

Tu B'Shvat

SEDER

The New Year of the Trees



Introduction

There are four new years in the Jewish tradition:

The first of Nisan is the New Year of the kings and seasonal feasts (fiscal new year).

The first of Elul is the New Year of the tithing of the cattle.

The first of Tishrei is the jubilee, Rosh HaShana.

The 15 of Shvat is the New Year for the tithes of fruit

On Tu B'shvat we celebrate the New Year of the Trees and our own belief in the future of the world. Tu B'shvat, ties so closely to Israel and its feasts. We celebrate the unbreakable bonds between Jews everywhere and the land of Israel. As we celebrate this seder we renew our pledge to share in the rebuilding of Medinat Israel (state of Israel) and make the desert bloom



The white gate

How our fathers celebrated Tu B'shvat when the temple was existing?

Tu B'shvat during the second temple was the New Year for budgets and taxes (like Jan the 1st today). Our father called those taxes Trumot – Donations. Every farmer had to donate some of his produce to the Cohens and to the Leviys.

Truma Gdola (Big donation) –

Donation to the Cohens in the temple (%2 of the produce)

Ma'aser Rishon (first tithe) –

Donation to the Leviys in the Temple (%9 of the produce)

Ma'aser Min HaMa'aser (tithe from the tithe) –

Donation that the Leviys gave to the Cohens (%12 of the Leviys donation)

Ma'aser Sheni (second tithe) –

a provisions the farmers use to sell for money if they had a long ride to Jerusalem to buy goods (%9 of the produce)

Total donations: %20 of the produce

First glass – White wine

Our first white of wine symbolizes winter. As we drink it we recall that nature has been dormant these many months, awaiting the warmth of the spring and the cycle of rebirth in the land

Let us all say:

**BA-RUCH A-TA A-DO-NAI E-LO-HEY-NU M-LECH HA-O-LAM BO-RE
PRI HA-GA-FEN**

**BLESSED ARE YOU LORD OUR G-D, RULER OF THE UNIVERSE WHO CREATES THE
FRUIT OF THE VINE.**

Next we eat fruits with hard outer covering and soft insides are eaten (shelled nuts, pomegranate coconuts....). Once again reminding us that the winter makes the ground hard but life is underneath waiting to be reborn.

Let us all say:

BA-RUCH A-TA A-DO-NAI E-LO-HEY-NU M-LECH HA-O-LAM BO-RE PRI HA-ETS

BLESSED ARE YOU LORD OUR G-D, RULER OF THE UNIVERSE WHO CREATES THE FRUIT OF THE TREE.



Jerusalem Gate

After the Romans Exile, the Jews in the Diaspora developed some new customs to keep the connection between them to Erets Israel and Jerusalem. Every year in Tu B'shvat every Jewish family used to sit around the table and eat dry fruits that grown in Israel those fruits are knows as the 7 species:

wheat, raisins, olives, figs, dates, carob and almonds.

Today we are keeping this tradition and we celebrate Tu B'shvat by eating those fruits.

Second cup: white wine mixed with a little amount of red wine

Our second cup of wine is white, but tinged with red. It symbolizes the beginning of springtime and the earth's reawakening. In Israel, pink and white flowers bloom on the hills and mountains at this time of the year.

Let us all say:

L'Chaim

Next we eat fruits with softer outer covering and a hard inner core are eaten (olives, dates, peaches...) recognizing that the ground is slowly thawing out

Let us all say:

Betea'von



Gate of Zion

During the Aliyah Shniya, the second Aliya (the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century) a new tradition was developed. The educators and the new Zionists look for new way to show desires, the yearnings and longings that in their hearts for the land of Israel, and educate the new generation for that. Every year in Tu B'shvat every Jew in Israel younger and adults men and women used to plant a tree and by that show the continuity of the Jewish people, the desire for the land and the wish for peace.

Today we are continuing this Mitzvah by planting trees in Israel or donating money to the Keren Kaymet (national Jewish fund).

Third cup – red wine mixed with a little amount of white wine

Our third cup of wine mostly red, but with some white represents the full arrival of spring. The red tulip and red buttercup spring up over the countryside of Israel. As spring arrives the soil is warmed and softened

Let us all say:

L'Chaim

Next we eat soft fruits (raisins, seedless grapes, figs...) recognizing that the earth has come alive again

Let us all say:

Betea'von



יער הילדים in Israel / Children's Forest

Gate of tree of life

Since the days that Israel was blessed with the 7 species, we are enjoying today many more blessed tasty and loving fruits that grown in Israel. Today we can all enjoy them:

The almonds, the nuts, the Tsabars (prickly pear), the citrus fruits, the avocados, the persimmons, the mangos, the peaches, the plums the kiwis and all the rest of them too.

Erets Israel becomes Erets Zavot Chalav Udvash (country of milk and honey)

Fourth cup – red wine

The fourth cup of wine is red. In the autumn plants prepare seeds for the next cycle, the leaves of the trees turn colors and fall... the cycle is continuing.

Let us all say:

L'Chaim

Today, we have the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of our memories of our hopes and desire. Today we enjoying eating to fruits of all that – the fruits of Israel.

Let us all say:

Betea'von



WE HAVE TAKEN TIME OUT OF OUR EVERYDAY ROUTINE TO CELEBRATE LIFE AND NATURE AROUND US; TO RECOGNIZE AND ENJOY THE GIFTS THAT WE HAVE INHERITED ON THE EARTH. LET US TRY TO INCORPORATE SOME OF THIS AWARENESS INTO OUR LIVES.



And as we close our Tu B'shvat Seder...
Let us all sing together:

L'Shana haba'ha B'yerushalim Next year in Jerusalem

Written and edited by: Ran Elazari, Project "Arevim"