

Shalom! What a beautiful observation - yes, the **Tree of Life is woven throughout our Sabbath prayers**, reminding us that Shabbat itself is a **taste of the world to come**, where the Tree of Life will flourish!

The Tree of Life in Our Siddur on Shabbat

You'll find references to the Tree of Life in several key parts of our Sabbath worship:

1. In the Kiddush (Sanctification of Shabbat)

When we recite the Kiddush over wine, we say:

"And You chose us from all nations and tongues, and sanctified us with Your commandments, and lovingly gave us, from all Your holy days, the Sabbath day as an inheritance, as a remembrance of the creation of heaven and earth - the first of Your works, a holy convocation; and You called it a day of rest, a holy day, a memorial of the exodus from Egypt. For You are the Lord our God, who has sanctified us and the Sabbath day."

The sages link this to the Tree of Life - just as the Tree was in the center of Eden, Shabbat is the center of our week, **a taste of the original wholeness of creation**. When we sanctify Shabbat, we are "reentering" the garden and drawing close to the Tree of Life.

2. In Lecha Dodi (The Friday Evening Welcome to Shabbat)

This beloved hymn includes the line:

"Come, let us go meet the Sabbath bride, let us receive the presence of the Divine. ... She is a crown of glory for God, a diadem for the Holy One of Israel. ... Prepare for her arrival, clear a path for her, adorn yourselves with mitzvot as with jewels!"

The sages say the "**Sabbath bride**" is like the Tree of Life - she brings beauty, **nourishment**, and **restoration**. The "jewels" we adorn

ourselves with are the good deeds that connect us to the Tree's life-giving power.

3. In the Amidah (The Standing Prayer)

On Shabbat, we add special blessings to the Amidah, including:

"You have chosen us from all peoples, and sanctified us with Your commandments, and have lovingly given us Shabbat as an inheritance - a holy day of rest and remembrance of the creation of the world. For You are our God, who sanctifies the Shabbat and Israel and the holy places."

The Midrash teaches that when we pray this, we are "watering the roots of the Tree of Life" - Shabbat is the stream that nourishes the Tree, allowing it to bear fruit in our lives.

4. In Ata Kadosh (The Holy One)

This prayer, sung during the Repetition of the Amidah on Shabbat, says:

"You are holy, and Your name is holy, and holy beings praise You daily. ... May the glory of God be revealed, and may all flesh see it together - for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it."

The sages connect this to the vision of the Tree of Life in the **heavenly Jerusalem** - on Shabbat, we catch a glimpse of that glory, when **heaven and earth draw near**.

Why the Tree of Life is Central to Shabbat

The sages teach that Shabbat is a "**foretaste of the world to come**" - and the Tree of Life is at the heart of that world. Here's how they are linked:

- **Restoration**: Just as the **Tree of Life** will restore creation to its original perfection, Shabbat **restores** us each week - body, mind, and spirit. **Rev 2:7, 22:2, 14**

- **Connection:** The Tree connects heaven and earth; Shabbat connects us to God, to each other, and to our ancestors.

- **Nourishment:** The Tree bears fruit for sustenance; Shabbat nourishes us with rest, community, and Torah study.

- **Holiness:** The Tree is in the holy garden; Shabbat is our holy day, a time set apart for God.

A Beautiful Practice

Many communities have a custom of decorating the synagogue with **greenery on Shabbat** - especially on festivals like **Sukkot** - as a reminder of the Tree of Life. When we sit under the **sukkah**, we are like the righteous sitting under the **shade of the Tree of Life** in the world to come.

Even in our homes, when we set a beautiful Shabbat table with fresh bread, wine, and

fruit, we are recreating the abundance of the garden and drawing close to the Tree's life-giving presence.

Final Thought

The fact that we sing of the Tree of Life on Shabbat reminds us that Torah is not just something we study - it's something we live. Shabbat brings the Tree of Life into our daily reality, showing us that the **restoration** we hope for is already beginning in our midst.

As we sing on Shabbat: "Shabbat is a delight, a crown for the people of Israel to wear!" - and that crown is woven from the branches of the **Tree of Life**.

May your Shabbat always be filled with the light and nourishment of the **Tree of Life** - may you taste its fruit, feel its shade, and know the peace it brings. Shabbat shalom!

