

The 4 Worlds

According to *Kabbalah*, there are four worlds or levels of creation: *azilut* (emanation), *beriah* (creation), *yetzirah* (formation), and *assiyah* (action - our world of physical reality). The world of *azilut* is purely spiritual and is symbolized by scents from trees like bay leaves, douglas fir pine needles, Cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg etc The world of *beriah* is symbolized by fruits that have neither pits on the inside nor shells on the outside - that is, they are totally edible: grapes, figs, apples, *etrogim* (citrons), lemons, persimmons (the ones without pits), pears, carobs, and quinces. (Seeds are considered edible in this system). The world of *yetzirah* has pits inside, but the outside can be eaten. Its fruits are olives, dates, cherries, jujubes, apricots, persimmons (the ones with pits), peaches, loquats, and plums. The world of *assiyah* has an outside shell that must be discarded, and an inside that can be eaten. Its fruits and nuts are pomegranates, walnuts, almonds, pine nuts, chestnuts, hazelnuts, coconuts, Brazil nuts, pistachios, and pecans. The symbolism, in brief, is as follows: Those parts that can be eaten represent holiness; the inedible parts - that is, the pits - represent the impure; and the shells serve as protection for the fragile holiness inside. (Adapted from The Jewish Holidays by Michael Strassfeld)

Another Interpretation of the 4 Worlds

The *Kabbalah* has a mystical idea of four worlds. It is a division different from Wiccan directions (N,E,S,W) or elements (Earth, Air, Fire, Water). The four worlds are the physical, the emotional, the intellectual, and the spiritual; corresponding to these are four ways of interacting with the world - four characteristic verbs, if you will: to do, to feel, to know, to be. Many Jewish traditions, mystical and otherwise, reflect this paradigm of four.

Charting the 4 Worlds and 2 Realms of Tu B'Shevat

WORLD	IDEA	ELEMENT	DIRECTION	SEASON	GRAPE JUICE	FRUIT
Assiyah	Action	Earth	North <i>Tzafon</i>	Winter in both the Jewish & Pagan Traditions as well as the 4 Worlds Model	all white	hard outside, soft inside
Yetzirah	Formation	Water	West <i>Ma'arav</i>	Fall in the Jewish & Pagan Traditions & Spring in the 4 Worlds Model	white with a dash of red	soft outside, hard inside
Briyah	Creation	Air	East <i>Mizrakh</i>	Spring in the Jewish & Pagan Traditions & Summer in the 4 Worlds Model	red with a dash of white or half and half	all soft
Atzilut	Spirit	Fire	South <i>Darom</i>	Summer in in the Jewish & Pagan Traditions & Fall in the 4 Worlds Model	all red	Smells
Cosmic Realm	Love	N/A	Up, Down, & Center/Place of All Things <i>D'varim</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ancestral Realm	Ancestors	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* NOTE REGARDING SCENTS FOR FIRE ALTAR: To make camp accessible for folks with allergies and scent sensitivities: Please do not use actual fire (you can use electric candles) and only use fragrant parts of trees that smell when you put your nose to them: Bay leaves, cinnamon, cloves, douglas fir needles, etc. (no flowers, smudges, essential oils, etc.....). Thanks!