Garrison,



Be The Tree

"I think it is important that you let the tree know that you will not hurt it. Some people naturally carry this energy message, and even animals do not fear them. Trees have often been harmed by humans, so the safety message seems basic and foundational. Thoughts such as "I come in peace" or "Hello beautiful tree! I will not cause you harm." seem a good starting place. Once I have come to the tree who will be my partner in practice, I stand before the tree with my feet solidly grounded on Earth. Then, I embody the shape of the tree as best I can. This is a beginning warm up stretch for my own body and an acknowledgement of the form of the tree."Jenny Garrison,



Tree-Dog

You can flow sweetly under the tree, or you can use the tree to deepen into your posture! Play around with different postures, using the tree as support. For an example, here is a variation of Down Dog (great for pregnancy!):

Stand a few feet away from your partner, the Tree. Place your hands on the tree, and walk the feet back so your spine is parallel to the earth. Press the hands into the tree, and feel the feet mesh into the dirt/ground below. Hold the pose and breathe, exchanging oxygen with the tree under your palms. Lift out of the pose and feel the shift of your energy.



Variation: Tree-Dog Twist

From Tree-Dog, take your left hand and set it on your sacrum. Roll the shoulder back, gently twisting the spine. Rotate the left ribs towards the sky. Press through the palm of your hand into the tree to deepen the twist.

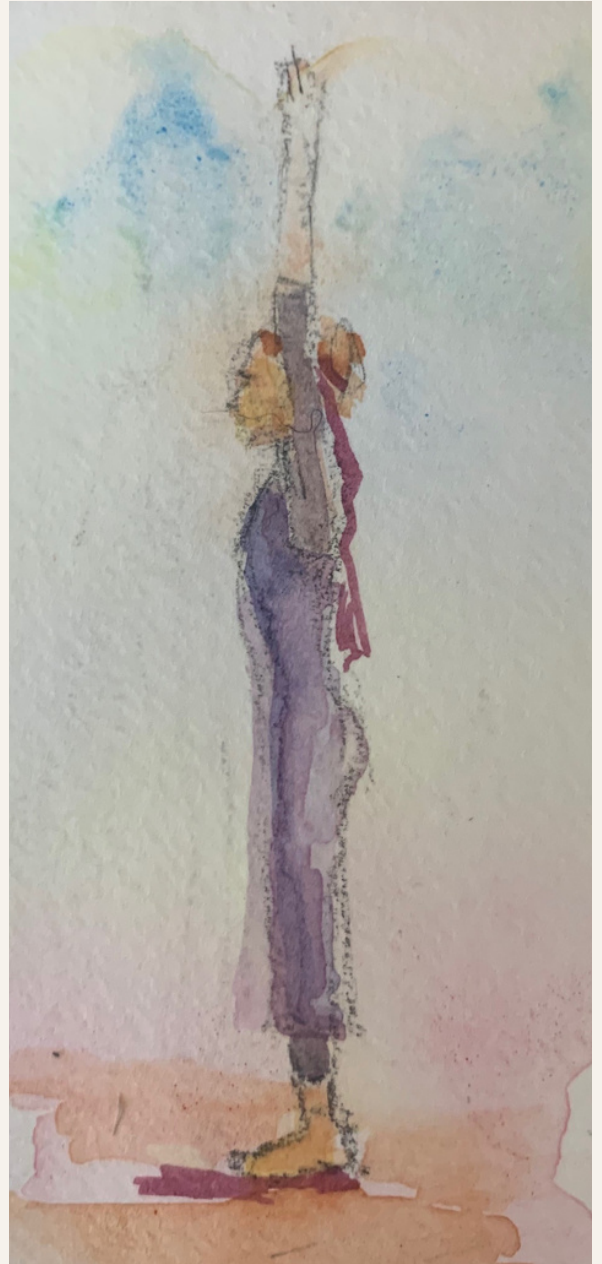


Mountain Pose

Extend down energetic roots into the earth, rooting you with deep connection and appreciation for the earth

The hebrew word for earth, 'Adamah', is related to “Edemeh”/ imagination. Our rootedness in the earth gives us the ability to imagine, and envision.

What energy is arising through the feet that is alive and present? When you feel connected and supported by the earth, what more can you envision? When does your imagination activate most freely?



“The earth is so richly endowed that the least we can do in return is to pay attention.”

-Braiding Sweetgrass

Tree Pose



"A little sway from side to side is a sign of resilience and an opportunity to find equilibrium in the middle of shifting circumstance."
—Sage Rountree

Benefits: improves balance and sense of groundedness, opens the hips, lengthens the side body, strengthens ankles and legs.

Steps:

1. From Mountain Pose, bring the hands to the hips and lift the knee up in front of you.
2. Slide the knee out to the side with the sole of the foot resting on the inner calf muscle or the upper inner thigh. Make sure the hips are even. Draw the navel in and up towards the heart.
3. Press down into the sole of the foot. When you feel rooted, grow your branches into your own expression. Remember a tree is stable, yet moist, like in the verse "as a tree planted beside streams of water".

“We need to perceive the earth as reverent of our being . We are all formed from the same ingredients as the tree...The earth is our physical body and water is its fluid. Fire is our acids and enzymes of the body: air is the Prana and breath, and space is the vibration of all vital systems together. The wholesome smell of earth stirs fresh memory.” Mayatiwari



Heart Meditation for Tu B'Shevat

Lay on your back, palms resting on the earth. Imagine the back of the heart as an earthy green field of grass. Visualize your entire backspace as moist, rich soil. The field of the back of the heart expands to the ground beneath and beside you... a wide grassy expanse. As if seeds are planted in this space, where the moist back of the heart meets the ground, imagine a blossoming of some sorts (maybe plants, flowers) up through the heart, brushing at the top of the heart space and widening up to the collar bones.

What does it feel like to host a renewed heart? Those places that are stuck, jaded, or rotten...bring flowers of renewal there. Just like the trees on Tu B'Shevat, we are renewing through the inner sap of life.



Recent research has shown that the smell of humus (organic forest soil) exerts a physical physiological effect on humans. Breathing in the scent of mother Earth stimulates the release of the hormone Oxytocin, the same chemical that promotes bonding between mother and child, between lovers.

Braiding Sweetgrass



TASTE OF KABBALAH

The Ari (Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, 1535-1572), describes the human soul as a branch that descends from the supernal Tree of Creation:

"As they [the souls] begin their descent towards this physical dimension, to become clothed in physical bodies, their shorashim (roots) remain attached to their Source from which they were “hewn” [and from which they continue to derive their sustenance]. Only the branches of these roots descend, by extending downward, until they become clothed in bodies in this [lower, physical] dimension. In this, they resemble the branches of a tree. The branches are attached to the trunk, but when they are bent over, they can touch the ground, even though they are still attached to the trunk of the tree...This is the inner meaning of the verse, “Ki ha’adam etz ha’sadeh—for man is a tree of the field” (Deuteronomy 20:19)."

"Though our branches have touched ground—meaning, though our souls have incarnated in physicality to such an extent that we can’t even imagine what it is to be a purely spiritual soul—we are still attached to the trunk, the roots, the Source. We can still experience ourselves as souls. Indeed, it is time that we understood: We are not simply bodies with weak, lowly souls. We are awesome souls who have descended into physicality in order to transform it. Our mission impossible is nothing less than to irradiate the entire world with the power of our soul." - Avraham Sutton

TASTE OF KABBALAH 2

In truth, man [each human being, and all humanity] can be likened to a tree, as it is written, “Ki ha’adam etz ha’sadeh—for man is a tree of the field” (Deuteronomy 20:19). The difference is that man is an inverted [right-side-up] tree. The roots of a physical tree are in the ground, whereas man’s root is above. For the neshamah (divine soul) is man’s shoshon (root), and it is in heaven [i.e., in his head which corresponds to the spiritual dimension]; his hands are thus like his main branches, and his feet are the smaller limbs that branch off from these. His torso is the trunk of his tree. Why is this important to understand? The root of a physical tree is below; it receives its sustenance from the ground below. Man’s soul, on the other hand, draws its life-force from heaven.

Maharal (Rabbi Yehudah Lowe, 1512-1609)



TASTE OF KABBALAH: UPRIGHT POSTURE



Each successive stage [of creation] was on a qualitatively higher level and less attached physically to the earth. While inanimate matter is part of the earth, the plant stands above it physically, and manifests a hierarchy of grades: shrubbery which grows without cultivation, grasses that need seeding in order to reproduce, trees that must be planted. However, they are still attached to the earth by their roots. The animal, on the other hand, has severed the physical junction to the earth, and is seen to be correspondingly more advanced biologically. This correspondence, moreover, is featured also within the animal kingdom, the rise in biological complexity being matched by increased freedom of mobility...

Noteworthy is that whereas the root or head of the plant is buried in the ground, the head of the animal is horizontal—equally poised between heaven and earth—and the more complex the animal the higher it holds its head. Culminating with man's upright posture, the head pointing in the direction of his roots in the upper realms. It reflects his status as a creature both of the upper and the lower realms, his posture being that of an inverted tree.

* Malbim, Genesis 1:25, s.v. bekol madregah sh'alta ha'beriah; translated by Dr. Zvi Faier, Malbim on Genesis, Hillel Press, Jerusalem, p. 131.

AVODAH OF SHEVAT

*Rectifying our Relationship
with Food*



4 LAYERS OF HUMAN

Tu B'Shevat, falling on the 15 of Shevat, is the holiday celebrating the New Year for the trees. It marks the awakening of the inner sap, the beginning of the ascension of the life force up the trees that were dormant all winter. Taking place in the dead of winter, Tu B'shevat is a subtle seasonal shift that we don't see externally, but marks the resurrection of life and beginnings of Spring. Just like the plant kingdom shifts from death to life, we have the opportunity to begin a new phase of our own healing journey. Just like the trees experience a period of hibernation, and then a return to vitality, we also experience this dynamic shift.

Our sages refer to a human as a “small world”, a miniature universe*. The Torah teaches that the physical world is divided into 4 Kingdoms: the mineral/inanimate Kingdom (Domem), the vegetable/plant Kingdom (tzomeyach), the animal kingdom (Chai), and the human kingdom (Midaber). Kabbalah teaches that every human is composed of these basic four layers as well**. The acronym used for these 4 layers are DatzCham.



Sources:

* (Tanchuma , Pekudei 3; Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 69 (p. 100a). See also Likkutei Torah , Bamidbar, p. 5a) .

** (Torah Or, p. 4a; Likkutei Torah , Chukas, p. 58a, Berachah 95c)

4 LAYERS OF HUMAN



Domem: The mineral layer is the very foundational substance we are created of such as gasses, liquids and solids. They are inanimate and don't have any movement internally or externally.

Tzomeyach: The vegetable layer within us refers to our autonomic bodily functions such as respiration, cell division, circulation, and digestion. These functions require no conscious thought but are responsible for the body's basic health such as healing wounds, metabolizing foods, fighting viruses, etc. Like a vegetable, this layer always grows, representing our quest for balance and health.

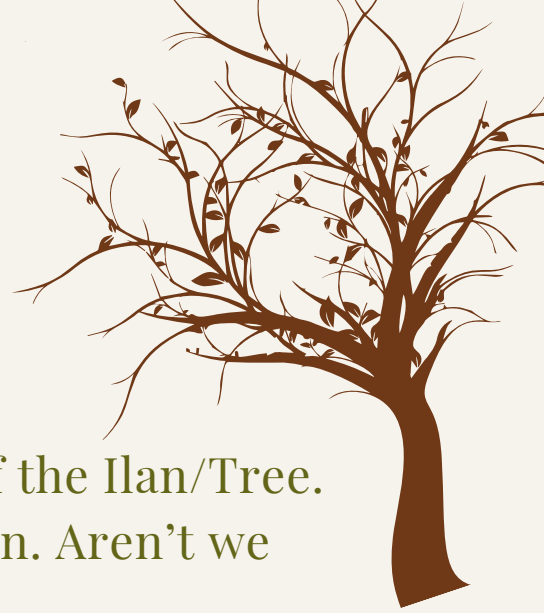
Chai: The animal layer corresponds to our primitive emotional and instinctive responses such as heart rate, fight or flight instinct, sexual arousal, and emotional reactions. This layer is responsible for our overall emotional health.

Medaber: The human layer is connected to our higher drives, creative communicative ability, free will, ability to dream/imagine, and conceptual higher level thoughts.

Tu B'Shevat focuses on the vegetable layer: specifically the body's health and efficiency. Shevat in general is a time to regroup our health by correcting any imbalances of our diet, reestablishing how we relate to food, and improving our relationship with to our physical appetites. Once we have established a healthy relationship to food (which is no easy task!) , we can then eat food with the experience of Divine Pleasure! This comes from eating with mindfulness and realizing that Hashem's light is within every bite ! This is known as 'nitzotey kedushah'. We can extend the holiness of G-d into the very physical, through the act of eating.

We uplift the vegetable layer on Tu B'Shevat by tasting different fruits, saying blessings over the fruit with intention, and deepening our appreciation of the unique colors/shapes/textures/and qualities of each fruit.

TREE OF LIFE



Tu B'Shevat is called the Rosh Hashana of the Ilan/Tree. Instead of plural "trees," it is singular: Ilan. Aren't we celebrating all of the trees?

The reason for this wording is that Tu B'Shevat we are rectifying the eating stemming from 1 tree.. The Tree! This tree is the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. Before the sin, Adam and Chava experienced a holy, balanced, healthy relationship to eating. After the sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge, all of humanity fell. All sins stem from this egotistical, indulgent sin of Adam and Chava eating without proper kavanah in the Garden of Eden. The first entry of all evil was Adam and Chava's unholy eating! We have the ability to rectify this original Sin stemming from unholy eating. When we rectify our eating, we turn away from Tree of Knowledge realm and eat from the Tree of Life!

What is the difference between the Tree of Knowledge & The Tree of Life? Kabbalah teaches that the Tree of Life has roots, and the Tree of Knowledge does not. To eat from the Tree of life is to know where your food comes from and to stay rooted to your Source.



Listen to Zusha's "Tree of Life"
during your yoga flow!

The Singular Tree

The Tree of Life, kabbalistically, looks like an upside down Tree containing the 10 sefirot (divine emanations). The Tree of knowledge is the same tree, yet doesn;t have the upper sefirot (keter, chokma, bina, daat).The Tree of Knowledge only contains the emotional Sefirot without the Upper “Brains”. In the words of Sarah Yehudit Shenider, “To eat from the Tree of Knowledge is to partake of life’s pleasures without acknowledging the hidden source of that bounty—without using that moment of pleasure-taking as an opportunity to commune with the Primal Will to Good, the Source of those delights. When we take from the world without acknowledging the Holy One—without considering the heavenly roots of this worldly benefit—we eat from the Tree of Knowledge.”





The Singular Tree

Rav Tsadok Hakohen teaches that at any moment when a person takes pleasure from the world in an egotistical manner, we eat from the Tree of Knowledge. The primary fixing of all humanity is to learn to eat with holiness. Sarah Yehudit Shneider teaches that “all neuroses, personality imbalances, and existential dissatisfactions, teaches Torah, have their root in this sin of unholy eating”.



TRIBE OF ASHER

“Taste and see that G-d is good.” Tehillim 34:9.

Living with this awareness means that within every bite of food, we can taste the Infinite presence within. The pleasures in the taste are not self-serving, rather they help us recognize the goodness and sweetness of our creator. This is why the Tribe of the month is Asher, who is associated with the essence of Taanug/pleasure and tasty, fatty foods (Pri Tzadik). The Torah says that Asher is “fat (rich/delicious) in his produce”(Bereishit 49:20). Yaakov’s blessing to Asher was that he would produce an abundance of olives to be pressed into olive oil. Olive oil represents the potential for luscious, pleasurable foods. Asher also shares the root word Ashirus/affluence because the fruit on Tu B’Shevat are not the basic staples, but are the sweet and tasty delicacies that represent affluence. Shevat is filled with an affluent energy and an abundance mindset, as expressed through eating exotic fruits and drinking wine.



PRACTICE

Hold a fruit and admire its color. Look at it's shape like you would a painting- noticing every detail and crevice. Caress the fruit and feel its texture. Ponder its life cycle: how it grew/formed, who watered it and picked it, and how it traveled to you just so that you could taste pleasure. Go even deeper by contemplating the spiritual qualities of each fruit. What does this fruit represent to you? What is its inner shining character?

Create your own blessing for yourself or for others based on this fruit. For example, hold up an orange and bless: "Your energy should be as smiley and as awake as this Citrusy, enlivening Orange! Your life should be as full and round as this robust orange with all it's flavor. Like this orange, you should peel back your tough layers to reveal a juicy, sweet center!"



HOLY EATING



STEPS FOR healthy, holy eating

I. PLAN

Prepare your meals with healthy intent. When we are hungry and have not yet put forethought into a meal, we tend to eat rushed and in a state of frenzy. Not to mention those last minute snacks/meals tend to be on the unhealthy side. Plan your meals by meal-prepping, gathering the right ingredients, setting the table: the preparation allows the experience to be felt with presence. Planning also helps you eat with the right amount of time before your yoga workout, so your stomach is not too full yet not on empty.



STEPS FOR healthy, holy eating

2. PAUSE

Before you eat, pause and appreciate what is in front of you. Pausing ensures that you begin eating with the proper intentions. Consider for a moment if you are eating because you're hungry, or looking to fill an emotional lack. The Arizal teaches that the prohibition to eat from the Tree of Knowledge was only temporary. Adam and Chava would have been able to eat from it once Shabbat began, but they impatiently couldn't wait. To rectify this impatience that was the root of their downfall, we wait, bless, breathe, and pause before we eat.



STEPS FOR healthy, holy eating

3. BLESS

Say a blessing (traditional from the Siddur or your own) with intention. Saying a blessing infuses your sacred pause with gratitude and recognition of the ultimate Source of the food. A blessing spoken with deep kavannah reveals the sparks of Divine within the food. This blessing transforms your eating from animalistic to one of Divine pleasure. (See next section on blessings)



STEPS FOR healthy, holy eating

4. EAT WITH JOY

King Shlomo says, “Go, eat your bread joyfully and drink your wine with a merry heart”(Koheles 9:7). Eating with joy brings health to our body and soul. When we eat in a rushed state of anxiety, our fight or flight reaction flares up and we actually digest slower. leading to all types of illnesses, weight problems, and stomach pains.



STEPS FOR healthy, holy eating

5. BREATHE

Remember to breathe between bites, savoring the tastes and textures. Pausing and breathing throughout the meal helps us connect to the element of the month—Avir/ air. Stop eating when you are $\frac{3}{4}$ full (Rambam). Overeating is the root of many illnesses (Hilchos De'os 4:15).





EATING QUIZ

There are no right or wrong answers; simply respond as you see fit and see what you discover about yourself.

- S= Sometimes

	Yes	<i>s</i>	No
1. I breathe when I eat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I plan healthy meals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I say blessings with intent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I pause before eating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I feel guilty after I eat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I eat foods that make me feel tired	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I eat with joy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I punish myself through eating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I eat foods that bring me energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What did you learn about yourself?



BLESSING



RADICAL AMAZEMENT

"As civilization advances, the sense of wonder declines. Such decline is an alarming symptom of our state of mind. Mankind will not perish for want of information; but only for want of appreciation. The beginning of our happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living. What we lack is not a will to believe but a will to wonder."

-Abraham Joshua Heschel, God in Search of Man



How can saying blessings open you up to wonder?
What are other ways that you can access this G-d
consciousness on a daily basis?

Tradition Blessings on Food

Food Blessings

Over bread:

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God,
sovereign of the universe, the One who
brings bread forth from the earth.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Over (non-bread) foods made from wheat, oats, rye, barley, and spelt:

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God,
sovereign of the universe, Creator of
types of nourishment.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרֵא מִיְּנֵי מְזֻנוֹת.

Over wine:

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God,
sovereign of the universe, Creator of the
fruit of the vine.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Over tree fruit:

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God,
sovereign of the universe, Creator of fruit
of the tree.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

Over fruit from the earth:

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God,
sovereign of the universe, Creator of fruit
of the earth.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה.

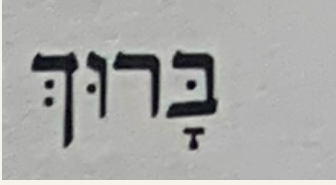
Over meat, fish, milk, eggs, and cheese, as well as beverages (other than wine):

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God,
sovereign of the universe, by Whose
word all things came to be.

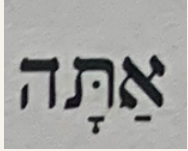
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָה בְּדַבְּרוֹ.

BLESSINGS WITH KAVANNAH

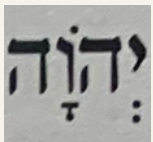
A deeper look into the words of the blessings:



Blessed (Baruch)= This word brings to mind expansion- a blessing, like the Zodiac of the D’li water pourer, pours open and expands. Hashem is the source of all blessings! Hashem is the wellspring of all abundance. When you say this word, remember that Hashem is the Source of All Good! It is a realization that “You, Hashem, are the source of all Blessings!”



You (Ata): How lucky are we to speak to G-d directly! Instead of saying “he”, we are saying “you!” The Universe is listening deeply and intently to our praises. Blessings allow us to speak directly to our source.



G-d (Hashem): This name is the Tetragrammaton of G-d that indicates transcendence, as well as His imminent expression enlivening the food. Sarah Yehudit Shneider describes the Tetragrammaton as an “invisible bloodstream of light that permeates creation like a circulatory system and carries life and soul.”

Blessings With Kavannah

אֱלֹהֵינוּ

Our G-d (Elokeynu)- This means “our nature”. This level of Gd represents Divinity that is encloded in nature. This attribute of G-d is present within all of creation. Looking at a pomegranate, I know that the Divine animating force sustains this fruit. Every facet of creation is enlivened by Divine light.

מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

(King of the Universe) Melech ha'Olam: The king Above who guides all the seasons, the fields, and directs the produce to grow accordingly.

בּוֹרֵא מִיְיָ מְזֻנּוֹת.

Who creates the food of the....earth/trees/vine/etc: The blessings are specific- to appreciate the details of creation and know closely where it came from. This detailed blessing is particularly important these days when many consumers are disconnected to the growing process and source of the food. Just like when thanking a person, the more specific you are, the more heart-filled the appreciation is. This blessing trains us to appreciate where our food is sourced, and cultivate gratitude so that we can train our being to receive the flow of light and bounty of G-d's creations.



Text Study

רַבִּי בָּא בְּרִיּוֹה דְרַב חִיַּיא בַר אַבָּא: אָכַל מְהֵלֵךְ, עוֹמֵד וּמְבָרֵךְ. אָכַל עוֹמֵד, יוֹשֵׁב וּמְבָרֵךְ. אָכַל יוֹשֵׁב, מִיֹּסֵב וּמְבָרֵךְ. אָכַל מִיֹּסֵב, מְתַעֲטֵף וּמְבָרֵךְ. אִם עָשָׂה כֵן הָרִי הוּא כְּמַלְאַכֵי הַשָּׁרֵת.

“Rabbi Ba, the son of Rav Hiyya bar Abba teaches: If he ate while walking, he must stand and bless. If he ate standing, he must sit and bless. If he ate sitting, he must recline and bless. If he ate reclining, he must enwrap himself and bless. And if he did this, he is like the angels who serve G-d” Talmud Yerushalmi, Berachot 7a



**WHAT POINT IS HE TRYING TO MAKE?
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN YOUR LIFE?**

When we bless bread, we are taught to put all 10 fingers on the bread. The 10 fingers represent the 10 Sefirot, the 10 commandments, and the 10 mitzvot connected to producing bread!

(Ie: Ma'aser, pe'ah, leket, challah, etc...")

See Mishnah Berurah 167:24



PRAYER FOR EATING

Rabbi Yoseph Chayim of Baghdad

May it be in accordance with Your will, Hashem my God and God of my ancestors, to give me the strength, fortitude, and determination to elevate the sparks in the food I eat, to refine and extract the good in it from the impurities that are mixed in it. Let it be refined and elevated through the process of chewing with my thirty-two teeth which correspond to the thirty-two pathways of Chokhmah (wisdom) through which ultimate refinement and rectification is accomplished. May it therefore rise up before You, as if I have intended all the requisite intentions alluded to in the upper jaw and lower jaw with which I chew my food...

May it rise up before You as if I have intended all the requisite intentions alluded to in the kavanah of swallowing the food after chewing it well, when the final birur (refinement and extraction of the holy sparks in the food) is accomplished by digesting the food in the stomach and transforming it into blood. It is then that nourishment goes to the liver by way of the blood vessels. The impure aspects in the food descend into the intestines and are expelled [lest they poison the body]...

May it rise up before You as if I have intended all the requisite intentions involved in ingesting the food I eat, to draw illumination and nourishment from the outermost aspects of Chokhmah and Binah, to Tiferet and Malkhut. I also ask to draw illumination and nourishment from Yetzirah to Asiyah, and to refine and elevate the good in the food, that is, the sparks of holiness that became intermingled in it as a result of the sin of Adam HaRishon. I wish also to rectify any soul that has incarnated into it. May all be refined by the consciousness-level of Abba/Chokhmah [through which ultimate refinement and rectification is accomplished].

>>>>>

May it be in accordance with Your will, Hashem my God and God of my ancestors, that...my ingestion of food be considered the equivalent of a korban (offering, sacrifice) which causes the supernal powers le'hitkarev (to draw close), from below to above. For this is exactly what happens to our food: its essence goes to the liver, and from the liver to the heart, and from the heart to the brain. So too by means of my eating, may the supernal powers draw close from below to above—from Asiyah to Yetzirah, from Yetzirah to Beriah, and from Beriah to Atzilut; from one level to the next, all the way to the blessed Ein Sof. And from there may great illumination descend to all dimensions until it reaches me.

May each and every one of my organs thus strengthen its corresponding spiritual "organ" above. May it be in accordance with Your will, Hashem my God and God of my ancestors, that all the sparks of holiness in this food, as well as all the souls incarnated within it, be refined and rectified as is proper. And that which I am not able to refine and rectify, You, O loving God—who do kindness even to the thousandth generation, with Your abundant mercies—complete their refinement and their rectification. Do this for the sake of Your great name, that they [the unrefined sparks and souls] not cause me to err or harm me. Safeguard me and rescue me from eating anything that is forbidden, so that no damage will result from my actions. Please join all the sparks of holiness that have been dispersed into the klipah (shell, the realm of evil) as a result of my actions, and restore them to their place in holiness, clean of all evil. Purify our souls. [May the day come when] Hashem will be [recognized and acknowledged] as King over the entire earth [just as His kingship is acknowledged in heaven]. On that day, the oneness of Hashem and the oneness of His name will be revealed [to all mankind]. May Hashem our God's pleasantness be [flow down] upon us; may He establish the work of our hands [above in eternity], and may He establish the work of our hands [below in this world].

ALTERS

“And he spoke to me, this is the table that stands before G-d.”(Ezekiel 41:22).

Talmud Bavli teaches on the verse above “At the time when the Temple stood, the altar used to make atonement for a person; now a person’s table makes atonement for him.” (Masechet Chagigah 27a)

How is the table like an altar? What does your table look like, what rituals does it hold?



ALTER POSE:

Reverse Table Top Pose



Physical Benefits: This pose opens up the chest & shoulders, activates the respiratory tract, tones the low back and Glute muscles, and strengthens the knees and ankles.

1. Begin in a seated position with the knees bent in front of you.
2. Slide the hands behind you so that your fingertips are facing your back body.
3. Press into the hands and soles of the feet as you lift your hips, leveling out the Torso parallel to the ground.
4. Lift the chin and press up through the Sternum.
5. Breathe for 2-6 breaths, your front body like an Alter. Offer up your blessings to Above, allowing gratitude to Swell open in your front body.

*This manual is dedicated to my son,
Elan (meaning Tree!), whose birthday
falls on Tu B'Shevat. His blessings fill
our home and bring so much Joy. May
you continue to bless and be blessed!*



SEFIRAH: KETER



KETER: CROWN

The Sefirah of Shevat is Keter: Crown. The Tribe of the month, Asher, is related to Keter because his name means Ashrei/Fortunate, alluding to the Royal Pleasure of Keter. The is like the divine pleasure we experience from eating fruit with holy kavanot. When we peel back the layers of any desire we have in this physical world, we uncover the deeper root source, the supreme crown, which is an expression of our innermost, highest self. This Supreme Crown is simply a will to exist, to be divine messengers, to serve our creator, and to connect in the deepest, sweetest way.

In the month of Shevat , we elevate our eating by eating with conscious, mindful, deliberate, purpose-filled bites.



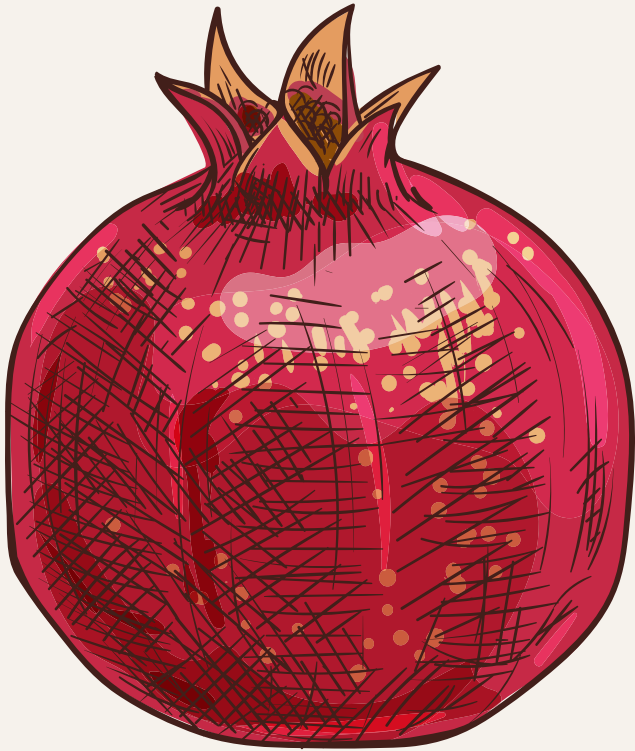
Keter: Crown

Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan expounds that activating Keter into our life is "ultimately drawing the spiritual into the physical dimension and integrating the highest levels of consciousness into a person's life. Man thus truly resembles G-d when, after transcending his own selfhood and recognizing that his very essence is somehow one with G-d, he realizes that existence itself is an awesome gift of love and kindness that he must share with others. For just as G-d is immanent in His creation and constantly bringing the world towards its ultimate perfection, man's true purpose is to do the same. When he connects his will to G-d's will, his potential for transforming the world into a heavenly Kingdom is unlimited"



KETER: SUPREME CROWN

One of the seven species of Israel is the pomegranate.



What do you notice about the pomegranate that is exquisite?

Its Majestic , Royal Crown! It is a Queenly fruit, isn't it?

Keter is our highest Sefirah/Energy center that is beyond our intellect and understanding. The crown sits above us. It's that part of us that is always connected to a higher reality and connected to a higher spiritual realm that cannot be grasped by our mind. Kabbalists teach that Keter includes our pleasure, faith, willpower, and desire.

PRACTICE:

WHEN YOU FEEL LOWLY UNIMPORTANT, OR UNINSPIRED, TRY BRINGING YOUR AWARENESS TO THE TOP OF YOUR SKULL: THE CROWN, ACTIVATING THE KETER TOP. RETURN TO SIT ON THE THRONE OF YOUR HIGHER CROWN.

Keter: Crown

The Torah teaches that the pomegranate holds 613 seeds, corresponding to the 613 mitzvot. Each seed is in its own encapsulated package. This packaging alludes to our deeds that are not necessarily unified with us. There are days that we feel empty and we are not yet at the place we want to be morally, spiritually, physically or emotionally. But yet, we can perform positive deeds that far surpass our current state! Those mitzvahs or actions become eternal fruits. The pomegranate inspires us to overreach & over-achieve past our immediate current state.



REFLECT

Think of a time that you weren't feeling like a "yogi:" perhaps you were sluggish, tired, inflexible, apathetic, etc. You got on your mat anyways and practiced. Did you feel "imposter syndrome?" Did the practice impact your internal state? How did your energy transform?

Keter: Crown

Kabbalah gives us a little insight on Fruit with tough exteriors. Kabbalists teach that trees with hard shells or a protective layer like the almond and pomegranate have their roots in the lower realms of reality, where evil battles good. The fruit requires thick shells to protect it from harm.



REFLECT

How is your shell? Strong or weak? Thick or thin?

When is your outer shell unnecessarily dense, when you could be soft?

May our sweet inner selves be well protected from all evils. May our shells not entrap, but rather serve.

KETER: VISUALIZATION

Settle into a restorative yoga posture, or Shabbat pose (final relaxation) . Close your eyes and bring awareness to your Keter: the space around the crown of your head. Envision a glowing sphere of pure white energy, expanding outwards with Radiance.

Take a seat on your higher throne: viewing the world from this space of Queenship.

Feel the Divinity from the Crown of your head pour downwards through your body.



KETER: MANTRA

This sefirah reminds us that at our core, we are vibrating with the Divine Desire. This Desire was the primordial energy that brought the world into being. Behind every action, or emotion, lies our deep Divine Desire to Exist. Because this is what the Divine wanted for us, and this is why we were brought into the world.

The mantras for this Sefirah are,

"I am the Divine's Desire"

"I am Divine Light"

"God willed me into existence"



KETER: YOGA APPLICATIONS

Activate the Keter Sefira through these 4 poses:

1. Mountain Pose with Halo Arms:

From mountain Pose, interlace the arms above you, creating a "halo" shape around the Crown.



KETER: YOGA APPLICATIONS

Activate the Keter Sefira through these 4 poses:

2. Pyramid Pose with arms lifting forward:

From Pyramid Pose, lift the torso up and reach the arms in front of you. Hug the hips in towards each other and activate the inner legs. Lengthen the spine, and engage the core in and up. As though the arms are an extension of the Crown of your head, feel the Crown growing and expanding forwards. Open the palms towards each other to feel and experience this Keter Energy.



KETER: YOGA APPLICATIONS

3. *Dolphin Pose:*

From Down Dog, bend the legs and drop the elbows down parallel in front of you.

Ground through your forearms and inner wrists.

Walk the hands towards your body as your legs straighten. Keep the legs active and feel the Crown pressing into the mat.



Variation: Tree-Stand
Face the tree, a few feet away. Forward fold, connecting with the earth below you. Then, lift the spine up to a flat-back, hands resting on the tops of thighs or shins. Press the Crown of your head into the Tree.



KETER: YOGA APPLICATIONS

4. Headstand

You may practice this pose against a wall or tree if you are beginner to headstands. From Dolphin Pose, lift the legs together, keeping them straight, until ankles, knees, hips and shoulders are stacked above your shoulders.

Hold for 5-10 breaths, and then gently reverse by bending and curling your knees into your chest.

Rest in child's pose.



LETTER OF THE MONTH



Painting by @terracottaplant

The Hebrew letter of the month of Shevat is the Tzadik and resembles a tree. The Tzadik is a righteous person who resembles the Tree of Life. The Torah says that “the Tzadik eats to satisfy his soul, but the belly of the Rasha/ wicked person is always empty.” (Mishlei, 13:25) A tzadik is someone who doesn’t eat for an emotional need, or from a place of “lack,” but rather to fuel his/her body with energy to serve the world.

The rectification of eating during Shevat extends to our relationship with any external object. Eating is essentially taking something external and ingesting it into our being. We can consume food, but we can also consume and integrate information and imagery into our being. Eating is an archetype experience for feeling in lack, and then taking something to fill your lack. Sarah Yehudit Shneider teaches that “literal eating, material acquisition, sexuality, honor-seeking, addiction to power, praise, drugs, or even attention are all forms of eating”.

Name of the month

The word Shevat literally means "tribe," referring to the Shevatim: the 12 tribes of Israel. Shevat can also mean a branch, like the branch of a tree!

Although the 12 tribes are distinct in character and avodah, they are all interconnected as One People. Just like the Trees in a forest above ground seem separate and isolated, science reveals that beneath the ground, trees communicate via intelligent social networks and nutrient sharing.



STAFF/ ROD

The Hebrew month “Shevat” also means “rod, or “staff.” This alludes to Moshe's miraculous staff. G'd's 4 letter name was inscribed on it so that when Moshe held the staff upright, G-d's name was in the proper order and Divine Chesed/kindness flowed down. When Moshe would turn the staff upside down, G-d's name was in reverse order and the energy of Din/harsh judgement was channeled down. This staff was said to be created at the beginning of time.

“The month of Shevat is like a rod with which we can break open the Kelipa/shell that conceals the spiritual nature of the food we eat, revealing the Divine wisdom and holy sparks within it. Every time we eat, we have an opportunity to elevate sparks of holiness. Even on a physical level, when we are grinding food with our teeth; sifting nourishment from inert matter, processing and absorbing the nutrients, and eliminating the waste, we are potentially elevating the dormant sparks of holiness. The key to this redemptive process is conscious intention, focused attention, and awareness of higher potential.”

Rav Pinson



The name of the month Shevat has related Hebrew letters to the word, Shabbat. Like Shabbat, relaxing and appreciating the trees reminds us of the power of the being over doing. The tree's essence is to be.

The letters of Shabbat stand for three elements:



Tov
(good)

Bereishit
(beginning)

Shamayim
(heaven)

Shevat is a month of rectifying the physical. Within every object of creation, we rectify through these steps of contemplation:

1. Look at the object and search for the Reishit/beginning in it. What is its original wisdom? What is the point of essence within it? What can I learn from it spiritually? How can I use this object to serve my higher purpose?
2. See the TOV- the inner goodness within the object.
3. Through seeing the point of wisdom & source of goodness within the object, we are able to raise the physical to the level of Shamayim!

ZODIAC



The Zodiac for this month is the Water Bearer/Water Purer, known in Hebrew as “D’li” . The Baal Shem Tov teaches that if you see a water carrier holding pitchers of water, it is a sign of blessing!

The D’li relates to “expanding the realm of holiness/kedusha into the seemingly mundane in order to elevate the fallen sparks hidden within all aspects of creation.” (Rav Pinson). We pour sacredness onto the earth. We fill the low, dry earth with moisture and life.

The Even Ezra, a biblical commentator, says that the Mazal of Aquarius has the most influence over the Jewish people like the Hebrew letter of the month, Tzaddik, has the most impact over the Jewish people. Just like a D’li is a vessel that pours water, we pour waters of Torah, wellness and goodness out to the world for others.

Moshe Rebeinu's name means “from the water I have drawn you.” Moshe is the biblical archetype who watered the world with Torah and oneness.

What pours out of you naturally, effortlessly?

What spiritual fruits of yours require more energy output?

What dry or jaded parts of you could use more life-giving moisture?





ELEMENT: AIR

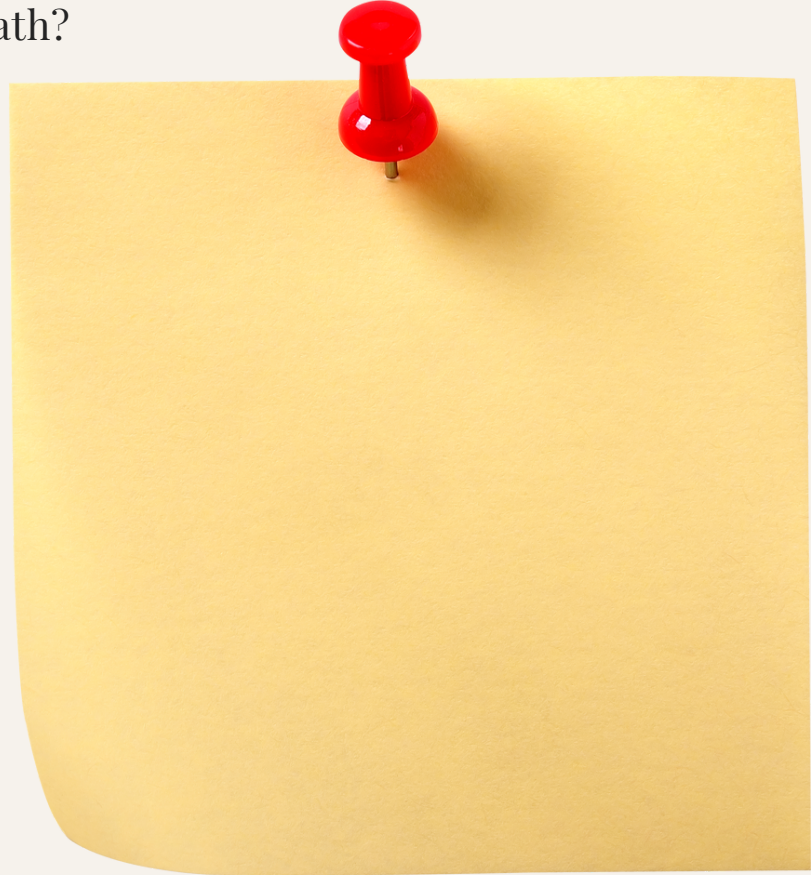
Aquarius is an air sign- one that exhibits independence, flexibility, and creativity. Bring these air qualities of lightness, mobility and creative movement into your yoga practice.

The element of Air-Ruach- can also mean “breath”. When we slow down our eating, & take mindful breaths, we can improve our relationship to food by tapping into our higher consciousness while eating. In yoga, we let the breath circulate through our body with creativity and buoyancy. Yoga for the air sign brings about light, playful, and flowful sequences. Postures that open up the breathing channels such as the lungs, front of the body, chest, and neck can connect you to the air element.

"When the air element is balanced, you are able to freely give and receive love, feel light and open, be compassionate, feel motivated and innovative, and express mental agility. An unbalanced air element—either too much or too little—may lead you to feel withdrawn, noncommittal, unproductive, unfocused, sluggish, or overloaded with racing thoughts."Chopra

Air Journaling

What poses bring you deeper into your breath?



What poses challenge your sense of easeful breathing?



2 Yoga Poses to connect to the Air Sign



This pose is both a twist and a lateral flexion of the spine, to open up the side body for deeper breaths, create more flexibility in the spine, and bring you an influx of creative energy. While your hips are sinking low, your upper body is light and airy.

Steps:

1. Sit down in a seated position with your legs crossed.
2. Twist the spine by bringing the Left hand onto the Right knee.
3. Raise your right hand overhead, expanding through the top ribs & breathe
4. Repeat on opposite side

2 Yoga Poses to connect to the Air Sign



Graceful warrior wonderfully expands the lobes of the lungs, allowing you to feel light and expressive in the top body. This posture may challenge your breath, so activate the air element through this pose with peaceful, yet powerful breaths. If your mind wanders, return it back to your point of focus: the breath.

Steps:

1. Begin in a Warrior 2 Position with your arms extended.
2. Flip the right palm up to the sky, and then follow the hand up and over the head, as your gaze lifts.
3. Slide the left hand down the leg, or bind it behind your back to rest on the front hip. Drop the outer right hip, lengthening the side body and expanding the lung-space.

**BODY PART
OF THE
MONTH**



Esophagus/Kurkavan

The body part of the month, the Kurkavan, helps us process our food (Berachos 61b). The deeper work of this month is to process and digest the spiritual nutrients in every bite. We learn to taste the inner essence of our food: the divine energy animating within it. The Kurkavan was spiritually damaged when Adam and Chava ate from the Tree of Knowledge hurriedly. To rectify this original sin, we refine our habit of eating mindlessly and impatiently, to approaching our food with patient consciousness .

The Zohar teaches that there are 4 levels of relating to food:

1. Eating as a slave (the Jews in Egypt)
- 2: Eating as a free person (represented by matzah)
- 3: Eating as an angel (the Mon/Manna in the desert)
4. Eating as a wise person (Mochin d'Gadlus: expansive consciousness)

Rav Pinson parallels these stages of the Zohar with four paths of eating: Indulgence, Avoidance, Equanimity, and Holy Re-engagement, as will be explored. We can also expand these four paths to food and anything we ingest in the physical realm.

Stage 1: Indulgence



This level represents unconsciously indulging in food. Addictive behaviors and mindless eating derive from this level. Adam and Chava brought negativity into the world through the first sin of unholy eating. They contained the souls of all of humanity and we were, therefore, all present as part of their decision to eat from the Tree of Knowledge in a haste. When we eat at the level of indulgence, we repeat the original sin. This corresponds to the Zohar's description of eating as a slave. The word for Egypt, Mitzrayim, means constriction. This level implies an unhealthy attachment to food.

Stage 2: Avoidance:

Cleanses or fasts are practices that separate ourselves from the indulgence of eating. Self-rectification is a pathway taught by the Classic works of Mussar. Shevat is an acronym for ShoVaViYm: a period of frequent fasting prescribed by the Kabbalists. Fasting gives us a separation period to allow us to become aware of our eating habits. We can fast for a full day, just a morning, or even for one moment! Rabbeinu Yonah of Spain taught that if you are engaging in self-centered eating, simply “fast” for one moment, setting down the food. The goal here is to extricate yourself from animalistic, ego-based eating. Having time away from food allows us to ask ourselves, “Do I depend on eating for superficial pleasure? Am I eating for emotional comfort? When I return to food after the fast, can I refocus on eating with consciousness?” If we realize the power of what food really is: divine energy and sparks, then we become more mindful of what we put in our mouths. According to the Zohar, this corresponds to the period where we eat Matzah on Passover to “eat as a free person”.



Stage 3: Equanimity



Equanimity (*hishtavus*) is to be level-headed and balanced in our eating approaches. All food is spiritually equal and we therefore relinquish anxiety about what we're consuming. Whether we have coffee or water doesn't matter. We eat with neutrality. The food merely brings energy to our body for spiritual pursuits. On this level, we are not necessarily "enjoying" the food as it satisfies our bodies' basic needs. This relates to the Zohar's level of eating as an angel, who have no taste or free will. Yuma 75b describes Manna that the Jews received in the desert as "angel food."

Stage 4: Holy Re-engagement:

It would be a shame to be at the level of equanimity for the entirety of our lives. If G-d wanted this, there would have been only one type of food/taste! It would be to deny the pleasures of G-d's creation. Humans and angels are distinct; we don't aspire to angelicness. In fact, the highest level is to enjoy the pleasures of this world as a way to “know G-d in all your ways!”. This is the level of soul-eating, as it says in Mishlei: “The Tzadik eats to satisfy his soul.”(13:25) The Zohar elaborates on this verse and teaches the Tzadik is satisfied even before he eats, and does so from a place of wholeness.

Because unholy eating was the downfall of the world, its counterpart will bring healing and spiritual fixing to the world. We can enjoy the food not because it is filling a lack or need, rather to experience Divine Pleasure and connect with our Source, who is enlivening the food! This highest path is the way of the Baal Shem Tov and Chassidus in general. This highest level corresponds to the Zohar's level of eating as a wise person.

PRACTICE



Pick up a fruit (even better: one of the seven species of Israel).

Settle your mind.

Pause, gazing at the fruit.

See the divine beauty in the fruit.

Notice its intricate details, the interesting shape, the textures.

Smell the fruit on a deep inhale.

Open up the wells of gratitude by saying a blessing.

Take a bite and feel Hashem's glory in the fullness of the experience.

Remember that you are eating Divine Sparks within the fruit.

Feel taanug/holy pleasure as you connect to a piece of Creation.

*“Man was created for the sole purpose of rejoicing in Hashem and deriving pleasure from the splendor of His presence; for this is true joy and the greatest pleasure that can be found!”
(Mesilas Yesharim ,1).*



7 SPECIES OF ISRAEL





The Torah praises the seven fruits of Israel all of which are connected to the climatic & spiritual properties of the holy land. Eating these fruits connects us to Hashem & the holy land as each contains divine lessons for our spiritual lives.

"For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with streams and springs and fountains issuing from plain and hill; a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs, and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey; a land where you may eat food without stint, where you will lack nothing; a land whose rocks are iron and from whose hills you can mine copper. When you have eaten your fill, give thanks to the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you."

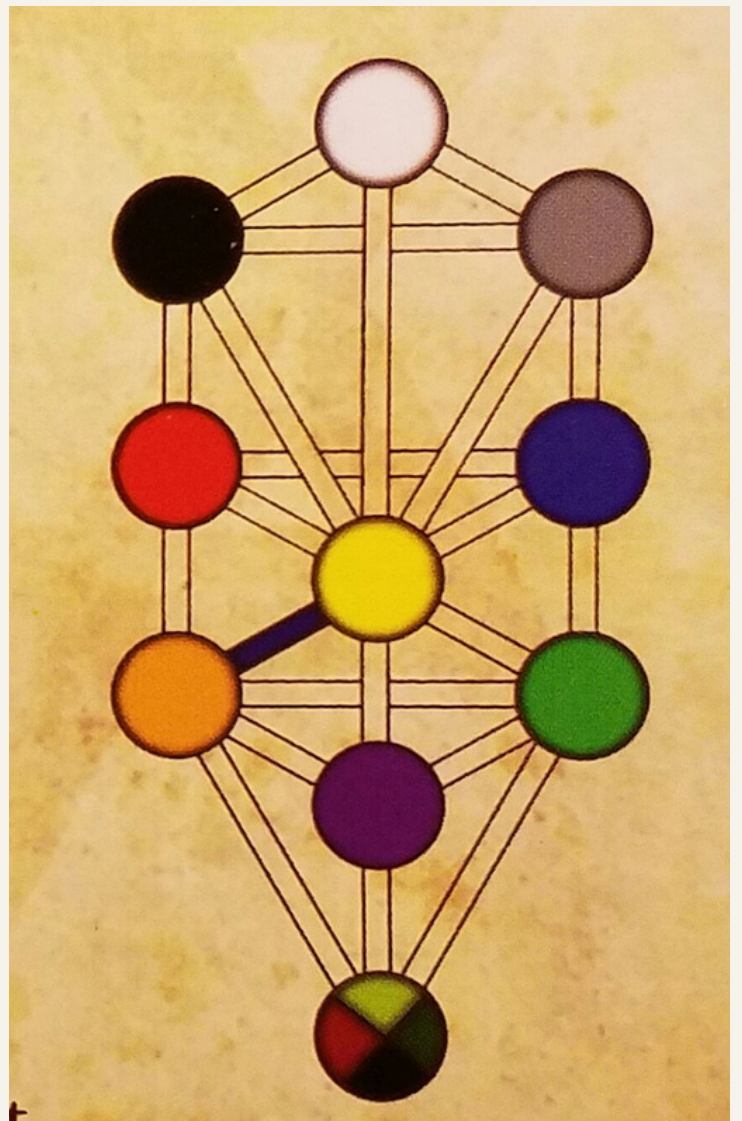
אֶרֶץ חֹטֶה וְשֵׁעֶרָה וְגֶפֶן וְתַאֲנָה וְרִמּוֹן אֶרֶץ זֵית שֶׁמֶן וְדִבְשׁ:

Deuteronomy 8:9-10

DIVINE ENERGIES

Kabbalah likens the seven fruits to the seven emotional Sefirot: the Divine Energies/ Divine Emanations. Hashem created the word through 10 Utterances: these correspond to the 10 Sefirot and the 10 commandments (Midrash Numbers Rabbah 14:11)

Sefer Yetzirah explains that there are 32 pathways to the Heart of the world: these correspond to the 22 letters of the Hebrew Alphabet + the 10 Sefirot.



3 GROUPINGS

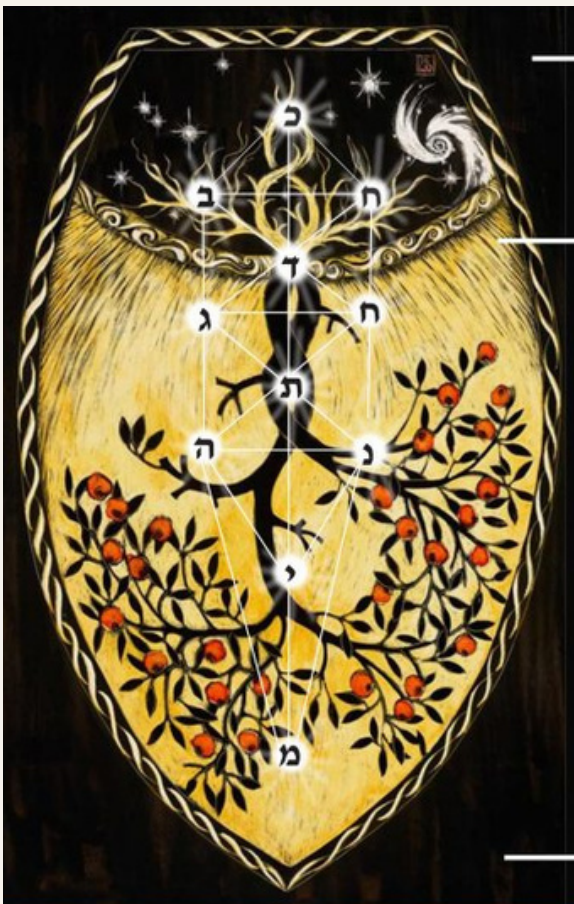
Kabbalah breaks down the Sefirot into three groupings: the intellectual sefirot (CHABAD); the emotional sefirot (CHAGAT); the instinctual sefirot (NEHY). The intellectual sefirot corresponds to the mind; the emotional sefirot corresponds to the heart; and the instinctual Sefirot corresponds to the liver.

The structure of the *Sephirot* (emanations)

	<i>Keter</i> “crown”	
3. Intellectual <i>sephirot</i> <i>CHABAD</i>	<i>Bina</i> “understanding”	<i>Chochma</i> “wisdom”
	<i>Da'at</i> “knowledge”	
2. Emotional <i>sephirot</i> <i>CHAGAT</i>	<i>Gevura</i> “strength/restraint”	<i>Chesed</i> “loving-kindness”
	<i>Tiferet</i> “beauty”	
1. Instinctual <i>sephirot</i> <i>NEHY</i>	<i>Hod</i> “acknowledgment/thanksgiving”	<i>Netzach</i> “victory”
	<i>Yesod</i> “foundation”	
	<i>Malchut</i> “kingdom”	

UPSIDE DOWN TREE

On a simpler level, the emanations are broken down into the three upper Sefirot (the intellectual Sefirot), and the lower seven (the emotional Sefirot). The three upper Sefirot are called the “three mothers.” In the image of the Tree of Life (below) these correspond to the mind, and the body. The right branch are the masculine, expansive energies, and the left branch are the feminine, contractive energies. The middle column is a balance between the two sides: a perfect harmony. The Tree of Life is an Upside Down Tree. So whereas a regular tree receives its life-force from its roots below, the Tree of Life is rooted above.



ENERGETIC FRUITS

The seven Emotional Sefirot are each comprised of their own quality, energy, and expression. Each Sefirah corresponds to: a day of creation, direction of space, Shepherd, Prophetess, body part, color, sound, system in the body, and meditation. This is beyond the scope of this course. If you want to delve further into the Sefirot, Jenna will be offering a 7-week Sefirot Course during the Omer (between Pesach and Shavuot). Each week will delve into a Sefirah in-depth. Beautifully, each one of these corresponds to one of the seven fruits of Israel, according to the Great Kabbalist the Holy Arizal! Just like different foods give particular medicinal properties to the body, its inner dimension (the sefirah) brings spiritual healing and emotional self-improvement.

Sefirot	Translation	7 Species of Israel
Chesed	Loving-Kindness/ Giving	Wheat
Gevurah	Restraint /Power	Barley
Tiferet	Balance/ Beauty	Grapes
Netzach	Ambition/ Victory	Figs
Hod	Humility/ Surrender	Pomegranates
Yesod	Foundation/Truth	Olive Oil
Malchut	Royalty/Queen/Kingship	Date Honey

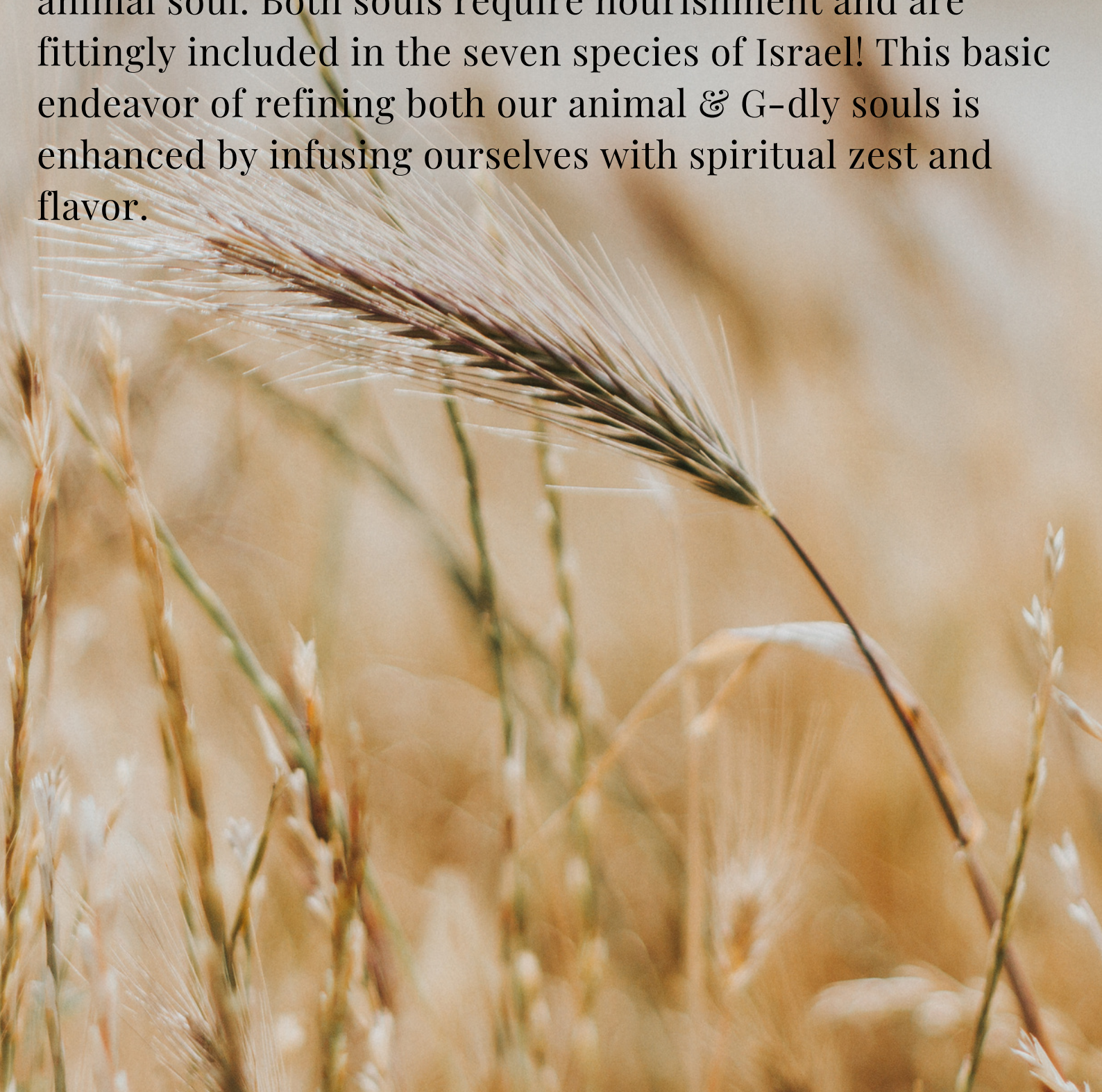
SEFIROT & SPECIES

Each of these Species relating to a Sefirah corresponds to a body part and a system in the body.

Sefirot	Body Part	Bodily System	7 Species of Israel
Chesed	Right Arm	Skeletal System	Wheat
Gevurah	Left arm	Circulatory System	Barley
Tiferet	Heart/Torso	Muscular System	Grapes
Netzach	Right leg	Endocrine System	Figs
Hod	Left leg	Immune System	Pomegranates
Yesod	M procreative organ	Reproductive System	Olive Oil
Malchut	F procreative organ, mouth & feet	Digestive System	Date Honey

For deeper exploration into this, consider joining the seven-week Sefirot course.

The seven Species compose of two grains and five fruits. Wheat and Barley represent the two sides of our soul: the Animal Soul & the G-dly Soul. The animal soul is our natural self-oriented self and the G-dly soul is directed towards our transcendence. In biblical times, wheat functioned to feed humans, whereas barley was allocated for animals. Wheat, thus, represents the nourishment of our distinct G-dly soul, while Barley does the same for the animal soul. Both souls require nourishment and are fittingly included in the seven species of Israel! This basic endeavor of refining both our animal & G-dly souls is enhanced by infusing ourselves with spiritual zest and flavor.



7-SPECIES: YOGA APPLICATIONS



- Celebrate each of the 7 species of Israel. Connect each fruit during your class to its Sefirah through activating the body part, visualization, meditation, and exploring the Sefirah's energy through movement.
- Create a yoga flow all around your favorite species! Ex: Crown Yoga for the Pomegranate
- Pair your yoga class with a 7-species of Israel tasting, using their nutrients to fuel your movements!

need more insight?

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YOGA SEQUENCE CRAFTING FOR: SHEVAT

Whether you are crafting a sequence to teach a class, or for yourself, use this space to integrate the Shevat teachings into your movement practice.

Class Name:

Intro: (Setting a theme or intention):

	ASIYAH	KAVANNAH
Warm up:		
Flow, including peak-postures. Step by Step:		
Cool Down:		
Final Relaxation/ End Meditation:		

*Asiyah= Physical movement or posture.

*Kavannah: Intention, teaching, theme for the posture

Yoga Through the Mystical Hebrew
Months

YOGA MANUAL FOR SHEVAT



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MADE WITH LOVE BY JENNA ZADAKA