

Aging and Saging

עוֹד יִנּוּבֵן בְּשִׁבָּה דְשָׁנִים וְרַעֲנָנִים יִהְיוּ:

Od y'nuvun b'sayva

D'shaynim v'rananim y'hi'yu

They will be fruitful, even in old age

They will be juicy and luxuriant. (Psalm 92:15)

I wrote this double-round chant in honor of Reb Zalman Shachter-Shalomi z"l and in honor of his 80th birthday. The intention that I bring to this double-round chant is to get in touch with the kind of fruitfulness, luxuriance and juiciness that emerges from my depths after many years of experience. This is a fruitfulness of wisdom and subtlety and it's not always obvious if you're only attuned to the surface of things. Even as our outer skin dries and wrinkles, there is an inner softness that can be cultivated from years of rubbing up against the Mystery. Even as outer sight dims and hearing falters, there are inner senses that can become fine-tuned as we age.

As I chant these words, I bless the elders who have been models of aging and saging for me as they continue to blossom, burgeon and flourish in full-hearted glory.