

Tu B'shevat Seder Interactive Seder

As you walk through the seder, read the information, following the instructions and recite the blessings. Enjoy.

**We begin with Four Questions for Tu B'shevat.
Why is this day different from all other days?**

- 1. Other New Year celebrations honor events and people. Why does this New Year honor trees?**
- 2. On other days, we eat many kinds of foods. Why today do we especially eat fruits which grow in Israel?**
- 3. On other days, we take trees and fruits for granted. Why today do we think about conserving and sharing?**
- 4. In many parts of the world, it is wintery and cold. Why today do we speak of plantings?**

As we answer these questions, we will learn about the holiday we have come to celebrate.

When you think of a new year, what do you picture? Your birthday, your own special new year with candles and a cake? January 1st with noisemakers party hats and streamers; the beginning of the school year, with new notebook, backpack and lunchbox? Or maybe Rosh Hashanah with apples, honey and the sound of the shofar?

Tu B'shevat is another new year, the new Year of the Trees. In Hebrew, it is called Rosh Hashanah L'ilanot. Like other new years, Tu B'Shevat has a rich tradition of celebration. The Hebrew letter Tet and Vav which spell 'Tu' have a number value of 15. *Tu B'shevat means the 15th of the Hebrew month Shevat.* Even though it is winter in America, spring is beginning in Israel. Children in Israel plant trees on Tu B'shevat. Have you ever planted a tree in your yard?

In many places snow is on the ground so our first cup of wine (juice) is white, reminding us of winter when nature is asleep. The earth is barren, awaiting the rebirth of spring.

STATION ONE

POUR ONE CUP OF WHITE JUICE AND RAISE GLASS

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי תִגְּפָן.

**Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam,
borei p'ri hagafen.**

**Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the
Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.** ..

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיַּמָּנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַּן הַזֶּה.

**Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam,
shehecheyanu, v'kiyemanu, v'higianu laz'man
hazeh.**

**Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the
Universe, who has granted us life and brought us
together in this season of our joy.**

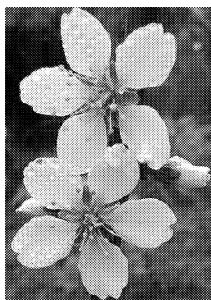
DRINK HALF

STATION TWO

The plate on our table has on it fruits with a peel or shell that cannot be eaten. We eat these fruits and nuts as a reminder that within each shell or peel, there is something that is good.

Let us find the good within us so we may reach out to others in love.

When children in Israel plant their trees, they sing a song about the *shkediyah*, the almond tree, the first to bloom in the spring.



**Hashkediyah poracht, hashemesh gam zorachat.
Tziporim al rosh kol gag m'vasrot et bo he'chag.
Tu B'shevat higiyah, chag ha'ilanot.**

**The almond trees blooms under the sun's rays.
The birds on the rooftops chirp a welcome.
Tu B'shevat the holiday of trees has arrived.**

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי העץ.

Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam borei p're ha'etz.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of trees.

EAT SOME FRUIT ON THE FIRST PLATE

STATION THREE

In early spring the earth gets warmer. Pink wine (juice) reminds us that pink flowers now grow in the Land of Israel.

POUR SEVERAL DROPS OF RED JUICE INTO YOUR WHITE JUICE SO THAT THE JUICE IN YOUR GLASS BECOMES LIGHT PINK.

RAISE GLASS

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי תִגְפוֹן

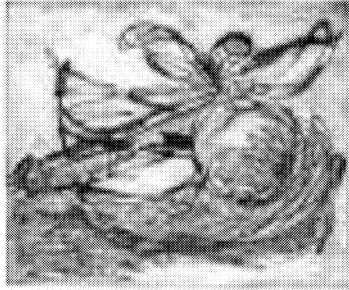
Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine. ..

Winter is still with us. Nature seems asleep.
The trees stand with black and brown branches
Against the pale winter sky.
In the land of Israel
Spring is almost here.
Flowers begin to dot the fields,
Almond trees begin to blossom.
Heavy winter rains are over,
Gentler showers fall;
Sap begins to rise in trees.

DRINK HALF





STATION FOUR

The plate now on your table has on it fruits with pits or seeds inside that cannot be eaten. We eat these as a reminder of the date-palm that is able to bend with the wind without breaking.

So may we, when we are pushed by the winds of challenge or change, bend but not break. May we know when to accept what cannot be changed and when to stand firm and reach toward the sky.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ

Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam borei p'ri ha'etz.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of trees.

EAT SOME FRUIT ON THE SECOND PLATE

Do you know anyone named Tamar or Oren? Many Jewish children are given Hebrew names of flowers and trees that bloom in Israel

Tamar - Palm
Oren - Pine
Ilan - Tree
Shoshana - Lily

Alon- Oak
Vered - Rose
Dafna - Laurel

STATION FIVE

Red wine reminds us that in the Land of Israel, the first spring fruit is ripening. Strawberries, melons and apricots are picked; red flowers cover the ground like a blanket.

POUR RED JUICE INTO YOUR PINK JUICE SO THAT THE JUICE IN YOUR GLASS BECOMES LIGHT RED.

RAISE GLASS

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי תְּגָפֹן.

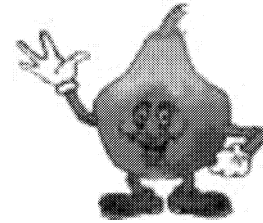
Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

**Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe,
who creates the fruit of the vine.**

DRINK MOST OF THE GLASS



STATION SIX



The plate before you now has fruits which are edible both inside and out.

It was said that on this New Year it was decided: which trees would flourish and grow and which would wither and shrink; which would suffer from poor weather and harmful insects and which would brave all dangers.

Why is the Torah compared to the fig?

Other fruits have something inedible; dates have pits, grapes have seeds, pomegranates have skin. But every part of the fig is good to eat.

Why is the Torah compared to the fig tree?

The fruit of most trees, the olive tree, the vine, and the palm tree is collected all at once, while that of the fig is collected a bit at a time. So, too, regarding the Torah: today a person learns a little and tomorrow s/he learns much, for the Torah cannot be learned in a single year or two.

-Midrash

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ

Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam borei p'ri ha'etz.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of trees.

EAT SOME FRUIT ON THE THIRD PLATE

STATION SEVEN

The fourth cup is all deep, dark purple-red. Summer ends, the trees are filled with blossoming flowers and the crops are growing tall as we reach autumn, the season of the harvest.

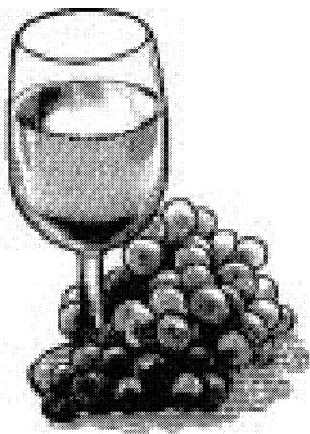
POUR RED JUICE INTO YOUR REMAINING LIGHT RED JUICE SO THAT THE JUICE IN YOUR GLASS BECOMES DARK RED.

RAISE GLASS

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי תִגְפָּן.

Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine. ..



DRINK THE FULL GLASS

STATION EIGHT

Instead of fruit, this plate contains seeds. Seeds are the hope for the future. We are provided with all that we need to insure that the earth will remain covered with beautiful trees that give us fruit, shade from the hot sun and many important qualities that contribute to ecology.

Let us all try to preserve our earth and contribute to a healthy and happy future for all the people of the earth. Besides planting new trees, what are some of the things we can do to make our earth beautiful?

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי העץ.

Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam borei p'ri ha'etz.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of trees.

EAT SOME SEEDS FROM THE FOURTH PLATE

Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai would say, "If you have a planting in your hand, and someone says to you, 'Here is the Messiah' - go and plant the planting, and afterwards to greet him."

Pirke Avot

CHAG SAMAECH!!!



AT THE START OF OUR SEDER WE ASKED FOUR QUESTIONS. NOW WE CAN ANSWER THEM BELOW:

1. Other New Year celebrations honor events and people. Why does this New Year honor trees?

If we closed our eyes and imagined a world without trees and bushes, we would see an ugly, barren, sad looking world.

Trees, with their colors and beauty, decorate the world. With their blossoms and fruits, they surround us with fragrance. But, trees are not only beautiful, they are also helpful to people and animals. They give us food: apples, oranges, peaches, lemons, pears and nuts.

They provide shade and homes for animals. They give us wood for building things like houses, musical instruments and pencils. Trees give us paper for writing and for printing books.

The roots of trees are also very useful. When trees grow on the side of a hill or a mountain, their roots help the earth and stones to stay in place.

Trees provide a place for children to climb, play and swing.

Because Jewish people like and appreciate trees so much, we celebrate Tu B'Shevat. We celebrate the New Year of the Trees.

2. On other days, we eat many kinds of foods. Why today do we especially eat fruits? which grow in Israel?

After the Temple was destroyed, and the Jews were forced to leave the land of Israel, the original purpose of Tu B'shevat was lost. The laws of planting and tithing crops did not apply outside of Israel. But the holiday was preserved as a symbol of the love of the Jewish people for their land.

It became a custom to eat fruits that grown in the Holy Land – almonds, dates, olives, figs, carob, and pomegranates. The Kabbalist created a formal Tu B'shevat celebration modeled after the Passover seder. Now we eat up to 15 different kinds of fruits, nuts, and grains, and drink four cups of wine or juice.

3. On other days, we take trees and fruits for granted. Why today do we think about conserving and sharing?

In modern times, Tu B'Shevat has taken on new meaning. In Israel trees have become the symbol of rebuilding the land. In the United States Jewish school children participate in conservation and ecology projects to help protect our earth. We take responsibility for the caretaking of our planet.

During the sixteenth century, Sephardic Jews, in keeping with the Jewish tradition of Tzedakah , collected money for a fund, *Maot Pairot*, in order to provide money for poor families to enable them to buy fruits for Tu B'Shevat. Today we can collect money for organizations such as Mazon, or the Central Virginia Food Bank, that provide food for the hungry.

4. In many parts of the world, it is wintery and cold. Why today do we speak of plantings?

In Israel, the heavy rains are finishing and winter is over. Spring is on the way. Children go out into the fields, valleys and deserts and plant hundreds of saplings. Have you ever planted a tree in your yard? Jewish children all over the world contribute money for tree-planting.

The Rabbis of ancient times agreed that a new year for the trees should begin in the month of Shevat, but disagreed on the day – the first or the fifteenth. This question was not settle until the tenth century , when the fifteenth was designated. By that date, the rainy season is usually over in Israel and the sap starts rising in the trees.

