

Tu BiShvat

A celebration of nature's rebirth

Haggadah for the Tu BiShvat Seder



אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ

Eretz Zavav Chalav U'Dvash

A land flowing with milk and honey



It states in the first Mishna of Tractate Rosh Hashanah:

“There are four New Years for the Jewish Calendar: The first of Nisan - Rosh Hashanah for (dating the reign of) Kings and (setting the cycle of) Festivals; The first of Elul - Rosh Hashanah for tithing cattle; The first of Tishrei - Rosh Hashanah for calculating Sabbatical and Jubilee years and for various plantings; The first of Shevat - Rosh Hashanah for trees, according to the school of Shammai, the fifteenth (ט"ו Tu) of Shevat, according to the school of Hillel whose view is accepted.”

Today we come together to reaffirm our connection with the land of Israel and rejoice in its rebirth. Tu BiShvat, Rosh Hashana lailanot marks the awakening of nature after its winter sleep. As we celebrate this Seder, we renew our pledge to share in the building of a better world.

Tu BiShvat was the cutoff date to determine which produce was appropriate for the annual offerings in the Temple. With the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, Tu BiShvat receded from Jewish consciousness. Centuries later the Kabbalistic tradition revived the holiday and created a Tikkun Tu BiShvat or Seder Tu BiShvat.

♪ **HaShkedia porachat veShemesh paz zorachat**
Tziporim merosh kol gag mevasrot et bo haChag
Tu BiShvat higuia chag lailanot
Tu BiShvat higuia chag lailanot

♪ השקדיה פורחת ושמש פז זורחת
צפורים מראש כל גג מבשרות את בוא החג
ט"ו בשבט הגיע חג לאילנות
ט"ו בשבט הגיע חג לאילנות

The almond tree is blooming And the golden sun is shining,

Birds atop each roof Announcing the arrival of the festival.

Tu BiShvat has arrived, (it's) the festival of trees.

Tu BiShvat has arrived, (it's) the festival of trees.

“HaShkedia Porachat” - Yisrael Duchman and Menashe Ravina

The Kabbalists of sixteenth century Tsfat began the custom of holding a Tu B'Shvat Seder. The Tu B'Shvat Seder includes four cups of wine, specific foods and story-telling. Over time, different communities have added their own customs and the Tu B'Shvat Seder has developed into a unique expression of appreciating the land.

How is the seder for Tu B'Shvat different from the seder for Pesach? At the seder for Passover we eat matzot - tonight we eat fruits. At the seder for Passover we don't pay attention to the color of the wine we drink - tonight we consciously move from white to red wine. At the seder for Passover we retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt - tonight we celebrate the trees and produce of Eretz Yisrael.

הִנֵּה מָה טוֹב וַיְמָה נְעִים שֵׁבֶת אַחִים גַּם יַחַד י

Hine ma tov uma naim, shevet achim gam yachad

How good and pleasant it is for brothers & sisters to sit together.

Psalms 133

Why are we thinking about planting at this time of the year?

Tu B'Shvat marks the traditional turning point between the rainy season and the beginning of the end of winter in the Land of Israel.

“And I will restore my people Israel and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine, they shall also make gardens and eat the fruit.” (Amos 9:14)

Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai taught us: “If you are planting a tree when someone tells you that the Messiah has arrived, you should finish your planting, and then go to greet the Messiah.” (Avot de Rabbi Nathan 31b)

It is important to plant the tree because it provides us with food and homes, warmth and shade. Trees contribute to the building of the Messianic Age.

THE FIRST CUP of wine is composed entirely of white wine, symbolising the barrenness of the winter. Raise the cup and recite together the blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haOlam, bore pri hagafen



Over the course of the Seder, we will eat fruits from three different categories. The fruits that we eat tonight correspond to the different worlds in Kabbalah. According to the Kabbalah, there are four worlds, or levels of creation: **EMANATION**, **CREATION**, **FORMATION**, and **ACTION** (our world of physical reality).

The first fruits we eat tonight are fruits with inedible peels, which symbolize the world of **ACTION**; pomegranates, almonds, walnuts, pistachios, chestnuts, hazelnuts and oranges. First we eat fruits of Israel. Lift up the fruit and recite:



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ
Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haOlam, bore pri ha'etz

One day, **Honi** was walking along, and saw an old man planting a carob tree. Honi knew that the old man would not live to see the fruits of his labor. He asked the man: “Why do you bother to plant a tree if you will never see its fruits?” The man answered: “I will not see this tree full grown, but my children will and their children will. I plant this tree for them.” (Babylonian Talmud, tractate Taanit 23a)

♪ **Ki tavo'u el haaretz unta'atem kol etz techila**
Venatan ha'etz piryo ve'haaretz yevula
Et linto'a ilanot, et linto'a velivnot

לֵךְ כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל הָאָרֶץ וּנְטַעְתֶּם כָּל עֵץ תְּחִלָּה
וְנָתַן הָעֵץ פְּרִי וְהָאָרֶץ יִבּוּלָה
עַתָּה לְנֹטַע אֵילָנוֹת, עַתָּה לְנֹטַע וְלִבְנוֹת...

*And when you shall come into the land, And have first planted all manner of trees,
Then shall the trees yield each its fruit And the land its harvest.
A time to plant trees, A time to plant and to build.*

“Ki Tavo'u el Haaretz”, traditional song

The **SECOND CUP** of wine is 2/3 white and 1/3 red wine, symbolising the approach of spring. The red signifies the emergence of colour. Raise the cup and recite:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haOlam, bore pri hagafen

We now take fruits from the second category. These fruits are edible on the outside, but have inedible pits, symbolizing the Kabbalistic world of **FORMATION**: olives, dates, apples and plums. Once again, we eat first from the fruits of Israel. Lift up the fruit and recite:



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haOlam, bore pri ha'etz

Israel is like the date palm, of which none is wasted; its dates are for eating, its lulavim are for blessing; its fronds are for thatching; its fibers are for ropes; its webbing for sieves; its thick trunks for building - so it is with Israel, which contains no waste. (Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 41)

צַדִּיק כַּתָּמָר יִפְרַח כְּאַרְז בְּלִבָּנוֹן יִשְׁגַּח

Tzadik katamar ifrach ke'erez baLevanon yisgeh

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, they shall thrive like a cedar in Lebanon.

Psalm 92



The **THIRD CUP** of wine is 1/3 white and 2/3 red, symbolising the coming of spring. The ground has warmed to allow the seeds to take root and the plants have started to grow. Raise the cup and recite:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haOlam, bore pri hagafen



Now we take the fruit from the third category, those fruits that are completely edible, symbolizing the Kabbalistic world of **CREATION**: grapes, figs and carob. Once again, we eat first from the fruits of Israel. Lift up the fruit and recite:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haOlam, bore pri ha'etz

The grapevine is like a human community. The leaves are like the amei ha'artzot, the people of the land, who work the land and provide food for all, as the leaves sustain the plant through photosynthesis. The branches, which distribute what the leaves produce to the entire plant, are like the merchants who distribute goods to the entire community. The tendrils, which fasten the grapevine to its support, are like those who produce neither goods nor scholarship, but have a function in the community. The bunches of grapes are like the scholars, who cannot survive without all the other parts of the grapevine/community. (Babylonian Talmud, tractate Hulin 92b)

Why is the Torah compared to the fig?

1) Unusual among fruit trees, the fig can produce fruit over a long season, from Shavuot to Sukkot (late May to early October).

a) You cannot pick all the figs at once, but only gradually, over a long season. Similarly, you cannot learn the whole Torah at once, but only gradually, little by little, over an entire lifetime. (Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 12)



The FOURTH CUP of wine is all red, symbolizing the arrival of summer. The trees are in full bloom and filled with fruit. Raise the cup and recite:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haOlam, bore pri hagafen

The fourth Kabbalistic world of **EMANATION** is purely spiritual and cannot be symbolized in any concrete way, i.e., by physical food.. They cannot be eaten in this world but we can smell fragrant herbs and spices which hint at a realm beyond this physical reality.



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא עֲשָׂבֵי בְשָׁמִים
Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haOlam, bore isbeh
vessamim

Rabbi Eliezer ben Azarya said: “Whoever has more wisdom than good deeds - what is that person like? Like a tree whose branches are many but whose roots are few. The wind blows, uproots it and knocks it over. However one whose good deeds exceeds their wisdom, what is that person like? Like a tree whose branches are few but whose roots are many. Even if the strongest winds in the world blow, that tree is unmoved. As it says in Psalms ‘He is like a tree planted by streams of water.’”. (Mishnah Avot 3:17)

עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרְמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ
אָמֵן

Oseh shalom bimromav hu ia'asse shalom aleinu ve'al kol Israel
veimru amen

*He who makes peace in his high places, He shall make peace upon us
and upon all of Israel, and we say amen*

הַלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצְלֵי-שִׁמְעַת הַלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצְלֵי תְרוּעָה
כָּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְּהַלֵּל יְהוָה הַלְלוּ-יָהּ

Haleluhu betziltzelei shama, haleluhu betziltzelei tru'a
Kol han'shamah t'halel Yah haleluyah

*Praise Him with clear-toned cymbals, praise Him with loud, clashing cymbals.
Let all souls praise God - Halleluyah.*

Psalm 150



This haggadah was originally published by the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism (IMPJ), edited by rabbi Yehoram Mazor.

TRANSLATION, REVISION AND PUBLICATION

Daniel Weiss Vilhordo
President

Andrea Kulikovsky
Executive Director

David Britva Beraha
Communications and Media

Kelita Cohen
Volunteer



ujramlat.org

