

## T"U B:SHVAT

### ROOTS

“Because Man is the tree of the field”  
(Deutoronomy 20,19).

Two sources of life for the tree: it draws from the moisture of the ground, and absorbs the forces that are embedded in the soil from which it grows; its roots, they assure its certainty in standing against any wind. At its treetop, the tree enjoys the light and the dancing rays of the sun; on its side, flowers emerge luring the bees to fertilise them.

Two movements of the tree: growth downward, towards the water, towards the soil, from which it grows, and growth upward, towards the sun, from which it derives its life-giving and nourishing warmth and light.

The roots and the treetop at the extremities of the tree are balanced. As the size of the roots, so is the measure of its branches and leaves. Without roots, any ordinary wind will bend the tree and break it. Without the treetop, the tree remains – dry wood.

Within the tree, there is a direct connection of moisture between the roots and its treetop. That same bond between the roots and the leaves is the very force that guarantees the tree its life. Cut off that bond, and the tree will be destroyed (cut-off and dried out).

Every Jew is like the tree of the field. He is rooted in the solid ground of his ancestors' legacy, roots of soul and tradition, and turns his head upwards, yearning higher and yet higher heavenward. Ancestors' legacy and love of G-od are those that guarantee the life of the Jew –the tree– within the People of Israel.

The moisture, the water within the tree, is, for the Jew, the wisdom of the Torah. The words of the Torah are compared to water: “It is a tree of life for those who grasp it” (Proverbs 3,18).

T"U B:SHVAT is the New Year of trees, “since most of the year's rain had ceased” (Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShana 14a). The roots of the tree have already become satisfied from the water which came from below, and the treetop's leaves start to sprout. They demonstrate and confirm that indeed, a bond exists between the roots and the leaves; between our ancient beginnings and the renewal of our sublime aspirations; between the Lower and the Higher; between Earth and G-od's Heaven above.

From the book: *Be'Iqvei Chaggim uMo'adim*, In the Wake of Festivals and Solemn Days Thoughts on the Festivals and the Weekly Haftaroith.

By: Rabbi Yerachmiel Yaakov (Eugene Jacob) Duschinsky (z"l.), Av-Beth-Din South Africa. Sefer-Hermon Press, New York, 1982.

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