

The Planted Light

אור זרוע

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*Tu B'Shvat and Her Fruit
in the Light of Midrash & Minhag*

Pre-Publication Edition

מהדורה קמא

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שנת ונטעתם כ"ל ע"ץ עה"כ לפ"ק

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פתיחה

Foreword



Tu B'Shvat from Its Origins

In the depths of winter, as the days begin to slowly lengthen and the first whispers of renewal stir beneath the dormant earth, the Jewish calendar marks a subtle yet profound milestone: Tu B'Shvat, the New Year of the Tree. Sap begins to rise in the trees. The first stirrings of new life pulse through dormant branches. Tu B'Shvat arrives quietly, with little fanfare in the Torah itself. And yet, within this seemingly minor date lies a wellspring of wisdom flowing through the millennia of Jewish thought.

The fifteenth day of Shvat presents itself as a technical demarcation in the agricultural laws of ancient Israel—the day that separated one tax year from another for the fruits of the trees. From these humble legal origins, Tu B'Shvat has blossomed into a multifaceted celebration that encompasses numerous dimensions of spiritual growth.

This volume seeks to trace the rich tributaries that flow from the original source of Tu B'Shvat through Jewish history, text, and practice.

Ma'aser and the Land of Israel

To understand Tu B'Shvat, we need to return to its origins in agricultural law. The Torah's system of *ma'aseros* (tithes) required precise timekeeping - fruits that budded before the fifteenth of Shvat belonged to one year's tithing cycle, those

that budded after belonged to the next. This wasn't arbitrary bureaucracy. The date was chosen because "most of the year's rain has already fallen" and "the sap has risen in the trees" (Rosh Hashanah 14a, Rashi) - marking a genuine transition in the growing season.

Think about what this system created. Harvesting fruit wasn't just gathering food – it included participating in a sacred economy. *Terumah* went to the *kohanim*, *ma'aser rishon* to the Levites, *ma'aser sheni* was brought to Jerusalem and eaten there in certain years, *ma'aser ani* went to the poor in other years. In the fourth year of a tree's life (*revai*), its fruits would be brought to Jerusalem and consumed there. The agricultural cycle became intertwined with supporting communal institutions, sharing with those in need, and experiencing Jerusalem's sanctity.

When exile severed Jews from the land, these laws became largely theoretical. Yet Tu B'Shvat remained on the calendar – a reminder of the covenant between our people and our homeland. Even in the coldest corners of the Diaspora, Jews marked this day with customs preserving the memory of the Land and its fruits. Liturgical poems from the 6-7th centuries celebrate the New Year of the Tree and its bountiful blessings. Responsa from the 10th century indicate that Tu B'Shvat was significant enough that communal fasts would be postponed to avoid conflicting with it. The memory of Tu B'Shvat would live on.

With the return to Israel in modern times, Tu B'Shvat gained renewed relevance. The connection between people and land was reestablished not as theory but as lived reality. Tree-planting on Tu B'Shvat now represents both physical revitalization of the land and spiritual renewal of the covenant. As Rav Kook wrote in a letter encouraging Tu B'Shvat celebrations, tree-planting serves "to increase the settlement of the Land of Israel and to exalt the spirit of our students in

the life-foundation of building the nation in the land of our forefathers and in yearning for His ultimate redeemer.”

The Kabbalah of Fruit

The sixteenth century brought a remarkable expansion of Tu B'Shvat's meaning through the lens of Jewish mysticism. The kabbalists of Tzfat, particularly those in the circle of the *Arizal*, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, perceived profound cosmic significance in eating fruits and reciting blessings. They developed an elaborate Tu B'Shvat seder modeled after the Pesach seder, involving four cups of wine and various fruits in specific order.

These mystics taught that consuming fruits with proper intention could serve as *tikkun* (rectification) for Adam's sin with the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. As *Chemdat Yamim* relates: “My Master would say to have intention while eating the fruits to rectify the mistake of Primal Man, who erred with fruit of the tree.” Indeed, the *Arizal* was known to teach that the primary means of achieving divine revelation was by means of reciting blessings over food with the proper intention.

The kabbalistic approach categorized fruits according to spiritual worlds. As explained in *Pri Etz Hadar*, the original Tu B'Shvat Haggadah there are ten fruits associated with the ten *sefiros* of the three lower worlds:

The fruits of *Beriyah*, Creation, the highest of these three worlds, have no shells or pits and can be eaten entirely. These include grapes, figs, and apples—fruits that symbolize complete goodness without any waste or barrier.

The fruits of *Yetzirah*, Formation, have inedible pits or seeds within them but no outer shells—fruits like olives, dates, and cherries. These represent an intermediate level where good predominates but is not without some element of waste.

Finally, the fruits of *Asiyah*, Action, have hard, inedible outer shells that must be removed to access the edible portion within—fruits such as pomegranates, nuts, and almonds. These symbolize the material world where holiness is often concealed behind external barriers.

This classification mirrors kabbalistic understanding of the human soul and cosmos. Just as we must work to reveal the divine spark within ourselves by removing the “shells” of egoism and materialism, we must recognize divine essence hidden within the physical world. Blessing and eating fruit becomes a microcosm of this larger spiritual process.

The four cups of wine represent another dimension of this cosmic progression. Beginning with white wine (winter’s dormancy), mixing white and red in different proportions, and finally drinking red wine (life’s fullness), we enact the seasonal transformation from potential to actualization, from concealment to revelation.

This kabbalistic dimension elevates Tu B’Shvat from an agricultural milestone to a powerful opportunity for spiritual alignment and cosmic healing. It reminds us that material and spiritual are not separate domains but different manifestations of unified divine reality. Through mindful consumption of fruits, we participate in the ongoing work of *tikkun olam* - the repair and perfection of creation.

A New-Ancient Seder

This work seeks to integrate the multiple dimensions of Tu B’Shvat into a cohesive and accessible resource for study and celebration. It’s both an anthology of traditional sources and a practical guide for conducting a meaningful seder.

The structure follows the traditional Tu B’Shvat seder while expanding its scope. The work begins with foundational sections exploring the roots of Tu B’Shvat, the relationship between humanity and earth, and the mitzvah of planting. These sections establish the conceptual groundwork for the

seder itself. The *seder* then proceeds through a carefully curated selection of fruits, each accompanied by relevant texts and commentaries that illuminate its significance in Jewish tradition. The concluding sections offer prayers and reflections that help us integrate these insights into our lives beyond the *seder* itself.

What makes this work distinctive is its comprehensive approach to sources and attention to multiple dimensions of meaning. Unlike many modern compilations that selectively draw upon sources to support contemporary perspectives, this work invites engagement with the full breadth and depth of Jewish thought on these topics. The inclusion of Hebrew/Aramaic originals with English translations makes sources accessible to readers at varying levels.

Furthermore, this work seeks to honor both tradition and innovation. It preserves the kabbalistic framework of the Tu B'Shvat *seder* while making it accessible to those without extensive background in Jewish mysticism. It maintains the centrality of the Land of Israel in Tu B'Shvat observance while expanding its relevance to Jews living throughout the world.

Structure of the Book

This Haggadah is organized into several main sections:

1. **שָׁרָשִׁים (Roots)** – These introductory chapters from the foundations for the Tu B'Shvat Seder and tefillos that follow.
 - a. **רֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה לְאֵילָן (New Year of the Tree)** traces Tu B'Shvat from its earliest rabbinic sources through its historical development;
 - b. **הָאָדָם וְהָאָרֶץ (Humanity and Earth)** explores the deep interrelationship between human beings and the natural world within Jewish tradition, emphasizing responsibility and interdependence; and

- c. **וְנִטְעָתֶם (And You Shall Plant)** gathers texts on the mitzvah and metaphor of planting, highlighting themes of cultivation, patience, and the long view required for true growth across generations.
2. **ט"ו בְּשָׁבָט (Tu B'Shvat Seder)** - The core of the work, this section provides the framework for experiencing the Tu B'Shvat seder. Each fruit included in the *seder* receives its own section with relevant texts and commentaries.
3. **תְּפִלּוֹת (Prayers)** - The final section offers prayers associated with Tu B'Shvat, fruit consumption, and tree planting, providing resources for extending the observance beyond the *seder* itself.

Throughout these sections, you'll find texts from diverse sources and time periods, all connected by their relevance to Tu B'Shvat themes. Sources are presented in original languages alongside English translations, maintaining fidelity to tradition while ensuring accessibility.

May our study and observance of Tu B'Shvat deepen our appreciation for the natural world, strengthen our commitment to its preservation, and enhance our awareness of the divine presence that sustains all existence. And may we merit to fulfill the words of the prophet: "They shall not build for others to dwell in, nor plant for others to consume. For the days of My people are as the days of a tree, and My chosen ones shall outlive the work of their hands" (Yeshaya 65:22).

Chaim Davies

Shevat 5786



שָׁרָשִׁים





ראש השנה לאילן

The New Year of the Tree



Our journey begins with the very foundation of Tu B'Shvat in Jewish tradition. To understand this holiday's significance, we must first recognize its original place in the calendar system. Where does this day come from? What makes the fifteenth of Shvat significant?

Mishnah, Rosh HaShanah 1:1

There are four New Years: the first of Nissan is the New Year for Kings and for Festivals. The first of Elul is the New Year for tithing animals; R. Eliezer and R. Shimon say: the first of Tishrei. The first of Tishrei is the New Year for years, for Shemitah and Jubilee cycles, and for planting and for vegetables. The first of Shvat is **the New Year for the Tree** – according to Beis Shammai; Beis Hillel say, **on the fifteenth** of it.

משנה, ראש השנה א:א

אַרְבָּעָה רָאשֵׁי שָׁנִים הֵם:
בְּאַחַד בְּנִיטָן רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה
לְמַלְכִּים וְלִרְגָלִים. בְּאַחַד
בְּאַלּוּל רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה לְמַעֲשֵׂר
בְּהֶמְהָ. רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר וְרַבִּי
שְׁמַעוֹן אוֹמְרִים, בְּאַחַד
בְּתִשְׁרִי. בְּאַחַד בְּתִשְׁרִי רֹאשׁ
הַשָּׁנָה לְשָׁנִים וְלַשְּׁמִטָּה
וְלַיּוֹבְלוֹת, לְנִטְעָה וְלִירְקוֹת.
בְּאַחַד בְּשֶׁבֶט, רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה
לְאֵילָן, כְּדַבְּרֵי בֵּית שְׁמַאי.
בֵּית הֵילֵל אוֹמְרִים, בְּחִמְשָׁה
עָשָׂר בּוֹ.

The Mishnah tells us there are actually four New Years on the Jewish calendar. The first of Nissan marks the New Year

for kings and for festivals. The first of Elul—or according to some, the first of Tishrei—for tithing animals. The first of Tishrei, which we know as Rosh Hashanah, for years, *shemittah* and *yovel* cycles, for planting and for vegetables. And then there's the first of Shvat for trees—that's *Beit Shammai's* opinion. *Beit Hillel* says the fifteenth of the month. *Halacha* follows *Beit Hillel*.

So Tu B'Shvat—the fifteenth of Shvat—becomes the New Year for trees. But why this particular date?

Rosh HaShanah 14a

What is the reason? Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Oshaya: it is since most of the years' rain has already come, even though most of the [winter] season is yet to come.

מסכת ראש השנה דף יד/א

מאי טעמא? אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אָמַר רַבִּי אוֹשְׁעִיא: הוֹאִיל וַיִּצְאוּ רֹב גְּשָׁמֵי שָׁנָה, וְעַד־יֵין רֹב תִּקְוָהּ מִבְּחוּץ.

The Gemara explains: by this point, most of the year's rain has already fallen, even though winter itself isn't over yet. Rashi elaborates on the ecological significance of this timing:

Rashi ibid.

As most of the rainy days, which is the time of the primary rainy season, have already passed, such that the sap has risen in the trees; and from then on, the fruits emerge.

רש"י שם

הוֹאִיל וַיִּצְאוּ רֹב גְּשָׁמֵי שָׁנָה – שֶׁכָּבֵד עֶבֶר רֹב יָמוֹת הַגְּשָׁמִים שְׁהוּא זְמַן רִבִּיעָה וְעֵלָה הַשָּׂרֵף בְּאֵילָנוֹת וְנִמְצָאוּ הַפְּרוֹת חוֹנְטִין מֵעַתָּה.

Rashi adds the crucial detail: once most of the rainy season has passed, the sap begins to rise in the trees. From this point forward, new fruits that emerge belong to the new agricultural year for purposes of *ma'aser* and other tithes.

This matters. In ancient Israel, the Torah's tithing system demanded precision. You couldn't mix fruits from different years. *Terumah* goes to the *kohanim*, *ma'aser rishon* to the *Leviyim*, *ma'aser sheni* gets brought to Jerusalem in years one, two, four, and five of the *shemittah* cycle, *ma'aser ani* goes to the poor in years three and six. Add to this the three years of *orlah* when fruit cannot be used at all, and *revai* in the fourth year when fruit is brought to Jerusalem. Tu B'Shvat is the dividing line that makes this entire system work.

Yet this practical agricultural significance belies the day's broader spiritual meaning. Excavations of the Old Cairo *genizah* which began in 1896 unearthed liturgical poems for Tu B'Shvat, composed by Rabbi Yehudah HaLevi ben Hillel (from the school of Rabbi Eliezer HaKalir, c. 6th-7th century). These represent one of the earliest known compositions specifically for this holiday. We have included these poems in the Tefillos section at the back of this volume.

Even in the depths of exile, Tu B'Shvat remained on the calendar. It became something more—a reminder, a point of connection, a way to keep the covenant with the Land alive even when we couldn't be there.

Consider this responsum from the 11th century, subsequently cited by the 13th century Mordechai (Rosh Hashanah #701):

Responsa of Rabbeinu Gershom, 14

Regarding that which you asked: "a community that wished to decree a fast of BeHaB but it fell on Tu B'Shvat, should we be concerned for [Tu B'Shvat's nature as a] Rosh HaShanah and thereby postpone the fast, or not? My opinion is that the fast is pushed off until the following week; we don't find a fast

תשובות רבינו גרשום

מאור הגולה, סי' יד

וְשִׁשָּׁאֲלָתֶם: "צָבוּר
שֶׁבָקְשׁוּ לְגִזֹּר תַּעֲנִית
בְּשָׁנֵי וַחֲמִישֵׁי וְשָׁנֵי וּפָגַע
בְּתַעֲנִית ט"ו בְּשַׁבָּט, יֵשׁ
לְחוּשׁ לר"ה וְלִדְחוֹת
הַתַּעֲנִית אוֹ לֹא?" כִּךְ
דַּעֲתִי נוֹטָה שֶׁהַתַּעֲנִית

day on a New Years – and the Mishnah [includes Tu B'Shvat when it] says (Rosh HaShanah 1:1), “There are four New Years”.

נִדְחָה עַד הַשָּׁבֶת הָאֶחָד
וְאֵין קוֹבְעִין תַּעֲנִית בּוֹ
בַּיּוֹם שֶׁלֹּא מִצָּאנוּ תַּעֲנִית
בְּרִיָּה, וְתַנּוּן ד' רָאשֵׁי
שָׁנִים הֵן.

Rabbeinu Gershom Me'or HaGolah—the light of the exile, the teacher who built Torah life in Ashkenaz—addresses a question: A community wants to decree a fast on Monday-Thursday-Monday, but it falls on Tu B'Shvat. Should they postpone it?

His answer is unequivocal: Yes. We don't establish a fast day on a Rosh Hashanah, and the Mishnah explicitly lists four New Years—Tu B'Shvat among them.

This is 11th century Northern Europe – and they're treating Tu B'Shvat with the respect accorded to any other festival day.

This reverence for the day continued to develop through the medieval period. By the time of the *Maharil*, Rabbi Yaakov Moelin, at the end of the 14th century, clear customs have emerged:

Maharil, Minhagim, Shvat 2

On the fifteenth of it [Shvat] we do not recite Tachanun; and we rejoice on it with a festive meal.

מהרי"ל, מנהגים, שבט, ב

וּבְחֻמְשָׁה עָשָׂר בּוֹ אֵין
אוֹמְרִים תְּחִנָּה וּבִשְׁמִינִי
בּוֹ סְעוּדָה.

The Maharil notes two important practices: the omission of Tachanun, and a festive meal to mark the day. These customs reflect Tu B'Shvat's evolution from a purely agricultural marker to a day of joy and celebration.

By the 16th century, eating fruit had become central to the observance, as documented by Rabbi Yissachar ibn Susan in Jerusalem in 1564:

Tikkun Yissachar, Pashtus

On the fifteenth of it [Shvat] to the week of Parashat Beshalach, it is the New Year for the Tree. And the Ashkenazim accumulate a variety of fruits in honor of the nature of the day.

תיקון יששכר, פשטות, עמ'

ב"ח

יום ט"ו בו שבֿת בְּשַׁלַּח וְהוּא
רֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה לְאֵילָנוֹת
וְהָאֲשְׁכְּנָזִים יֵצְאוּ מִרְבֵּים בּוֹ
בְּמִינֵי פְרוֹת הָאֵילָן לְכָבוֹד
שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל יוֹם.

The Ashkenazim in Jerusalem are bringing in various fruits on Tu B'Shvat, eating them *lichvod hayom*—in honor of the day.

This practice spreads. It's cited in *Knesses HaGedola (Orach Chaim 131, Beis Yosef), Magen Avraham (ibid. 16:6), Eliya Rabbah (ibid. 14), Pri Chadash (ibid. 6)*—in short, it becomes widespread.

Different communities develop their own expressions. In Worms, Germany in 1650, Rav Yosefa Shamash documents how it became a special day for children and their teachers:

Minhagim of Worms, 312

On the fifteenth [of Shvat] we recite Tachanun, even at Shacharit. And it is a day the teachers make relaxed for the students, particularly for young children. And it is a day of drinking and festivity for teachers and students. We are accustomed to give whisky to the students and rejoice with them.

מנהגים דק"ק וורמיישא, סי'

רי"א

חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר אֲוֻמְרִים תְּחַנֶּה
אֶפְלוּ בְּשַׁחֲרִית, וְהוּא יוֹמָא
דְּמִפְגְּרֵי בֵּה רַבָּנָן הַמְלָמְדִים,
וּבְפֶרֶט לְמַקְרֵי דְרִדְקֵי, וְהוּא
יוֹם מִשְׁתֵּה וּשְׂמֻחָה לְמַלְמְדֵי
וְהַתְלָמִידִים. וְנוֹהֲגִין לְתַת
לְתַלְמִידֵי יַיִן שְׂרָף וְלִשְׂמֹחַ
עִמָּם.

The teachers relax the usual strictness. Tu B'Shvat is a day of celebration for teachers and students together. They even give the students whiskey and join them in festivities—a

practice that might raise eyebrows today but reflects the holiday's joyous character.

By the early 18th century, eating fruits on Tu B'Shvat has become presented a religious obligation. In 1712, Rabbi Eliyahu Itamri cites an ethical will attributed to Rabbi Eliezer HaGadol of the 1st century, which emphasizes the importance of blessing and consuming fruits on Tu B'Shvat:

**Tzava'ah of Rabbi Eliezer
the Great (Shevet Mussar, 16)**

My son, be careful to bless
over fruits on Tu B'Shvat, for
this is an ancient custom.

**צוואת רבי אליעזר הגדול
(נוסחת השבט מוסר, פרק ט"ו)**

בני, הוי זהיר לברך על הפרות
בט"ו בשבט, שמנהג ותיקין הוא.

Around the same time, we begin seeing the emergence of an entirely novel kabbalistic dimension in the writings of Rabbi Yisrael Elgazi, the teacher of the Chida, in 1728:

**Chemdas Yamim, Shovavim, Ch.
3: Tu B'Shvat**

There is a good custom to those
who walk wholesomely, to
accumulate many fruits on this
day and to say songs and praise
over them, in the way I have been
accustomed with all the Chaverim
who are with me. And even
though in the writings of the
Master [Yitzchak Luria] this
custom is not mentioned,
nonetheless to my knowledge it is
a wondrous remedy in both *Nigleh*
[public Torah] and *Nistar* [hidden
teachings] ... and my Master would
say to have intention while eating

**חמדת ימים, שובבי"ם פ"ג,
ט"ו בשבט**

ומנהג טוב להולכים
בתמים להרבות בפרות
בעצם היום הזה ולומר
דברי שירות ותשבחות
עליהן כאשר הנהגתי לכל
החברים אשר עמדי. ועם
כי בדברי הרב זלה"ה לא
נמצא מנהג זה מכל מקום
לדעתי תקון נפלא הוא
בנגלה ובנסתר... ומוזרי
ז"ל היה אומר לבן
באכילת פרותיהן לתקון
חטא אדם הראשון אשר

the fruits to rectify the mistake of Primal Man, who erred with fruit of the tree. And that even though all year round our intention may be for this, but a Mitzva is most precious in her proper time, and this is the beginning and head of the [year for] fruits of the tree.

חָטָא בְּפִרְוֹת הָאֵילָן, כִּי אָף
כִּי כָּל יְמֵי שָׁנָה כָּל
כּוֹנְנֵינוּ לְתַקּוֹן זֶה מְכַל
מְקוֹם חֲבִיבָה מְצוּה
בְּשַׁעֲתָהּ זֶה הַיּוֹם תְּחִלָּה
וְרֹאשׁ לְפִרְוֹת הָאֵילָן.

Chemdas Yamim—the work that gave us customs like reciting *L'David Hashem Ori* during Elul—describes a full ritual meal for Tu B'Shvat. Fruits arranged in specific order. Songs and praises. And critically: *kavanah*, intention.

The author, Rabbi Yisrael Algazi—teacher of the *Chida*, *Rishon LeZion* in mid-18th century Jerusalem—reports that his teacher taught him to have intention while eating the fruits to rectify Adam's sin with the Tree of Knowledge. The very first sin involved fruit from a tree. Now, on the New Year for the Tree, we have an opportunity for *tikkun*.

He's forthright about it—this practice isn't found in the earlier writings of the *Arizal*. But he calls it a “wondrous remedy” in both the revealed and hidden dimensions of Torah.

Is there basis for this idea that eating with proper intention can achieve healing and spiritual uplifting? Absolutely. The Gemara recounts how, in lieu of the Temple's altar, one's table becomes a source of atonement:

Chagigah 27a

When the Temple is standing
the altar atones for a person;
now – it is a person's table
that atones for him.

מסכת חגיגה דף כז/א

בְּזִמְנֵי שְׁבִיטַת הַמִּקְדָּשׁ קָיָים —
מְזַבֵּחַ מְכַפֵּר עַל אָדָם, עַכְשָׁיו —
שִׁלְחָנוּ שֶׁל אָדָם מְכַפֵּר עָלָיו.

When the Temple stood, the altar provided atonement. Now our tables atone for us.

This transforms every meal. Our dining tables become like the *mizbe'ach*, capable of serving as vehicles for *avodah*.

The Arizal's disciple, Rabbi Chaim Vital, emphasizes how our approach to eating can elevate us spiritually:

Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh, 15

My teacher, of blessed memory, also told me that the primary means through which a person attains Ruach HaKodesh depends on the person's intention and care in every blessing made over pleasurable things (*birchos ha'nehenin*). For through them, the power of those *kelipot*—which cling to physical foods and attach themselves to the person who eats them—is nullified. And through blessings recited over them with proper intention, those *kelipot* are removed, and the material substance of the person is refined, becoming pure and ready to receive holiness. He warned me very strongly about this.

שער רוח הקודש, פרק טו

גם אמר לי מורי ו"ל כי
עקר השגת האדם אל
רוח הקדוש תלויה על ידי
כונת האדם וזירות בכל
ברכת הנהגין, לפי שעל
ידם מתבטל כח אותם
הקלפות הנאחזות
במאכלים החמריים
ומתדבקים בהם באדם
האוכל אותם. ועל ידי
הברכות שעליהם
הנאמרות בכונה הוא
מסיר מהם הקלפות ההם
ומזכך החומר שלו ונעשה
זך ומוכן לקבל קדשה.
וזהו הירגזי מאד בזה.

The primary path to *ruach hakodesh* depends on our care with *birchos hanehenin*, blessings over things we enjoy. When we bless food with proper *kavanah*, we remove the *kelipot*, the spiritual husks clinging to physical items. We refine the material and prepare it to receive *kedushah*. Rabbi Vital adds: "He warned me very strongly about this."

This mystical approach to food is also hinted at by Rabbi Chaim ibn Attar:

Ohr HaChaim, Bereishis 18:5

Even in food there are wondrous secrets, as it is said (Mishlei 13:25), *The righteous one eats to satisfy his soul*—for its inner spiritual dimensions.

אור החיים, בראשית יח:ה

גַּם בַּמֵּאֲכָל יֵשׁ סוּדוֹת מִפְּלָאִים בְּאֵמֹר (מִשְׁלֵי י"ג:כ"ה) "צָדִיק אֵכֵל לְשַׂבֵּעַ נַפְשׁוֹ" – לְפִנְיָמִיּוֹת הָרוּחָנִיּוֹת.

The Ohr HaChaim confirms that food contains “wondrous secrets” and that the righteous eat not merely for physical sustenance but to satisfy the inner, spiritual dimensions of their souls. This perspective transforms the act of eating from a mundane necessity into a profound spiritual opportunity—especially appropriate for a holiday centered around fruits.

Rabbeinu Bachya elaborates on how mindful eating transforms a physical act into divine service:

Rabbeinu Bachya, Shulchan Shel Arba, Ch. 2

A person is greatly obligated to reflect upon the nature of eating, and to consider its proper purpose...

One who is God-fearing ought to direct his thoughts upward, so that his eating serves solely to sustain his body—not to pursue pleasure...

So too, when he eats, he must turn his thoughts and let them wander to the Holy One with

רבינו בחי, שלחן של ארבע, ב

חַיִּיב גְּדוֹל יֵשׁ עַל הָאָדָם לְהִתְבּוֹנֵן בְּאִיכוֹת הָאֲכִילָה וּלְהִתְבּוֹנֵן אֶל תַּכְלִית הָרְאוּי...

הָאִישׁ הֵרָא רְאוּי לוֹ שְׁתַּהֲיָה מִחֻשְׁבָּתוֹ מִתַּקְשָׁרֶת עִם הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים, וְשְׁתַּהֲיָה אֲכִילָתוֹ לְקִיּוֹם גּוֹפּוֹ בְּלִבָּד וְלֹא לְהַמְשִׁךְ אַחֲרֵי הִתְעַנּוּגִים...

וְכֵן יִצְטָרֵךְ כְּשִׂיאָכֵל שְׂיַפְנָה מִחֻשְׁבָּתוֹ וְתַהֲיָה מְשׁוּטָטֶת