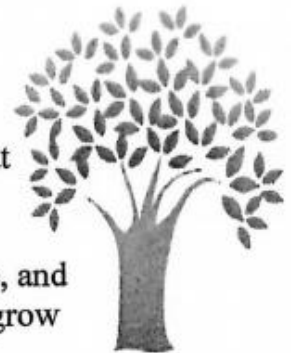


CEEW Tu B'Shevat Seder 2021 / 5781

Introduction:

On the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Shvat, Jews around the world celebrate the holiday of Tu B'Shvat. We call this, "The New Year for Trees." This is the season in which the earliest blooming trees in the Land of Israel, having been well-watered by the winter rains, begin their spring fruit-bearing cycle. In most of Israel, instead of snow in winter, there are heavy rains. The trees and fields need this rain.

Trees take a long time to grow. When we plant a young tree, a sapling, we hope that our children and grandchildren will sit in its shade, climb its branches, eat its fruit, and that it will provide a safe place for birds to build their nests. Planting trees shows that we care about our environment. The pits and seeds inside of the fruits, and the individual grains on the stalks of wheat and barley have the miracle of life inside of them. With soil, water, sunshine, and good care, pits and seeds can grow into saplings, which can then grow to become big trees.



Sing with us: Eretz Zavat Chalav

Lyrics: Eretz zavat chalav, chalav u-d'vash

Eretz zavat chalav, chalav u-d'vash (x2)

Translation:

A land flowing with milk and honey

A land flowing with milk and honey

This is a time to renew our responsibility to help protect and nurture the trees, vines and plants that provide us with fruits and grains. G-d and Moses took us through the desert to reach the Land of Israel. Israel was called “the Land of Milk and Honey” and many varieties of trees, vines, and grains grew there. To remind us of the Holy Land and to remember the vast variety of plants, we eat some of the fruits and grains, and give thanks to G-d for providing us with these things to eat.



One way we celebrate and give thanks is by eating the Seven Species of Israel. These Magnificent Seven fruits and grains are barley, wheat, figs, dates, grapes, pomegranates and olives. Tu B'shevat is also a time to give thanks and to eat from the four basic types of fruits.

Israel Fact: With 90% of Israel's population concentrated in the Tel Aviv-Haifa-Jerusalem Corridor, the rest of the country is left largely uninhabited. Imagine if 70% of the United States' 322 million residents were crammed into California, Nevada, and Arizona. This is the reality in Israel: seven out of 10 Israelis live in approximately 10% of the country's total geography.

Sing with us PLANT A TREE FOR TU B'SHEVAT:

Lyrics:

Let's dig a hole;
Let's dig a hole and plant a seed.
Let's water it, oh, let's water it
'Cause it is *Tu B'Shevat*.

Look at the sprouts;
Look at the sprouts, they're coming up.
Let's water them, oh, let's water them
'Cause it is *Tu B'Shevat*.

CHORUS:

Trees are blowing in the wind,
They're blowing; (2X)
Trees are blowing in the wind.

Look at the leaves;
Look at the leaves, they're growing now.
Let's water them, oh, let's water them

'Cause it is *Tu B'Shevat*.

Look at the tree;
The tree is so much taller now.
Let's water it, oh, let's water it
'Cause it is *Tu B'Shevat*.

CHORUS (2X)

Just look at me;
Just look at me, I'm taller now.
Don't water me, please don't water me
'Cause it is *Tu B'Shevat*.

CHORUS (2X)

(Pour first cup: all white grape juice)

The First Cup of Grape Juice

This cup of white grape juice symbolizes winter and the mystical dimension of *atzilut*, or emanation, at which God's energy infused the creation process with initial life.

As we begin, each of us is like a farmer looking at a barren field in winter. We raise this cup in tribute to the farmer who sees potential abundance emerging from the stark field and decides to plant, in Israel. Our first cup of grape juice is white, reminding us of winter when nature is asleep. The white wine symbolizes purity and represents the beginning of creation. In winter the earth is sometimes barren, covered with snow.

We say the blessing over grape juice:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן

Barukh ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam borei peri ha-gafen.

Blessed are you, Source of all life, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

For Adonai your God is bringing you into a good land. A land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths springing forth in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land wherein you shall eat without scarceness, you shall not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you may dig brass. And you shall eat and be satisfied, and bless God for the good land, which is being given unto you (Deuteronomy 8:7-10).

The First Fruits

Fruit that is hard on the outside and soft on the inside, such as walnuts, coconuts or almonds, Pomegranates, Peanuts, Coconuts, Chestnuts, Pistachios, Bananas. The hard shell symbolizes the protection that the earth gives us and reminds us to nourish the strength and healing power of our own bodies.

There are some people who may be tough or angry and hard to reach. They don't easily let G-d or other people in. They are like the first type of fruit. These people are like the Israeli cactus fruit they call a *sabra*, which is tough on the outside, but has a sweet fruit on the inside. People who are tough or angry can be sweet on the inside, if we can reach out to them or they reach out to others or to G-d.

We say the blessing over the fruits:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי העץ

Barukh ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, borei peri ha-etz.

Blessed are You, Source of all life, Creator of the fruit of the tree.



Sing with us Hashkediya porachat:

Lyrics: Hashkediya porachat V'shemesh paz zorachat; Tziporim merosh kol gag, M'vasrot et bo hechag. Tu bishevat higiya Chag ha'ilanot (2x)

Translation: The almond tree is growing, A golden sun is glowing; Birds sing out in joyous glee From every roof and every tree
Tu Bishevat is here, The Jewish Arbor Day Hail the trees' New Year, Happy holiday

Four Questions of Tu B'shevat

Question 1: Of all of God's creations, why does this holiday honor trees specifically?

Answer: Trees are a symbol of our investment in the future, and because they take so long to grow, planting them is the most selfless act one can make for their children. Trees give us shade and food; they purify our waters and house our wildlife. Honoring trees honors the investment of our ancestors and reminds us of our obligation to our children. There is a story told of a righteous man named Honi. One day he saw an old man planting a carob tree. Honi said to him: "Foolish man, do you think you will live to eat and enjoy the fruit of the tree you plant today? It will not bear fruit for many, many years." The old man replied: "I found trees in the world when I was born. My

grandparents planted them for me. Now I am planting for my grandchildren." And so Honi learned the importance of planting seeds for future generations.

Question 2: Why, today, do we specifically eat fruit that is grown in Israel?

Answer: In the Tanach, Isaiah is recorded as prophesizing that "In the days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will blossom and sprout, and they will fill the whole world with fruit" (Isaiah 27:6). For over 2000 years Jews were exiled from living in the Land of Israel; for over 2000 years the Jewish people were without a home. Now we can fulfill Isaiah's prophesy of not only filling the world with fruit, but partaking in its offerings as well.

Question 3: Why are we thinking about planting when spring is several months away?

Answer: Although it is still winter here, in the Land of Israel one season is ending and another beginning. It is a period of transformation where "most of the rainy season has passed and the sap has risen; but the time of ripening has not yet begun" (Rashi on Rosh HaShanah 14a). Now is the time for us to thank God for the rain for which our Earth depends and celebrate the start of another season of greenery.

Question 4: Why, today, do we remember the importance of conservation and environmental stewardship?

Answer: When we take our precious resources for granted we overlook their value in our lives, and we overlook their necessity for the future. This holiday is a time to reflect on our place in the world around us and to work to improve our relationship with the environment. Tu BiSh'vat is a time to remind us of the importance of completing God's work in the world, the holiest of deeds.

(Pour second cup: white grape juice with a little red)

The Second Cup of grape juice

This cup of grape juice is mostly white, with a little red mixed in, to symbolize the passing of the seasons and the mystical concept of formation and birth, often associated with water.

We now partake in our second cup of wine symbolizing the rebirth of spring and the transition from one year to the next. We drink a nearly full cup of white wine with a few drops of red wine to remind us of the gradual process of spring's rebirth. Just as each new stream begins with a trickle, each flower with a single bud, we watch as our simple drops of colored wine slowly transforms the hue of our glass.

We say the blessing over grape juice:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן

Barukh ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, borei peri ha-gafen.

Blessed are You, Source of all life, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

The Second Fruits

This fruit is soft with a pit in the center — and symbolizes the life-sustaining power that emanates from the earth. It reminds us of the spiritual and emotional strength that is within each of us.

Some people have natures that more easily let in G-d or others, but they still keep a part of themselves separate. These people are like the second type of fruit, like peaches, plums, olives and dates. They more easily connect to G-d and other people, yet in ways their souls are kept hidden inside, like the pit of a fruit.

We say the blessing over the fruits:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי העץ

Barukh ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, borei peri ha-etz.

Blessed are You, Source of all life, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Sing with us, Atzey zeitim:

Lyrics: Atzey zeitim omdim (4x)

Translation: Olive trees are standing (4x)

Israel Fact: Covering over 250,000 acres, Jewish National Fund forests provide an invaluable green canopy for both the people of Israel and the roughly 2,241 different species of animals and birds who call it home.

Dayeinu (Tu b'shevat style)

- Had we purchased 100% recycled paper but not reduced our paper usage... *Dayeinu?* Would it be enough?
- Had we reduced our paper usage, buying products with less packaging and printing on scrap paper but never saved electricity... *Dayeinu?* Would it be enough?
- Had we saved electricity, buying energy efficient appliances and installing compact fluorescent light bulbs but not planted a tree... *Dayeinu?* Would it be enough?
- Had we planted a tree but not safeguarded our forests... *Dayeinu?* Would it be enough?
- Had we safeguarded our forests, and helped to stop forest fires, but not cleaned up our streams... *Dayeinu?* Would it be enough?
- Had we cleaned up our streams but not cleaned up our rivers... *Dayeinu?* Would it be enough?
- Had we cleaned up our rivers but not taught our children about the importance of protecting our environment... *Dayeinu?* Would it be enough?

(Pour third cup: half of white grape juice with half red grape juice)

The Third Cup of grape juice

This cup of grape juice is mostly red with a little of white mixed in and symbolizes once again the change of seasons and the mystical concept of *beriah*, or creation.

We now partake in our third cup of wine symbolizing the warmth and ripening of summer. We pour half a cup of red wine, and half a cup of white wine to remind us that growth is a gradual process, that although the trees are full and green and the flowers have blossomed, their growth is not complete. So much more will be created; so much more will come to be.

We say the blessing over grape juice:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן

Barukh ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, borei peri ha-gafen.

Blessed are You, Source of all life, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

The Third Fruits

This fruit is soft throughout and is completely edible. This type symbolizes God's omnipresence and our own inextricable ties with the earth.

The third type of person fully connects with G-d and others. Like grapes and figs, there are no barriers and nothing is hidden inside. They represent how some people can be good and soft and sweet all the way through.

Additional fruit with edible skins and no pits such as: apples, dates, pears, carob, raisins, strawberries, blueberries

We say the blessing over the fruits:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי העץ

Barukh ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, borei peri ha-etz.

Blessed are You, Source of all life, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Israel Fact: Over the years, JNF has built 250 reservoirs across Israel. Each of these reservoirs stores recycled and runoff water for both local and regional communities. More than 50% of Israel's agricultural water comes from recycled water stored in JNF reservoirs. Israel needs 90 new water reservoirs to ensure that farmers have the water supply they need to grow crops, and to reach the goal of recycling 95% of its water.

(Pour fourth cup: full cup of red grape juice)

The Fourth Cup of grape juice

This cup is all red, symbolizing the mystical concept of fire and the idea that within all living things dwells a spark of God.

We now come to our final cup of wine. Our nearly full cup of red wines symbolizes the blooming and color of autumn, while the drop of white reminds us of the cyclical nature of the season and the need to harvest and save for the coming winter.

We say the blessing over grape juice:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן

Barukh ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, borei peri ha-gafen.

Blessed are You, Source of all life, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

The Fourth Fruits

This has a tough skin on the outside but sweet fruit within—and symbolizes the mystery of the world and our study of Torah. We are constantly seeking to uncover her secrets, and are continually nourished by her fruits.

There is a fourth kind of fruit that is both tough on the outside and has a large pit in the middle. The avocado has a tough peel, and a large pit, but in-between there is soft fruit to eat.

(Other examples: dates, cherries, olives, pears, plums, apricots, hackberries)

We say the blessing over the fruits:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי העץ

Barukh ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, borei peri ha-etz.

Blessed are You, Source of all life, Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Israel Fact: The Shamir Drilling project has made a significant contribution to the water economy of the Galilee and Golan Heights: from three drills, it's possible to now produce approximately 17.5 million cubic meters per year for agricultural use.

The Torah is compared to a Tree of Life. The roots of the tree are buried in the ground to hold the tree tightly to the soil. We can't see most of the roots, but they are there. Just like the roots, our faith and religion hold us strongly. The strong trunk of the tree represents our inner strength and the importance of Tikun Olam ("repairing the world").

People are compared to trees in the Torah. Think of the many parts of the tree. The branches of the tree show that we are always interacting with other people. The fruits of the tree are the kind things we do for other people. The seeds of the fruit represent the next generation of people whom we will help to grow. The leafy canopy of the tree shows that we reach toward heaven and G-d and Torah.

Sing with us Eits Chayim

Lyrics and translation:

Eits chayim hi lamachazikim ba, Vetomecheha me-ushar.

It is a tree of life to them that hold fast to it, and all of it's supporters are happy (2X's)

Shalom, Shalom (clap clap clap, clap) 3X's)

Conclusion:

As the environment is changing, and the idea of Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) is changing with it, we must be more aware of how our generation has the potential (and responsibility) to change the current practices in our society. In Deuteronomy 20:19 we learn "A human is like a tree of the field." Just as one tree does not make a forest, one person does not make up a community. It takes all of us working together to repair the spiritual and physical damage humans have inflicted upon the Earth. As we have celebrated Tu BiShvat, following in the traditions of the Kabbalists in Tzfat (Safed), we must also think about our responsibility to the Earth and how to begin these repairs.

Tu BiShvat is an ideal time to focus on Israel. Right now spring is about to emerge in Israel and forests are beginning to show a tinge of green. As we read, discussed, and explored our connections to the land of Israel, while tasting fruits that symbolize the fruits of Israel.

In the book of VaYikra (Leviticus) 19:23-25 we begin to learn about the importance of nature and the environment to the Jewish people and the environment to the Jewish people.

"When you enter the land and plant any kind of fruit tree, regard its fruit as forbidden. For three years you are to consider it forbidden; it must not be eaten. In the fourth year

all its fruit will be holy, an offering of praise to the LORD. But in the fifth year you may eat its fruit. In this way your harvest will be increased”.

From these verses we can understand the importance of the festival of Tu BiShvat, which became an important marker of time in the Jewish tradition.



It was a way to honor the trees, and by extension, the Earth that G-d gave us.

Sing with us Israel's National Anthem, Hatikva

The words of Israel's national anthem were written as a nine-stanza poem by poet Naftali Herz Imber

Lyrics:

Kol od ba'le'vav p'nima, Nefesh yehudi ho'miyah.

U'lefa-atei mizrach kadimah,

Ayin le'Tziyyon tzofiyah.

Od lo avda tikva-teinu,

Ha'tikvah bat sh'not al-payim

Lih-yot am chofshi b'ar-tzeinu

Eretz Tziyyon v'Yerushalayim.

Translation:

As long as in the heart within,
The Jewish soul yearns,
And toward the eastern edges, onward,
An eye gazes toward Zion.

Our hope is not yet lost,
The hope that is two-thousand years old,

To be a free nation in our land,
The Land of Zion, Jerusalem.

Israel Fact: JNF has led in the rehabilitation of the Be'er Sheva Lake as well, a 23-acre man-made lake filled with recycled water—serving as the focal point of Be'er Sheva River Park as well as the source of irrigation for the entire 1,300 acre park.

Sources:

How to Lead a Tu Bishvat Seder The modern seder draws on elements of its mystical predecessor. BY SUSAN SILVERMAN

Reprinted with permission of the authors from Jewish Family and Life: Traditions, Holidays, and Values for Today's Parents and Children, published by Golden Books.

<https://reformjudaism.org/sites/default/files/RAC-NFTY-seder.pdf>

https://lookstein.org/resource/seder_babaganewz.pdf

<https://reformjudaism.org/sites/default/files/World-Zionist-Organization-TuBiShvat-Seder-Hebrew-and-English.pdf>

www.jnf.org