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TU BISHVAT

Growing through the worlds of spirituality

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TU BISHVAT

Growing through the worlds of spirituality

Sometimes we need to go beyond our usual context to reconnect with ourselves, and the outdoors can provide this opportunity. Amidst the expansive quiet and beauty, we can unburden from the minutiae of daily life.

The Written Law begins with the creation of the universe, and the entire first section of the Oral Law is devoted to agriculture and the land. Sitting at the heart of any forest, the tree is a metaphor for both the Torah and for the spiritual structures and mapping of reality.

Each person is a world unto themselves and for each of us, the world was created.¹ Within our own world, there are actually many worlds: our family, our friends, our community, our colleagues, and ourselves. While we may be common to each of these domains, they contain distinct overtones and undertones, contexts and subtexts, ebbs and flows. This is no less true in the spiritual realm. There are four worlds (and a hidden fifth which will also be related to), each of which portrays a different sphere of our spiritual lives, not only providing a map of different states but of how to move between them.² By understanding the worlds, we can better understand our place within them.

To explain these worlds, many have used the metaphor of a tree and its fruit, and it is specifically Tu BiShvat, the New Year for trees,³ that brings this to life. Just as on a birthday, we focus on the individual, on Tu BiShvat, we take stock as a collective — we hone in on this process of growth and express it through a symbolic and meaningful Seder, eating produce, drinking wine and exploring the fruits of our lives.

1 *Sanhedrin 39b.*

2 *See the final page of this document for a diagram of these worlds.*

3 *Rosh HaShana 1:1.*

INTRODUCTION

This is not simple. So here I offer one access point, through six short prompts at each key stage of the Seder, namely:

1. **Introducing** an idea that orients us to the specific world we will be exploring at that stage.
2. **Seder Stage** with a practical step as part of your Tu BiShvat Seder and sources from the Zohar about some of the fruits.
3. **Exploring** a Core Text from the 10th page of the Pri Etz Hadar, the classic mystical work on Tu BiShvat compiled by a student of R. Isaac ben Solomon Luria, known as the Arizal.⁴
4. **Digging Deeper** to unpack the specific world at that stage, supported by further sources to deepen our understanding.
5. **Points to Ponder** allowing for a practical reflection, helping us integrate these ideas into our own lives.
6. **Visualize the Message** with a 1-minute video, accessible via QR code and hyperlink, which will bring the day's message to life in a visual and engaging way.

Thank you, Hashem. I am grateful to live these ideas together with the amazing Share Team, whose purpose is to help bring them to life for more people. Thank you to Rabbi Jeremy Tibbetts for being a study partner and teacher in developing these thoughts and ideas; Ari Levisohn and Aliza Crook for their careful edits; Yoel Bender for his beautiful design; and Elisha Zakai and Gemma Denby for the masterful videos.

TEXT:

Our teacher and master R' Chaim Vital of blessed memory, explained that there are thirty types of fruit that grow on trees... For there is nothing in the lower physical [world] that does not contain [a counterpart] example above [in the spiritual world].

ומהרח"ו זלה"ה כ"א שיש שלשים מיני פירות האילן... כי אין דבר גשמי פה למטה שאין דוגמתו למעלה.

Digging Deeper:

In our modern milieu, it is hard to appreciate trees as humanity once did. Before the days of running water, urban properties, and digital shopping, people were more acutely aware of how much these natural wonders give us. Trees often grow by water to drink, produce fruit to eat, offer shade from the heat, emit oxygen to breathe, and provide lumber which one could build with. In the Torah, humans are compared to "the tree of the field."⁵ The Kabbalists expanded this metaphor and often compared the ten Sefirot to a tree and the fruit it produces.⁶

⁴ This page is from the Machon Chemdat Yamim edition. The last two texts cited are footnoted with different sources.

⁵ Deuteronomy 20:19.

⁶ R. Abraham Azulai, *Ohr HaChamma on Zohar*, 3:24a:3.

INTRODUCTION

The Sefirot are, in short, the archetypal map of reality. As we explored throughout Chanuka,⁷ they are compared to many things: lenses which allow us to view God's Infinite light, vessels which can contain and reveal the Divine attributes, tools which balance finity and infinity, allowing us to connect to the spiritual, and more.⁸ So what did the Kabbalists hope to gain with these comparisons, and what does it tell us about the Sefirot, about which they wrote thousands upon thousands of pages?

In considering their longevity, fruit can be viewed in two distinct ways:

1. An end in and of themselves - to enjoy their sweetness and nutrition.
2. A means to an end - to plant their seeds and grow more fruit.

These two features are also true of the Sefirot. The Sefira of Chesed, the window which allows us to receive God's love, is not only to be appreciated and conceptualized, but internalized, in the same way that fruit is consumed and becomes part of who we are. And much like fruit, that is not their end. They also contain the seeds for a deeper spiritual life by serving as channels and windows into different spiritual states. The Tu BiShvat Seder is one of the many rituals that were developed to give us access to the Sefirot and worlds in this way. By contemplating and meditating upon the spiritual roots represented in the tangible fruits, we partake down below while awakening our consciousness to attach ourselves to our Source up above, thereby bridging the worlds.

But the Kabbalists also compare the full set of Sefirot to an inverted tree, with its branches below and its roots above. The more we rise and grow spiritually, the more we can find ourselves rooted and connected to our Source. We find ourselves in the lowest of the worlds, where things often seem upside down. If we can rise to higher realms and lift the world, we will find that we are returning the world back to its source where, much like the roots of a tree, it can be nourished to grow and develop into what it was always meant to be.

Point to Ponder

In preparation for your Tu BiShvat Seder, go out into nature - ideally a forest, but even a garden or a park will do. Admire a tree and consider what lesson you want to learn from it this year.



VISUALIZE THE MESSAGE

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⁷ RabbiBenji.com/LanguageOfLight.

⁸ See the Introduction to the Sulam commentary on the Zohar, no. 1-2.

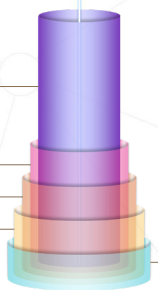
Ohr Ein Sof

Adam Kadmon

Atzilut

Briya

Yetzira



Asiya

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
 What I was walling in or walling out,
 And to whom I was like to give offence.

— ROBERT FROST, "MENDING WALL"

It is when we feel most exposed that we put up walls. A scarcity mindset, a lack of trustworthy friends, or a low self-esteem can send us into a defensive state and lead us to shut out the world. This is how we can sometimes find ourselves in the world of *Asiya*, which literally translates to the world of action, at the beginning of the Tu B'Shvat Seder. As opposed to *Yetzira* (Formation) and *Briya* (Creation), the Kabbalists understood *Asiya* to be the most concrete and physical type of existence, and it is therefore also the place where we need the most spiritual protection. In the Tu B'Shvat Seder, the fruits that we eat to represent *Asiya* reinforce this message, as they all come with an outer shell or peel and a sweet inside, such as pomegranates and nuts.

In the physical world, the path to spiritual growth is naturally blocked and difficult to see, as there are walls that have been put up and walls we ourselves construct. But while the peel may be sour, if we can scratch beneath the surface, to the *Pnimitiyut* interior, then sweetness and nutrition await.

This is also apparent from the cup of wine we drink at this stage: this first cup is all red, as the Seder progresses and then each cup will get lighter until we conclude with fully white wine. If we are willing to take the first step despite the potential darkness, a treasure trove of goodness awaits. The opacity will subside and the clarity will reign supreme.

Seder

Drink a glass of red wine, and then eat from the following ten fruits: pomegranate, walnut, chestnut, hazelnut, almond, acorn, pistachio, pine nut, coconut, and brazil nut. These represent the ten Sefirot of the world of *Asiya*. The inner meaning of the first four of these fruits is explained in the *Zohar*, as summarized below.

FRUIT	MEANINGS ACCORDING TO ZOHAR
Pomegranate	Removing the peel teaches us to separate from the bad in our lives (Tikkunei Zohar #24).
Walnut	Has four branches, representing the four corners of the world where the Divine presence can rest (Zohar 2:15a).
Chestnut	Taking a balanced approach in life (Zohar 1:161b).
Hazelnut	Finding balance specifically when dealing with the difficulties (Zohar 1:161b).

TEXT:

And there are another ten types of fruit that exist within the world of *Asiya*, corresponding to each one of her Sefirot. Therefore we should eat the interior and cast away the external husk of the fruit which serves as a partition between it and the world of changes, so as to ensure that we do not draw from any impurity. This is the secret of the evil inclination and the husk that attaches itself to the lowest part of the soul.

ועוד עשרה מיני פירות יש בעולם העשייה
 לעומת עשר ספירות שלה ולכן נאכל מה
 שבפנים ונזרק מה שבחוץ שקליפת הפרי
 היא מחיצה בינו ובין עולם התמורות
 כדי שלא יקבל טומאה וז"ס היצר הרע
 והקליפה דבוקה בנפש.

Digging Deeper:

“All beginnings are difficult.”⁹ Given that Asiya is the lowest world and our goal is to rise, we may assume that our main purpose is to transcend and leave it behind. But the worlds are not hierarchical per se; the earliest texts of Kabbala explain that “the beginning is looped into the end and the end into the beginning.”¹⁰ “Highest” and “lowest” is an illusion, as the spiritual structures are not linear but cyclical, whereby sometimes the beginning and the end are the best places to be.

Anything created intentionally is rooted first in the Creator’s initial and unfathomable thought. Even our world began from a single point, a condensed vision of what could be, and all of creation encircles around this point.¹¹ The Arizal explained that as the worlds come into being, they come closer and closer to this point, until finally the lowest world, that of Asiya, is situated on top.¹² Accompanying them and covering them are Klippa, or shell, the unrefined inessential elements which manifest as harsh judgments and darkened stringencies until they can be fixed up. Thus, the world of Asiya resembles a fruit with a peel.

Every fragment of light contains two aspects: an “inner light,” or *Or Pnimi*, and a “surrounding light,” or *Or Makif*.¹³ Consider a lamp, for example. The electricity flows into the lamp and is contained in the bulb. Meanwhile, the lamp continues to draw electricity from the socket and beyond in order to sustain the light. What is in the lamp is like the *Or Pnimi*: it is the light which constitutes the main experience of what that world or structure is, while the electricity in the socket and beyond is the *Or Makif*, external but constantly available to be drawn upon in order to sustain and even grow the light. The more “inwards” the *Or Pnimi* is, the higher it is; the more “outwards” the *Or Makif* is, the higher it is. Through this idea, we can understand why Asiya is the culmination of the vision of the worlds: the lowest *Or Pnimi* and *Or Makif* are closest to each other in Asiya and therefore allow for the easiest growth.¹⁴ While it’s the lowest space, it is the easiest space from which to take our first step forward, upward, and inward.

Point to Ponder:

Where is the most natural place that you can grow from?



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9 *Mechilta Yitro 2.*

10 *Sefer Yetzira 1:7.*

11 *Etz Chaim 1:2.*

12 *Etz Chaim 49:2.*

13 *Etz Chaim 4:1.*

14 *Etz Chaim 42:3.*

Ohr Ein Sof

Adam
Kadmon

Atzilut

Briya

Asiya

Yetzira

I remember the moment I came to know how much I didn't know. This was a pivotal step in my path toward greater wisdom. A journey I continue to take every day. Only when one can appreciate the unfathomable depth of a given topic is one able to begin to really advance in it.

In the world of Yetzira, we are able to appreciate our growth and recognize how much more we still can grow. This is initially apparent in the name itself: For those familiar with kabbalistic literature, formation evokes taking one material, like clay, and shaping it into another. This furthering of the light is expressed through the food and drink at this stage of the Seder. As opposed to Asiya, where the peel surrounded the fruit, in Yetzira the fruits are edible on the outside with an inedible pit. While the fruit was previously only revealed with great effort, now, in our elevated state, it stands fully accessible.

But when we bite into it we find that we're not all the way there and that some element of it remains beyond our capacity to ingest. That tough core is not just a blockage, it is itself the shelter for a seed of life and creative potential. These fruits show us our ability to progress and grow continuously, not falling into despair over our limits, and even being inspired by and through them.

This is even more true with the cup of wine we drink in Yetzira, mostly red wine with some white added in. The gift of clarity, even if it's just a slightly more illuminated way of seeing, inspires us to go further by showing us that the progress itself matters, independent of the lofty destination. We know what we know, we know that there is a lot more we don't, and the knowledge of both leads us further on our journey.

Seder:

Drink a glass of red wine with some white wine added in and then eat the following ten fruits: olive, date, maraschino cherry, crab apple, peach, dried plum, apricot, cherry, plum, hawthorne. These represent the ten Sefirot of the world of Yetzira. The inner meaning of the first two are explained in the Zohar as summarized below.

FRUIT	MEANINGS ACCORDING TO ZOHAR
Olive	<i>As olives are pressed to release oil, we can utilize pressure to turn us into something greater (Zohar 3:247a).</i>
Date	<i>The date is one of the slowest growing fruits, symbolizing patience as we await the redemption (Zohar 3:17a).</i>

TEXT:

And the ten types of fruit are found in the world of Yetzira, representing the ten Sefirot of Yetzira which represents an intermediary stage... therefore the seeds within the fruit are not to be eaten.

ועשרה מיני פירות הם בעולם היצירה והן
סוד עשר ספירות דיצירה שהם בנונים...
ולכן גרעיני הזרע בתוך הפרי אינו נאכל

Digging Deeper:

The three worlds of Asiya, Yetzira, and Briya are grouped together as mentioned above. By virtue of Yetzira being in the middle, it constitutes not only a transitory space but also a connective space. Yetzira is compared to Jacob's ladder, with its feet planted in the ground (Asiya) and its head reaching the Heavens (Beria). It makes all ascent and descent possible.¹⁵ Yetzira is therefore a space of balance in the grandest sense.

This is also true within the space of Yetzira itself, where all binaries exist in harmony. It is a space where good and bad coexist.¹⁶ But is balance simply an improvement over the world of Asiya, which was only a slight amount of good, or is balance an ideal in itself? The answer is dependent on where one is situated. In this world, balance is the best we can hope for, as our world's existence necessitates both good and evil. Yetzira is a massive upgrade from where we began, as it is the state in which we have balanced our own world and thus helped the world as a whole to achieve its balance. For this reason, Yetzira is identified with the Mishna, the first comprehensive work of Jewish law, as it is the sketch of an ideal life for us.¹⁷

The word for Jewish law in Hebrew is Halacha, from the root halicha, or walking. As we walk the path of life, we can change and become better through our experiences. It is through life that we become more balanced and achieve self-actualization. This is the inner meaning of the idea that Yetzira is not created ex nihilo (out of nothing or Yesh Mi'AYin) like Bryia, but formed out of something pre-existing (Yesh Mi'Yesh). We come to balance through experience, and through this, we find a way to traverse this world with confidence and holiness.

Point to Ponder:

What is beyond your grasp? How can this inspire you to grasp more?



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¹⁵ R. Nathan Nata Shpira, *Megale Amukot, Vayetze*.

¹⁶ R. Yosef Hayim of Baghdad, *Ben Yehoyada on Chagiga 5a*.

¹⁷ *Gra on Sefer Yetzira 1:13*.

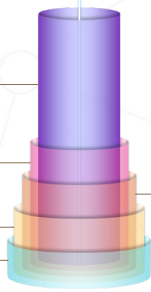
Ohr Ein Sof

Adam Kadmon

Atzilut

Yetzira

Asiya



Briya

What does it mean to achieve wholeness? The quest for self-actualization has become one of the greatest fascinations. It is impossible to achieve our ideal lives and become who we are meant to be until we are able to envision and articulate it. Olam HaBriya, the third-highest world, provides a lens

through which we can see the inner, Pnimityut-based vision for the ideal life. There is an idea that worlds of Asiya, Yetzira, and Beria can be made into worlds of separation called Alma Depeiruda. They comprise the full range of what it means to exist as a finite being in relationship with the Infinite. The lower worlds, Asiya and Yetzira, were associated with fruits which are different on the inside versus the outside. They map spiritual modes of growth and process.

The fruits of Olam HaBriya, on the other hand, are the same on the inside and the outside. The height of experience as a created being is not to rend the soul from the body or to remove oneself from the world. Rather, the farther one is from impurity and the closer they cleave to the sacred, the more integrated they appear.

Here, our third glass of wine is mostly white with a splash of red. It indicates a level of lucidity without forgetting where it came from. The unified person has no need to conceal or be something that he is not; his inside is like his outside.¹⁸ This lofty image of the peak of self-refinement is opened to us through the Tu BiShvat Seder, as we can reflect on how to become unified through and through, and by doing so, reveal the unity of all things.

Seder:

Drink a glass of white wine with some red wine added in and then eat the following ten fruits: grape, fig, apple, etrog, lemon, pear, carob, strawberry, loquat, and guava. These represent the ten Sefirot of the world of Briya. The inner meaning of four of these fruits is explained in the Zohar, as summarized below.

FRUIT	MEANINGS ACCORDING TO ZOHAR
Grape	<i>Just as the vine extends below so that the grapes can be utilized, we can find our soul is connected to a higher source (Zohar 3:127a).</i>
Apple	<i>Consider the unity which brings all differences together, just as an apple brings a multitude of colors together (Zohar 3:74a).</i>
Etrog	<i>The etrog is at first more like the tree and then becomes more like the fruit — Bnei Yisrael are now like this world, but in the future will become more like the World to Come (Zohar 2:120b).</i>
Carob	<i>The smallness of the carob's fruit indicates to us that even in the smallest points, we can find holiness and blessing (Zohar 3:216b).</i>

TEXT:

In the world of Briya, there are ten [fruits] corresponding to her ten Sefirot, and since they are distantly removed from impurity and much closer to the world of Atzilut, they have no outer husk, not inside nor outside, rather they can be eaten as they are.

ובעולם הכריאה עשרה מהן לעומת עשר
ספירות שלה מפני שהם רחוקים מן
הטומאה וקרובים לאצילות אין להן קליפה
לא בפנים ולא בחוץ ונאכלין כמו שהן.

¹⁸ Yoma 72b.

Digging Deeper:

Briya is the highest of the worlds of separation. As a general Pnimiyut rule, the higher something is, the more concealed it is. Briya is therefore considered to be more concealed than the worlds below it. The verse explains that God “forms [yotzer] light and creates [bore] darkness, makes [oseh] peace and creates [bore] evil.”¹⁹ The Arizal explains that this hints to the higher and more concealed level of Briya, where we cannot fathom the light it contains and thus perceive it as darkness, unlike the lower worlds of Yetzira and Asiya, where we are able to have more comprehension.²⁰

However, in the Siddur, the second half of the verse is changed from “creates evil” to “creates all.” This is not an act of censorship. Rather, it is a deep, intimated commentary on the inscrutable Divine plan for our world. R. Moshe Isserles writes that the forces that affect good in our world and those that affect evil are fully unified and the same: in God’s view, they both serve to bring about the ultimate good for our world.²¹ From our perspective when speaking to each other, it is accurate to say that good and evil are separate. But in prayer, speaking to God, we have to acknowledge the Divine perspective that these two forces are one, coming together and working together in an unfathomable way.²²

Olam HaBriya, the concealed world and first of the worlds of separation, is the place where the bad first comes to exist. Yet ultimately, this darkness will reveal itself as light and will usher in an age of pure goodness. In the redemptive era of integration, we will see the totality of things from a unifying viewpoint, where good and bad become great goodness.²³ Just as the story of creation begins with the light and darkness and ends with God looking over all that was created, proclaiming it to be “very good,” the experience of the world of Briya is one of united philosophy and faith, where one can plumb the depths of why and how our world is the way it is, with the backing of strong belief that the true and totalizing good will come to reveal itself.

Point to Ponder:

Reflect on a moment in your life that you were disappointed about at the time, but in retrospect you grew. Is there anything you are going through now that may result in the same?



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19 Yeshayahu 45:7.

20 Sha'ar HaPesukim, Shemot 1:8.

21 R. Moshe Isserles, Torat HaOla 3:49.

22 R. Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook, Olat Ra'aya, Keriat Shema 1.

23 R. Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin, Pri Tzaddik, Bechukotai 9.

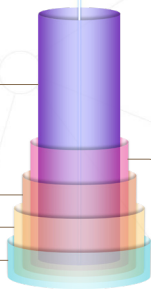
Ohr Ein Sof

Adam Kadmon

Briya

Yetzira

Asiya



Atzilut

As we reach the final cup of wine of the Tu BiShvat Seder, representing the lofty world of Atzilut, we find something surprising: there is no fruit left! This climactic stage of the Tu BiShvat Seder is marked more by absence than presence — or, perhaps more correctly, the presence

of absence. While the lower worlds were marked by distinction and differentiation, the world of Atzilut is a space of complete connectedness. It is the spiritual stance of feeling fully present, awake and aware in one's life. Rather than trying to connect with a source outside of oneself, that very Source is revealed from within.

At this stage we are nurtured directly from the Source, not as a soul or a body, but as both united as one. For a moment, from this world, we glimpse a world beyond:

In the World to Come there will not be eating or drinking, no procreation, no negotiation, no jealousy, hatred, or competition; rather the righteous will sit with crowns atop their heads, sustained by the splendor of the Divine Presence.²⁴

Our last cup of wine, fully clear, symbolizes the completion of our journey and the culmination of our transformation. The color white contains all others within it. It is their source. Even the dark red of wine can ultimately be traced back to the color white, and so too for us: No matter how unworthy we feel, this Seder reminds us that we too can merit to ascend, rise up, and become one with our Source.

To that, we say **to life - l'chaim**.

Seder:

Drink a glass of white wine.

TEXT:

[In the world of Atzilut] It [the lights], Its Vitality [the expression of the lights], and Its Vessels [the containment of the light] are unified.²⁵

אִהוּ וְחִיּוּהִי וְגִרְמוּהִי חֵד כְּהוֹן

²⁴ Berachot 17a.

²⁵ Tikunei HaZohar, introduction, p. 3b.

Digging Deeper:

Atzilut is fundamentally different from the other worlds. This has implications for the past and how our worlds came to be, for the present and what we are meant to fix, and for the future and what will be in the time of redemption. In the beginning, Atzilut was originally going to be the final and lowest world. This is because Atzilut contains vessels and lights which are fully unified, where individuation is possible without separation. It is only through the Shevira, the shattering of the vessels and the descent of the worlds, that Beria, Yetzira, and Asiya came to exist.

The experience of Infinity is only possible in the world of Atzilut.²⁶ When the Infinite Divine Light is contained in vessels, it undergoes a transformation that allows finite beings to perceive it. The vessels of Atzilut are so lofty that they serve as lenses which allow us to experience that finitude. This is also why our main spiritual mission is to fix the world of Atzilut—our ability to really connect with the Infinite depends on it.

The lower worlds of separation were always intended to be extensions of the world of Atzilut, never their own independent existence.²⁷ This is what will be in the future: Pieces of Atzilut from the original breaking are scattered in the worlds of Beria, Yetzira, and Asiya, and our deepest experiences now come from encountering and raising up these sparks of light. Ultimately, when the last sparks are raised up, the fully rebuilt world of Atzilut will shine into the separation and illuminate it too. Thus, we will not only have completed the world of Atzilut as it was originally intended to be, but we will have also expanded it by making all the worlds a vessel to hold its light.

Point to Ponder:

What absence is there in your life? What presence does that bring?



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26 R. Shlomo Elyashiv, *Leshem Shevo Ve'Achlama, Hakdamot U'Shearim* 1:2.

27 R. Shalom Sharabi, *Hakdamat Rechovot HaNahar* 2b.

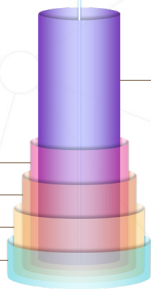
Ohr Ein Sof

Atzilut

Briya

Yetzira

Asiya



Conclusion *Adam Kadmon*

While the Seder is now complete, there is one world which remains untouched. This is the world referred to as Adam Kadmon, anthropomorphically speaking, literally “the first human.” It is the first created world and the ultimate root of the ability to change the subsequent worlds that come to enlodge it. Adam Kadmon is the root of all four worlds. It is higher than the experience of trying to connect with our Source or even of being unified with it. It is the sphere in which we become unified with the root of all things, representing the fullest expression of our spiritual growth.

Due to its lofty nature, most of the mystical intentions and practices do not involve Adam Kadmon explicitly. There is one glaring exception, and it is perhaps counterintuitive at first: eating. At the highest level, even our most basic act of self-sustenance can be reconfigured into a greater arc of wanting to provide for the world. The act of receiving and accepting something we need gives us the strength to provide for someone else. Even one who wants to give cannot do so without one who is willing to receive.²⁸

This vision of a humanity, where each human being is dignified in sharing what they have and being able to accept from others earnestly, is the true understanding of what it means to be a human and in human form, from the lowest individual to the highest world. We end the Pesach Seder with a passionate declaration that we will celebrate “next year in Jerusalem,” where the ritual, as described in the Seder, can truly be fulfilled.

The Tu BiShvat Seder, however, is meant to be completed in the here and now. It taps us into the lofty and hidden world which is ever present behind our day-to-day life. If at the end of Pesach we gesture towards the future, toward what will be, at the end of Tu BiShvat we plant ourselves firmly in the here and now, in what is. Through awakening our intention to this moment, we can reconnect to the joy of simply being, as we connect to a world which is all good and all light.

TEXT:

It was called “Adam Kadmon [the primordial human].” It was called Kadmon because it preceded all of [existence which was created through the process of] the emanation [from God]. And there is no doubt that it is called this also because it is absolutely hidden [from our perception].²⁹

וקראו שם אדם קדמון. ונקרא קדמון
להורות כי הוא קדמון לכל האצילות. ואין
ספק שלא יקרא כן אלא בהיות בתכלית
ההעלם.

²⁸ See R. Yehuda Ashlag, *Introduction to the Zohar: The Wisdom of Truth*.

²⁹ *Pardes Rimonim* 23:1.

Digging Deeper:

After the Tzimtzum, the act of cosmic contraction allowing one to experience separation from the Infinite, there remains a fundamental problem. It is not possible for anything to exist without the Infinite's light, and so a single ray of light is brought back into the *chalal*, that newly separate space, so that life can be possible. This ray, called the *kav*, is fully concealed by the world of Adam Kadmon and extends across the entire *chalal*. Notably, Adam Kadmon's creation is not described—seemingly, it is present from the moment that ray of light enters the *chalal*.³⁰

This dynamic of differentiation and descent does not only allow for separation, but also for reunification. The entrance of this light creates independent beings who can strive for “the cleaving of Emanator and emanation,”³¹ a level wherein difference and unity can be experienced as one. It is notable that the description here speaks in the singular. Through our individual ability to cleave to our source on a microcosmic level, we allow the entire macrocosm to inch closer to its Source and thereby, to fulfill its initial purpose. Adam Kadmon as the mediator between *kav* and *chalal* makes this possible and reveals all of humanity's ability to bridge the gap between light and darkness.

R. Noam Elimelech of Lizhensk explained that when a person feels they have become unworthy of holiness, they should work to combine and unify themselves with the entirety of the Jewish people. Our Source remains unblemished and untainted no matter our actions down below. The realization that the Source maintains its purity allows us to not only rediscover our own holiness, but to let go of the pain, anger, and shame we may have felt.³²

Point to Ponder:

What goodness can you tap into right now?



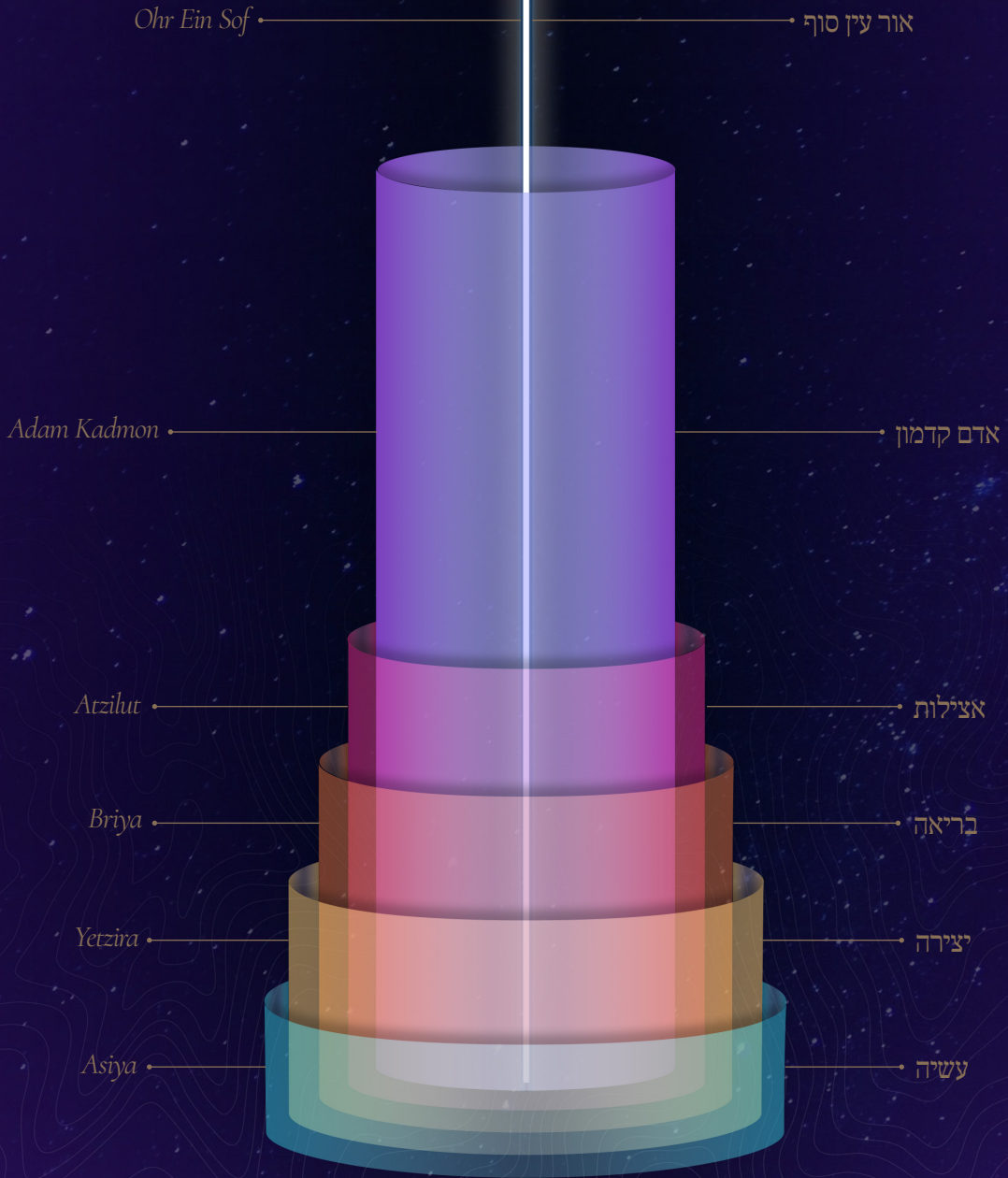
VISUALIZE THE MESSAGE

[Watch](#) the captivating video version of this series and share it with someone that may appreciate it!

30 *Etz Chaim* 1:2.

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Noam Elimelech, Devarim* 1:1.



THE FIVE WORLDS OF CREATION IN KABBALA, SHOWING THE DESCENT OF DIVINE LIGHT (OHR EIN SOF) THROUGH LEVELS OF REALITY. FROM ADAM KADMON TO ATZILUT, BRIYA, YETZIRA, AND ASIYA, EACH WORLD PROGRESSIVELY CONCEALS DIVINITY TO SHAPE EXISTENCE.



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