

Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) - חג האילנות - ט"ו בשבט

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# I. Introduction

In this [study](study.html) I would like to examine the minor [festival](festival.html) of Tu B’[Shevat](feasts.html), the [new](teruah.html) year for the trees. This [festival](festival.html) begins the spring cyle of [festivals](festivals.html) as we explored in our [study](study.html) of [rains](rains.html). This [festival](festival.html) celebrates the beginning of spring as the sap begins to rise in the trees that have been dormant during the winter.

The [name](name.html) "Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html)", or Hamishah Asar B'[Shevat](feasts.html), are ways of saying the [fifteenth](fifteen.html) of [Shevat](feasts.html) which corresponds with January/February on the Gregorian [calendar](calendar.html). To understand the “Tu” we need to understand that the "T" is the English transliteration of the of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [letter](letters.html) "Tet", which is used to represent the [number](nchart.html) [nine](nine.html). The "u" is the English transliteration of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [letter](letters.html) "Vav", which is used to represent the [number](nchart.html) [six](six.html). In [Hebrew](hebrew.html) the [numbers](nchart.html) are the [letters](letters.html). So, [nine](nine.html) plus [six](six.html) is [fifteen](fifteen.html).

Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) is not an [appointment](appointm.html) with [HaShem](hashem.html); it is not a [festival](festival.html). Never the less, it is a Biblically significant day. This is [one](one.html) of [four](four.html) days which are called [*Rosh Hashana*](teruah.html), [*New*](teruah.html) *Year*, because it is the [New](teruah.html) Year for the titheing of the fruit of the tree. The [Talmud](orallaw.html) speaks of this:

[***Rosh HaShana***](teruah.html) ***2a*** *CHAPTER I, MISHNAH. THERE ARE* [*FOUR*](four.html)[*NEW*](teruah.html) *YEARS. ON THE* [*FIRST*](one.html) *OF* [*NISAN*](feasts.html) *IS* [*NEW YEAR FOR KINGS*](teruah.html) *AND FOR* [*FESTIVALS*](festivals.html)*. ON THE* [*FIRST*](one.html) *OF* [*ELUL*](elul.html) *IS* [*NEW*](teruah.html) *YEAR FOR THE TITHE OF CATTLE. R. ELEAZAR AND R. SIMEON, HOWEVER, PLACE THIS ON THE* [*FIRST OF TISHRI*](feasts.html)*. ON THE* [*FIRST*](one.html) *OF* [*TISHRI*](feasts.html) *IS* [*NEW*](teruah.html) *YEAR FOR YEARS, FOR RELEASE AND* [*JUBILEE*](yovel.html) *YEARS, FOR PLANTATION AND FOR [TITHE OF] VEGETABLES. ON THE* [*FIRST*](one.html) *OF* [*SHEVAT*](feasts.html) *IS* [*NEW*](teruah.html) *YEAR FOR TREES, ACCORDING TO THE RULING OF BETH SHAMMAI; BETH HILLEL, HOWEVER, PLACE IT ON THE* [*FIFTEENTH*](fifteen.html) *OF THAT MONTH.*

The [Mishna](orallaw.html) tells us that the school of Shammai said that the [new](teruah.html) year for trees is on the [first](one.html) day of the month of [Shevat](feasts.html), while the school of Hillel said that it is on the [fifteenth](fifteen.html) day of [Shevat](feasts.html). The [halachah](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cwalking.html) follows the opinion of the school of Hillel, and we therefore celebrate the [new](teruah.html) year for trees on the [fifteenth of Shevat](feasts.html).

[**Rosh Hashana**](teruah.html)**h for The Tree**

*The Pri Tzaddik points out, it is not called the "*[*Rosh Hashana*](teruah.html)*h for the trees," but for "the tree" (singular); whenever the word "tree" is used, it always refers to Torah, which is called "Aitz Chaim," the* [*Tree of Life*](eternal.html)*.*



We all [know](daat.html) that the agricultural seasons for planting and harvesting do not usually coincide with the beginning and end of our [calendar](calendar.html). As these gifts are gifts of produce which depend on a yearly [cycle](cycles.html) (as each *year's* harvest is subject to these gifts, in addition to the fact that the gift may differ from year to year, as mentioned above), a definition of a *year* is needed so we [know](daat.html) the cut-off point for inclusion of the produce in a specific year, and hence subject to a specific year's gift requirement. The beginning of the agricultural year for trees as far as these gifts go is the [fifteenth](fifteen.html) of [Shevat](feasts.html), the [New](teruah.html) Year for Trees. For example: The present [Jewish](gen-jew.html) year is 5768. If a fruit was formed on the tree before the [fifteenth](fifteen.html) of [Shevat](feasts.html) 5768, it is included with all fruits that were formed from [Shevat](feasts.html) [fifteen](fifteen.html), 5767 until [Shevat](feasts.html) [fifteen](fifteen.html), 5768. If the fruit was formed after [Shevat](feasts.html) [fifteen](fifteen.html), 5768, it is included with the fruits formed from [Shevat](feasts.html) [fifteen](fifteen.html), 5768 until [Shevat](feasts.html) [fifteen](fifteen.html), 5769 for purposes of determining to which year's gift it will be subject. **This is the significance of the** [**New**](teruah.html) **Year for Trees.**

No Ta'anith (fasting) is permitted on Tu B’[Shevat](feasts.html) since it is the [Rosh Hashanah](teruah.html) ([New](teruah.html) Year) of the trees.

Tu B’[Shevat](feasts.html) is the day when the fruit of a tree is evaluated for the purpose of tithing. There are [three](three.html) Biblical tithes that applied to the fruit of the tree. The portions are separated according to the [seven](seven.html) years of the [Shmita](shmita.html) [cycle](cycles.html). In the following scriptures, we will examine the scripture that relate to this tithe:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 25:2-9*** *"*[*Speak*](mashal.html) *to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a* [*sabbath*](sabbath.html) *to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. For* [*six*](six.html) *years sow your fields, and for* [*six*](six.html) *years prune your vineyards and* [*gather*](gather.html) *their crops. But in the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *year the land is to have a* [*sabbath*](sabbath.html) *of rest, a* [*sabbath*](sabbath.html) *to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a* [*year of rest*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cshmita.html)*. Whatever the land yields during the* [*sabbath*](sabbath.html) *year will be* [*food*](food.html) *for you--for yourself, your manservant and maidservant, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, As well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces may be* [*eaten*](eating.html)*. "'Count off* [*seven*](seven.html) *sabbaths of years--*[*seven*](seven.html) *times* [*seven*](seven.html) *years—so that the* [*seven*](seven.html) *sabbaths of years amount to a period of* [*forty*](forty.html)*-*[*nine*](nine.html) *years. Then have the* [*trumpet*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cshofar.html) *sounded everywhere on the* [*tenth day of the seventh month*](seven.html)*; on the* [*Day of Atonement*](kippur.html) *sound the trumpet throughout your land.*

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 27:30-31*** *"'A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*; it is holy to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. If a man* [*redeems*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Credemption.html) *any of his tithe, he must add a* [*fifth*](five.html) *of the value to it.*

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 18:25-32***[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses, "*[*Speak*](mashal.html) *to the Levites and say to them: 'When you receive from the Israelites the tithe I give you as your* [*inheritance*](inherit.html)*, you must present a tenth of that tithe as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*’s* [*offering*](korbanot)*. Your* [*offering*](korbanot) *will be reckoned to you as grain from the* [*threshing floor*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Ctemple.html) *or juice from the winepress. In this way you also will present an* [*offering*](korbanot) *to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *from all the* [*tithes*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cshmita.html) *you receive from the* [*Israelites*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cgen-jew.html)*. From these tithes you must give* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*’s portion to Aaron the* [*priest*](priests.html)*. You must present as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*’s portion the best and holiest part of everything given to you.' "Say to the Levites: 'When you present the best part, it will be reckoned to you as the product of the* [*threshing floor*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Ctemple.html) *or the winepress. You and your* [*households*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Chousehld.html) *may* [*eat*](eating.html) *the rest of it anywhere, for it is your wages for your work at the* [*Tent of Meeting*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cmikdash.html)*. By presenting the best part of it you will not be guilty in this matter; then you will not defile the holy* [*offerings*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Coffering.html) *of the* [*Israelites*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cgen-jew.html)*, and you will not die.'"*

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 26:1-16*** *When you have entered the land* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your* [*G-d*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cconundrum.html) *is giving you as an* [*inheritance*](inherit.html) *and have taken possession of it and settled in it, Take some of the firstfruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your G-d is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your G-d will choose as a* [*dwelling*](dwelling.html) *for his* [*Name*](name.html) *And say to the* [*priest*](priests.html) *in office at the* [*time*](time.html)*, "I declare today to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your G-d that I have come to the land* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *swore to our* [*forefathers*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cfathers.html) *to give us." The* [*priest*](priests.html) *shall take the basket from your* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *and set it down in front of the altar of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your G-d. Then you shall declare before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your G-d: "My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down* [*into Egypt*](thebirth.html) *with a few people and lived there and became a great* [*nation*](nations.html)*, powerful and numerous. But the Egyptians mistreated us and made us suffer, putting us to hard labor. Then we cried out to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, the G-d of our* [*fathers*](fathers.html)*, and* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *heard our* [*voice*](voice.html) *and saw our misery, toil and oppression. So* [*HaShem brought us out of Egypt*](thebirth.html) *with a mighty* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with miraculous* [*signs*](signs.html) *and wonders. He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey; And now I bring the firstfruits of the soil that you,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, have given me." Place the basket before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your G-d and bow down before him. And you and the Levites and the* [*aliens*](aliens.html) *among you shall rejoice in all the good things* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your G-d has given to you and your* [*household*](househld.html)*. When you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce in the* [*third*](three.html) *year,* [*the year of the tithe*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cshmita.html)*, you shall give it to the Levite, the* [*alien*](aliens.html)*, the fatherless and the widow, so that they may* [*eat*](eating.html) *in your towns and be satisfied. Then say to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your G-d: "I have removed from my house the sacred portion and have given it to the Levite, the* [*alien*](aliens.html)*, the fatherless and the widow, according to all you commanded. I have not turned aside from your* [*commands*](cmds613.html) *nor have I forgotten any of them. I have not* [*eaten*](eating.html) *any of the sacred portion while I was in* [*mourning*](mourning.html)*, nor have I removed any of it while I was unclean, nor have I offered any of it to the dead. I have obeyed* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *my G-d; I have done everything you commanded me. Look down from* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, your holy* [*dwelling*](dwelling.html) *place, and bless your people* [*Israel*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cgen-jew.html) *and the land you have given us as you promised on oath to our forefathers, a land flowing with milk and honey."* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your G-d* [*commands*](cmds613.html) *you this day to follow these decrees and* [*laws*](law.html)*; carefully observe them with all your* [*heart*](body.html) *and with all your soul.*

***Nehemiah 10:34-39*** *"We--the* [*priests*](priests.html)*, the Levites and the people--have cast lots to determine when each of our families is to bring to the* [*house of our G-d*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Ctemple.html) *at* [*set times*](settimes.html) *each year a contribution of wood to burn on the altar of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *our G-d, as it is written in the* [*Law*](law.html)*. "We also assume responsibility for bringing to the house of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *each year the firstfruits of our crops and of every fruit tree. "As it is also written in the* [*Law*](law.html)*, we will bring the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle, of our herds and of our flocks to the house of our G-d, to the* [*priests*](priests.html) *ministering there. "Moreover, we will bring to the storerooms of the house of our G-d, to the* [*priests*](priests.html)*, the* [*first*](one.html) *of our ground meal, of our [grain] offerings, of the fruit of all our trees and of our* [*new*](new.html)[*wine*](wine.html) *and oil. And we will bring a tithe of our crops to the Levites, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all the towns where we work. A* [*priest*](priests.html) *descended from Aaron is to accompany the Levites when they receive the tithes, and the Levites are to bring a tenth of the tithes up to the house of our* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, to the storerooms of the treasury. The people of Israel, including the Levites, are to bring their contributions of grain,* [*new*](new.html)[*wine*](wine.html) *and oil to the storerooms where the articles for* [*the sanctuary*](mikdash.html) *are kept and where the ministering* [*priests*](priests.html)*, the gatekeepers and the singers stay. "We will not neglect the* [*house of our G-d*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Ctemple.html)*."*

In Shulchan Aruch[[1]](#footnote-1), which discusses the days on which we do not say Tachanun (a special [prayer](prayer.html) of supplications which is not recited on joyous days), we find that Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) is [one](one.html) of those festive days on which we do not recite the Tachanun [prayer](prayer.html). Commenting on this [law](law.html), the Magen [Avraham](avraham.html) writes that "The custom of the Ashkenaz is to increase the consumption of different types of fruits on this day," in honor of the significance of the day to trees and their fruits. Ben Ish Chai also advises Sephardim to do likewise. This is a custom which many people keep today, using fruits which the Torah mentions in conjunction with the [land of Israel](city.html):

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 8:6-10*** *Observe the* [*commands*](cmds613.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your G-d,* [*walking*](walking.html) *in his ways and revering him. For* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your G-d is bringing you into a good land--a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; A land with wheat and barley, vines and* [*fig*](bethphag.html) *trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; A land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills. When you have* [*eaten*](eating.html) *and are satisfied, praise* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God for the good land he has given you.*

The honey, in the above passage is date honey. This means that the [land of Israel](city.html) is especially praised for the following fruits:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Wheat** | **Barley** | **Grapes** | [**Figs**](bethphag.html) | **Pomegranates** | **Olives** | **Dates** |
| Wheat Field | Barley | grapes_jpeg | Figs | kerem1b | Olives | Dates |

Since the Torah mentions them in a particular order, so too do we bless [HaShem](hashem.html) *in this order* if we have any or all of the above fruits.

# II. Titheing

The [three](three.html) tithes associated with Tu B’[Shevat](feasts.html) are:

1. **Terumah or Maaser rishon** - A 1% portion separated for the Levites every year.
2. **Maaser shini** - Literally, the second tithe (tenth). A 10% portion the owner was to [eat](eating.html) "before [HaShem](hashem.html)" on the [first](one.html), second, [fourth](four.html), and [fifth](five.html) [Shmita](shmita.html) years. Any [Jew](gen-jew.html) who lived too far away from the [Sanctuary](mikdash.html) to bring this tithe there could instead bring its monetary value with which he was to purchase [food](food.html) there and enjoy a festive meal with his family and the Levi'im. (The Ma'aser [Sheni](sheni.html) was taken after the Terumah [[Kohen's](priests.html) portion] and Ma'aser Rishon [Levite's portion] had been removed.
3. **Maaser Oni** - A 10% portion that was given to the poor in the [third](three.html) and [sixth](six.html) years. This tithe was consumed at home, rather than brought to the [Sanctuary](mikdash.html)

In the [seventh](seven.html) year, there is no planting or reaping, so there are no portions to separate

The [Halachic](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cwalking.html) proposition is that the [seven](seven.html) year [shmita](shmita.html) [cycle](cycles.html) obligates us to give fruit tithes to the Levites (who are landless), according to and also to the poor, ***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 26:1-16.***. These gifts are given during the [first](one.html), second, [fourth](four.html) and [fifth](five.html) years. However, during the [third](three.html) year, and so too the [sixth](six.html) year, this self-same tithe is [eaten](eating.html) by the land owner, but only within the domain of [Jerusalem](city.html), as "[Maaser Shini](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cshmita.html)", the second tithe.

What is the decisive border-line date used to decide what belongs to the second year and what to the [third](three.html) year? **The decision is made by ascertaining just when the tree blossomed its fruits, before Tu-B'**[**Shevat**](feasts.html) **or after**. Because technically the day when trees stop absorbing water from the ground, and instead draw nourishment from their sap. In [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [law](law.html), this means that fruit which has blossomed prior to the [fifteenth](fifteen.html) of [Shevat](feasts.html) could not be used as tithe for fruit which blossomed after that date. Until this critical date, it yet belongs to the previous (second) year. After that, it is considered to belong to the "[third](three.html) year". (Note: likewise with [*orlah*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Ccircumcz.html) (fruits produced by a tree during the [first](one.html) [three](three.html) years after its planting), fruits are prohibited until Tu-B'[Shevat](feasts.html) of the [fourth](four.html) year, and so too the stipulation not to deliver "terumot (the 1% portion separated for the Levites every year) or bikurim" (firstfruits) from fruits of [one](one.html) year, as consideration for fruits of another year, the demarcation line is Tu-B'[Shevat](feasts.html).)

Since the Holy [Temple](temple.html) was destroyed, the [Jewish people](gen-jew.html) can no longer bring the FirstFruits *(Bikkurim)* to [Yerushalayim](city.html). On Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) we offer instead the *fruit of our lips*, to praise [HaShem](hashem.html) for all the fruit trees in the [world](worlds.html).

Why Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html)?

[***Rosh HaShana***](teruah.html) ***14a*** *ON THE* [*FIRST*](one.html) *OF* [*SHEVAT*](feasts.html) *IS* [*NEW*](teruah.html) *YEAR FOR TREES. What is the reason? R. Eleazar said in the* [*name*](name.html) *of R. Oshaia: Because [by then] the greater part of the year's rain has fallen[[2]](#footnote-2) and the greater part of the* [*cycle*](cycles.html)*[[3]](#footnote-3) is still to come. What is the sense of this? What it means is this: `Although the greater part of the* [*cycle*](cycles.html) *is still to come, yet since the greater part of the year's* [*rain*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Crains.html) *has fallen, [therefore etc.]'.*

The above [Talmud](orallaw.html) says that the majority of winter [rains](rains.html) fall before Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html). How so? Since the [first](one.html) [rains](rains.html) are expected by the seventeenth of Cheshvan, [three](three.html) months pass until Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html), and the rest of the winter season is only [two](two.html) and a half months (until the end of [Nisan](feasts.html)).

In [Jewish law](law.html) the "majority" is given full weight and [authority](authority.html) as if unanimous. We find that all of the agricultural [laws](law.html) of the Holy [land of Israel](city.html) are biblically binding only if *all* of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People are [dwelling](dwelling.html) in the land. When only a minority of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [Nation](nations.html) is there, the [commandments](cmds613.html) are binding only rabbinically. However, if the majority of our [nation](nations.html) are [dwelling](dwelling.html) in the [land of Israel](city.html), once again these instructions have biblical weight.

So too, in our winter [rain](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Crains.html) season. If [three](three.html) months pass, out of a sum total of [five](five.html) and a half months (starting with 17th of Cheshvan) it is legally considered as if the entire year has passed.

A fruit which blossomed before the [fifteenth](fifteen.html) of [Shevat](feasts.html) is considered to be produce of the previous year. If it blossomed afterwards, it is produce of the [new](teruah.html) year. [By comparison, grains, vegetables, and legumes have the same [New](teruah.html) Year as humans, the [1st of Tishri](feasts.html).] In Israel, the rainy season begins after the [festival](festival.html) of [Succoth](succoth.html). It takes approximately [three](three.html) months (from [Succoth](succoth.html), the [fifteenth](fifteen.html) of [Tishri](feasts.html), until the [fifteenth](fifteen.html) of [Shevat](feasts.html)) for the [rains](rains.html) of the [new](teruah.html) year to saturate the soil and trees, and produce fruit. All fruit which blossom beforehand is a product of the [rains](rains.html) of the previous year, and is tithed together with the crops of the previous year.

 **"FOR MAN IS AS A TREE IN THE** [**FIELD**](field.html)**"**

(***Devarim 20:19***)

Rabbi Uri from Strelisk used to say :"A man should work forever, doing full and honest labor in order to rise step by step in the service of [HaShem](hashem.html). But do not look back every few minutes to see if you are progressing. For man is like a tree. And do you look at a tree continually to see how it is growing? If you did, you would see nothing and become tired of looking, unless you prune it and protect it, trim and fertilize and water it to protect it from damage and danger and strong winds. Then the tree will grow and prosper and become beautiful. So must man rid himself of all those things which spoil him, and tend all the qualities which aid him in the service of [HaShem](hashem.html) so that he will grow and prosper. It is, however, not a virtue to measure from hour to hour how much he has grown."

## Malbim

Many fruits and vegetables from Eretz Yisrael are now available in the United States. Before [one](one.html) is able to [eat](eating.html) any of these fruits, Terumah and [Ma'aser tithes](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cshmita.html) must be taken. Fresh produce grown in [Eretz Israel](city.html) must undergo the necessary tithe-taking in order to be considered kosher. The same is true about canned fruits and vegetables from Israel (especially to Jaffa Oranges and Israeli canned tomatoes).

Here is the tithe-taking procedure:

1. A penny, nickel, or dime must be in front of you (at least [one](one.html) cent for every ingredient that grew in Eretz Yisrael).

2. Break or cut off slightly more than [one](one.html) [one](one.html)-hundredth of the [food](food.html) and set it aside from the rest.

3. Say the following: IF THERE IS ONLY [ONE](one.html) [TYPE](types.html) OF [FOOD](food.html) THAT REQUIRES SEPARATIONS, THEN WHATEVER IS MORE THAN [ONE](one.html) [ONE](one.html)-HUNDREDTH OF THAT [FOOD](food.html) SHALL BE TERUMAH ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE PIECE WHICH I HAVE SET ASIDE, THE REST OF IT ALONG WITH [NINE](nine.html) OTHER SIMILAR PIECES ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE ORIGINAL [FOOD](food.html) SHALL BE MAASER RISHON. THAT SAME REMAINDER OF THE BROKEN-OFF PIECE SHALL BE TERUMAS MAASER. FURTHERMORE, I AM PROCLAIMING [MAASER SHENI](sheni.html) TO BE IN EFFECT ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE [FOOD](food.html), AND I AM [REDEEMING](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Credemption.html) IT AND ITS [FIFTH](five.html) ON A PERUTA OF THIS COIN WHICH I HAVE IN FRONT OF ME. IF THIS [FOOD](food.html) [NEEDS](needs.html) [MAASER ONI](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cshmita.html), THE MAASER ONI SHALL TAKE EFFECT ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE [FOOD](food.html). IF THIS [FOOD](food.html) IS SUBJECT TO THE [LAWS](law.html) OF NETA REVOI THEN IT AND ITS [FIFTH](five.html) (a [redemption](redemption.html) surcharge) SHALL BE [REDEEMED](redemption.html) ON A PERUTA OF THIS COIN WHICH I HAVE IN FRONT OF ME. IF THERE IS MORE THAN [ONE](one.html) [TYPE](types.html) OF [FOOD](food.html) HERE WHICH REQUIRES SEPARATIONS, TITHE-TAKING AND/OR [REDEMPTION](redemption.html), THEN THIS DECLARATION SHALL HAVE EFFECT ON EACH [TYPE](types.html) OF [FOOD](food.html) SEPARATELY FOR ITS OWN [TYPE](types.html).

 There is a short-cut to the above declaration. Hang this declaration up in a conspicuous place in your room. Follow steps [one](one.html) and [two](two.html). When you get to step [three](three.html), say: ALL SEPARATIONS AND REDEMPTIONS SHALL TAKE EFFECT AS SPECIFIED ON THE PIECE OF PAPER OUTLINING THE PROCEDURE OF SEPARATING TITHES AND OF REDEMPTIONS THAT IS HANGING IN MY ROOM.

4. Wrap the broken or cut-off piece in a piece of plastic and discard.

5. The penny, nickel, or dime coin must be disposed of in a manner such that it will never be used again (by anyone).

6. The [food](food.html) may now be [eaten](eating.html).

NOTE: If the Maaser [Sheni](sheni.html) (9% of the [food](food.html)) is not worth a U.S. penny the above procedure cannot be followed.

# III. Connections

There is an intrinsic [connection](connection.html) between Tu B’[Shevat](feasts.html) and [Purim](Purim.html) because they are always exactly [thirty](thirty.html) days apart. This is not coincidental because [thirty](thirty.html) days before a [festival](festival.html) we are required to start studying the halachic requirements of the [coming](coming.html) [festival](festival.html). Tu B’[Shevat](feasts.html) stands in good company in this regards, with [Purim](Purim.html) preceeding [Pesach](passover.html) by [thirty](thirty.html) days, with [Pesach](passover.html) preceeding [Pesach](passover.html) [sheni](sheni.html) by [thirty](thirty.html) days, and [Purim](katan.html) Katan preceeding [Purim](Purim.html) by [thirty](thirty.html) days as well.

There is also a [connection](connection.html) betweenTu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) and [Shavuot](shavuot.html)**.** Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html)is the [New](teruah.html) Year for the trees. Any tree that has bloomed before Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html)is considered to be bearing fruit from theprevious[calendar](calendar.html) year. A tree that blooms on or after Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html)is therefore bearing the fruit of the current [calendar](calendar.html) year. On [Shavuot](shavuot.html) the [world](worlds.html) is judged concerning the fruits of the trees. How are they judged? If the fruits are the children and the trees are the parents, and Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html)is the [New](teruah.html) Year upon which hinges the bloom of the trees, then it is clear that the factor which is being [judged](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cwicked.html) is that which [Shavuot](shavuot.html) comes to [teach](teacher.html) us: TheTorah.

# IV. Talmudic Passages

This next section contains most of the [Talmudic](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Corallaw.html) material on Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) that does not appear elsewhere in this paper. I have provided it as reference material:

[***Rosh HaShana***](teruah.html) ***14b*** *Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: `It is recorded of R. Akiba that he once plucked a citron tree on the* [*first*](one.html) *of* [*Shevat*](feasts.html) *and gave* [*two*](two.html) *tithes from it[[4]](#footnote-4),* [*one*](one.html)*[[5]](#footnote-5) in accordance with the ruling of Beth Shammai and* [*one*](one.html)*[[6]](#footnote-6) in accordance with the ruling of Beth Hillel.[[7]](#footnote-7) R. Jose b. Judah said: He did not follow the [*[*two*](two.html)*] rulings of Beth Shammai and Beth Hillel, but the [*[*two*](two.html)*] rulings of Rabban Gamaliel and R. Eliezer, as we have learnt:[[8]](#footnote-8) `A citron tree follows the rule of a tree in* [*three*](three.html) *respects and of a vegetable in* [*one*](one.html) *respect. It follows the rule of a tree in* [*three*](three.html) *respects \_ for `uncircumcision,'[[9]](#footnote-9) for* [*fourth*](four.html)*-year fruit, and for the* [*Sabbatical year*](shmita.html)*. It follows the rule of a vegetable in* [*one*](one.html) *respect, its tithe [year] being determined by its plucking. So Rabban Gamaliel. R. Eliezer, however, says that a citron follows the rule of a tree in all respects.[[10]](#footnote-10)*

*But is it right to adopt the harder rule from both sides?[[11]](#footnote-11) Has it not been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: `As a general principle, the* [*halachah*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cwalking.html) *follows Beth Hillel. If* [*one*](one.html) *prefers, however, to adopt the rule of Beth Shammai, he may do so, and if he* [*desires*](needs.html) *to adopt the rule of Beth Hillel he may do so.* [*One*](one.html)*, however, who adopts the more lenient rulings of both Beth Shammai and Beth Hillel [on the same subject] is a bad man, while to* [*one*](one.html) *who adopts the more stringent rulings of both Beth Shammai and Beth Hillel may be applied the verse, But the fool* [*walketh*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cwalking.html) *in darkness.[[12]](#footnote-12) No; either* [*one*](one.html) *must follow Beth Shammai both where they are more severe and more lenient or Beth Hillel both where they are more severe and more lenient'? [The answer is that] R. Akiba was doubtful about the tradition, and did not* [*know*](daat.html) *whether Beth Hillel fixed [the* [*New*](teruah.html) *Year for trees] on the* [*first*](one.html) *of* [*Shevat*](feasts.html) *or on the* [*fifteenth*](fifteen.html) *of* [*Shevat*](feasts.html)*.[[13]](#footnote-13)*

# V. Selected Essays

**Tu B'**[**Shevat**](feasts.html)[[14]](#footnote-14)

Trees contribute so much to our lives as human beings that it is only fitting that we take a day out of the year to honor them. In ancient [Hebrew](hebrew.html) poetry, and in the [Garden of Eden](eden.html), the tree symbolized the [secret](sod.html) of life. Today, with scientific [knowledge](knowledge.html) we [know](daat.html) that this is true. Trees give us oxygen, shelter, [food](food.html), the basic necessities of survival.

Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html), the [new](teruah.html) year of the trees, falls on the [fifteenth](fifteen.html) day of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) month of [Shevat](feasts.html). It is on this day that the [first](one.html) almond trees of Israel bloom.

The almond tree (Sh'keidiyah) has special significance for Tu B’[Shevat](feasts.html). It is the [first](one.html) of the fruit trees to blossom each year in [Israel](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Ccity.html). The word for almond in [Hebrew](hebrew.html) also means to *watch*. It is the subject of [one](one.html) of Jeremiah's prophecies:

***Jeremiah 1:11*** *"The word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *came to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?' I replied 'I see a branch of an almond (shakeid) tree.* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to me, 'You have seen right for I am watchful (shokeid) to bring my word to pass."*

This reminds us that we must be watchful and vigilant to [HaShem](hashem.html)'s [commandments](cmds613.html).

**Returning to Eden**[[15]](#footnote-15)

On Tu B’[Shevat](feasts.html), we return to the place of our [first](one.html) encounter with trees: The [Garden of Eden](eden.html). We enter once again into harmony with nature as we were in the garden. The antagonism between humans and nature is set aside. In Bereshit (Genesis), for [eating](eating.html) of the [Tree of Knowledge](thetree.html), [HaShem](hashem.html) punishes us:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 3:17-19*** *To* [*Adam*](adam.html) *he said, "Because you listened to your wife and* [*ate*](eating.html) *from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not* [*eat*](eating.html) *of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will* [*eat*](eating.html) *of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will* [*eat*](eating.html) *the plants of the* [*field*](field.html)*. By the sweat of your brow you will* [*eat*](eating.html) *your* [*food*](food.html) *until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for* [*dust*](rock.html) *you are and to* [*dust*](rock.html) *you will return."*

We were driven from the garden, driven from a symbiotic relationship with [HaShem](hashem.html) and nature into [one](one.html) of bitter struggle. However, on Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) we reconnect to trees and to the [Tree of Life](eternal.html). We grasp the eternity symbolized by the long-living trees. We glimpse what the Garden was and how life could be again. No thorns or thistles, no returning unto [dust](rock.html).

On Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) we return to the [Garden of Eden](eden.html), beckoned by the trees all around us pointing the way to the [Tree of Life](eternal.html).

For more [insights](insights.html) on The [Tree of Life](eternal.html), check out my [study](study.html) on this interesting tree: [ETERNAL](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Ceternal.html) Remember that the [Tree of Life](eternal.html) is [Yeshua](yeshua.html) [HaMashiach](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cmashiach.html) according to Proverbs chapter [three](three.html). For more [insight](insights.html) on the garden’s other famous tree, the tree of the [knowledge](knowledge.html) of good and evil, look at: [Thetree](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cthetree.html).

**\* \* \***

Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) appears to be the day when we will be able to [eat](eating.html), for the [first](one.html) [time](time.html), from the [Tree of Life](eternal.html)!

**\* \* \***

This next section is an excerpt of a paper written by Rabbi Pinchas Winston:

Conceptually, Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) means much more, especially [coming](coming.html) in the weeks of Shov'vim (see Parashat Bo). As the Pri Tzaddik points out, it is not called the "[Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h for the trees," but for "the tree" (singular); whenever the word "tree" is used, it always refers to Torah, which is called "Aitz Chaim," the [Tree of Life](eternal.html). What is this supposed to allude to?

Most people are aware that there were at least [two](two.html) trees in the [Garden of Eden](eden.html): the Tree of [Knowledge](thetree.html) of Good and Evil, and the [Tree of Life](eternal.html). What many are not aware of is that, really, there had only been [one](one.html) tree before [Adam](adam.html) [ate](eating.html) the Forbidden Fruit: the [Tree of Life](eternal.html).

But the Torah speaks about the Tree of [Knowledge](thetree.html) of Good and Evil before the [sin](sin.html) as well? Yes, says the [Zohar](orallaw.html), but before the [sin](sin.html), it existed merely as a branch off the [Tree of Life](eternal.html) itself. Only once [Adam](adam.html) [ate](eating.html) from the Tree against God's will not to did the "branch" break off and become an independent tree and source of [knowledge](knowledge.html).

Rectification of [creation](bara.html) means re-unifying the Tree of [Knowledge](thetree.html) of Good and Evil with the [Tree of Life](eternal.html); [Mashiach](mashiach.html) comes once they are [one](one.html), just as with the reunification of God's Ineffable [Name](name.html) (see Rashi at the end of Parashat BeShallach). We do this primarily by learning Torah and doing [mitzvot](cmds613.html), which serves to remove the veil of nature from over [HaShem's](hashem.html) [hand](fourteen.html) and make His Presence clearer.

Therefore, Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) is not simply a non-[holiday](festival.html), to be marked merely by the consumption of carob. It is a [time](time.html) of deep contemplation, of developing a [spiritual](physical.html) unity with Torah and Eretz Yisrael. Like on [Purim](Purim.html) after it, the festive mood of Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) is to help us elevate our consciousness to tap into God's master plan for [creation](bara.html), and find our place within that plan. In doing so, we bring the Tree of [Knowledge](thetree.html) closer to unification with the [Tree of Life](eternal.html).

Not only this, the Pri Tzaddik (how appropriate-his [name](name.html) means: Fruit of the Tzaddik!) points out, but the [Jewish people](gen-jew.html) are referred to as "apples hanging on the Tree in the [orchard](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cremez.html)," the Tree here referring to [HaShem](hashem.html) Himself. Therefore Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) is also the celebration of the unique and intimate relationship the [Jewish people](gen-jew.html) have with their [HaShem](hashem.html), and a day to pursue that closeness.

# VI. Customs

**1.** In the early 20th century, the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) National Fund was founded for the promotion of planting trees in Israel and re-establishing the personal [connection](connection.html) between the [Jew](gen-jew.html) and [his land](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Ccity.html). Since that [time](time.html), to the present it has been customary to plant all kinds of fruit and non-fruit trees.

**2.** In the [land of Israel](city.html) the [birth](thebirth.html) of the tree is celebrated by planting saplings in honor of births. A cedar sapling would be planted for a boy and a cypress for a girl (cedar symbolizes height and strength while a cypress symbolizes tenderness and fragrance). When the boy and girl are ready for [marriage](mashal.html), a branch from each tree would be cut and used for the [marriage canopy, the chuppah](mashal.html).

**3.** [Eating](eating.html) of dried fruits (often from what is native to the [Land of Israel](city.html)) is customary in [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [communities](community.html) throughout the [world](worlds.html). Many make fruity, nutty, and Israeli-[type](types.html) dishes for this day.

**4.** The 17th century saw the institution of a "set" celebration, a [seder](haggada.html). The idea of a Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) [seder](haggada.html) or [tikkun](tikkun.html) is attributed to, either, Rabbi [Benjamin](benyamin.html) HaLevy of Safed or Natan [Benjamin](benyamin.html) of Gaza. The main [body](body.html) of the text can be found in *Pri Etz Hadar*.

It is a good custom to increase the [number](nchart.html) of fruits [one](one.html) [eats](eating.html), and to sing songs and praises concerning them, as is laid out in the [tikkun](tikkun.html). It is [known](daat.html) that, in kabbalistic terms, by saying the blessings on fruits we cause the continuation of the abundance above and the [angel](angels.html) in charge of that particular fruit receives this abundance in order to cause the fruit to grow once again.

There are supposed to be [thirty](thirty.html) (30) types of fruit:

[Ten](ten.html) which have no pit and no peel, but are [eaten](eating.html) the way they are. These include grapes, [figs](bethphag.html), apples, citrons, lemons, pears, quince, carob and berries.

[Ten](ten.html) which have pits inside. These include olives and apricots, and

[Ten](ten.html) which have a peel. These include nuts.

When [eating](eating.html) these fruits, there is an opinion that [one](one.html) should have in mind that through [eating](eating.html) them we are making a [Tikkun](tikkun.html) (correction) for the [Sin](sin.html) of [Adam](adam.html), who sinned by [eating](eating.html) the forbidden fruit. In truth, we should have this intent all year round, but on Tu B’[Shevat](feasts.html) it is all the more appropriate.

The Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) [seder](haggada.html) contains many citations about trees and fruits from the Bible, [Talmud](orallaw.html), and [Zohar](orallaw.html). It is traditionally seventeen chapters long, each chapter dedicated to a different fruit and that fruit [eaten](eating.html). There are many variations.

**5.** In [Temple](temple.html) times, on Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) the [first](one.html) fruits would be brought to the [Temple](temple.html) as a tithe, or portion tax. 10% of the fruit is given to the Levites as a tithe, the Levites then give to the [Kohanim](priests.html) ([priests](priests.html)) 10% of all that they had collected.

**6.** In all [communities](community.html) the tree is remembered and celebrated for as it is said: "Although you will find the land full of good things, you should not say: we will sit and not plant, rather as others have planted for you, so you must plant for your children." [[16]](#footnote-16)

**7.** There is a Chassidic custom of [praying](prayer.html), on Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html), for a beautiful etrog (citron) to be used for the following [Hag HaSuccoth](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Csuccoth.html) (the [Feast of Tabernacles](succoth.html)). Another custom linking these [two](two.html) holidays is to make a jam from the etrogim of Hag HaSuccoth and [eating](eating.html) it on Tu B’[Shevat](feasts.html). Hag HaSuccoth as the harvest [festival](festival.html) bears witness to how the trees were judged on the previous Tu B’[Shevat](feasts.html).

**8.** Another custom is to donate ninety-[one](one.html) cents or dollars to tzedaka since “charity averts the evil decree.” Because Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) is the day of judgment for the trees, we give ninety-[one](one.html), which is the numerical value of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [letters](letters.html) that make up the word *ilan*, tree.

**9.** A good custom is to germinate something for the [New](teruah.html) Year of the Trees. [One](one.html) suggestion is to keep etrog pits in the freezer until a week before Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html), then put them in moist cotton. They will begin to sprout in a short while.

Sephardi [Jews](gen-jew.html), sometimes call Tu B’[Shevat](feasts.html): Las Frutas ([Feasts](feasts.html) of Fruits).

Sephardic [Jews](gen-jew.html) of the 16th century had a *Ma-ot Perot* fund, money collected to provide fruit for the poor on Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html).

There is a beautiful custom of [eating](eating.html) jam or a similar delicacy made from the etrog (citron) used on the [festival](festival.html) of [Succoth](succoth.html) for the ceremony of waving the [four](four.html) species. Often that very same etrog was planted on Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) some years before.



There is a custom to plant trees, in Israel, on Tu B’[Shevat](feasts.html). [One](one.html) of the reasons for this custom is contained in a [command](cmds613.html) of the Torah:



***Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:23*** *"'When you enter the land and plant any kind of fruit tree, regard its fruit as forbidden. For* [*three*](three.html) *years you are to consider it forbidden; it must not be* [*eaten*](eating.html)*.*

This verse not only [commands](cmds613.html) us to refrain from [eating](eating.html) the fruit, but also to plant trees! We purposely fulfill this [command](cmds613.html) on Tu B’[Shevat](feasts.html) in order that we and our descendants may enjoy that which a tree provides.

# VII. Stories

The [Talmud](orallaw.html) has many stories which deal with the respect Judaism has for nature. Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html), the [fifteenth](fifteen.html) of the month of [Shevat](feasts.html), celebrates the praise of the [land of Israel](city.html). It is a renewal of our contact with the land and nature.

**The Old man and the Tree**

Many years ago the Emperor Hadrian was passing though the green hills of the Galilee near Tiberias. Off to the side of the road, he spotted an old man, his back bent under the strain, digging a trench on a terrace in which to plant [fig](bethphag.html) trees.

"Old man", called the Emperor, "If you hadn't wasted the years of your youth you wouldn't have to work so hard now."

"Not true", replied the old man. "I didn't waste away my younger years nor do I waste them away now. I do what I have to do and let [HaShem](hashem.html) do the rest".

"How old are you, old man?" asked Hadrian. "I am [one](one.html) hundred," was the reply.

Hadrian look up at the wrinkled and sweaty [face](body.html) and wondered out loud, "Do you really expect to see the fruits of your labor?"

"Why not", rejoined the man. "Even if I don't, didn't our [fathers](fathers.html) plant before us knowing that only we would enjoy the fruits?"

Hadrian was pleased with the answer and requested the old farmer, "If you ever live to see the harvest, let me [know](daat.html)", and with that the Emperor's retinue continued their [journey](stages.html).

Years passed and the trees nurtured by the old man began to bear fruit. They grew and the old man yet lived. [One](one.html) year he waited until the middle of the harvest season and picked a small basket of the largest and most beautiful of all his fruits. He packed them carefully and proceeded on his [donkey](chamor.html) to [Jerusalem](city.html). The old man waited outside the Emperor's gate and requested to be allowed in. The gate keeper derisively laughed at the thought of Hadrian inviting this old [Jew](gen-jew.html) to the palace... Hadrian heard the [laughter](mashal.html) and looking out his window he saw the old man. He remembered his invitation, and marveling at the man persistence he immediately gave an order for the old farmer to be brought to him. The Emperor showed the man full respect and ordered his basket to be emptied and refilled with gold.

His advisors stood astonished. "Why should the Emperor honor such a person"? The Emperor stood with the old man at his side. "I only honor whom [HaShem](hashem.html) has honored. Look at his age, look at his persistence, use him as an example." With that he sent the old man back to his village with his treasure. Needless to say upon his return he was received in wonder and was taken around the village telling and retelling his story.

[One](one.html) of his rapt listeners was a jealous and bitter woman who upon hearing the story thought to herself, "Hmm... The Emperor surely must like [figs](bethphag.html). If he has given such riches to the silly old farmer for a small basket what would he give for a whole sack"?

She quickly ran home and berated her husband. "Quick, don't waste [time](time.html), get a sack and fill it up with [figs](bethphag.html), for I have it on the best [authority](authority.html) that the Emperor will pay well for them."

The poor man filled up his largest sack put it on his [donkey](chamor.html) and began a long and arduous [journey](stages.html) to [Jerusalem](city.html). After many days he reached the palace, totally exhausted and in a sour mood. The man approached the gate keeper and demanded entrance to the Emperor. "I need to see Hadrian for I have brought him a most precious present, a sack full of [figs](bethphag.html). Just like the old man in our village". The gate keeper, not wanting to cause another incident, duly reported the story to the Emperor, who laughed at the man's impertinence. "He demands a reward, does he? Let him remain at the gate and every passer-by must take a [fig](bethphag.html) and throw it in his [face](body.html). That is all he deserves for his demands".

The poor man stood at the gate, his [face](body.html) pelted by passers-by, the object of total ridicule. He began to wish not for gold but for the sack to be empty, thinking of each [time](time.html) he had pushed in another [fig](bethphag.html) to fill it up even more.

Like everything else in life, this pain too came to an end and the man in total humiliation began the long trek home.

What was happening all this [time](time.html) with his wife? Sure enough she had been figuring out how to spend all the money her husband would bring. He came in bedraggled as a cat and totally exhausted. She looked at the empty bag a figured he had the money in his pocket. A quick embrace dispelled that notion. "Well, where is it? How much did you get? What luck did you have?"

The poor man, his patience at an end, burst out, "I have had great and greater luck. The great luck was that the [figs](bethphag.html) were ripe, the greater luck was that we sent [figs](bethphag.html) and not peaches!"

**Choni the Circle Maker**

R. Yohanon said: Through all the days of that righteous man, he was troubled about the meaning of the verse "A Song of Ascents. When the Lord brought back those that returned to Zion, ,we were like unto them that [dream](dreams.html)" (Ps. 126:1). Is it possible for a man to doze off and [dream](dreams.html) continuously for [seventy](seventy.html) years? [But the following incident clarified the verse's meaning for him.] [One](one.html) day, as he was [walking](walking.html) on the road, he saw a man planting a carob tree. He asked him, "How long will it take this tree to bear fruit?" The man replied, "[Seventy](seventy.html) years." He asked, "Are you quite sure you will live another [seventy](seventy.html) years to [eat](eating.html) its fruit?" The man replied, "I myself found fully grown carob trees in the [world](worlds.html); as my forebears planted for me, so am I planting for my children."

Once, when Honi sat down for a meal, [sleep](mashal.html) overcame him and he dozed off. During his [sleep](mashal.html), a grotto formed itself about him and hid him from sight, so that he continued [sleeping](mashal.html) for [seventy](seventy.html) years. When he awoke, he saw a man gathering the fruit of that same carob tree. He asked, "Are you the man who planted this tree?" The man replied, "That was my grandfather." Next, when Honi saw the herds and herds descended from his own [she-ass](chamor.html), he exclaimed, "No doubt I slept for [seventy](seventy.html) years." He went to his home an inquired, "Where is the son of Honi the Circle Maker?" He was told, "Honi's son is no longer in this [world](worlds.html), but his grandson is." At that, he announced, "I an Honi the Circle Maker," but no [one](one.html) believed him. Next he went to the house of [study](study.html), where he overheard the sages say, "This tradition is as clear to us now as it was in the days of Honi the Circle Maker," for whenever he came to the academy, he would settle any difficulty the sages had. Hearing these words, he cried out, "But I am Honi!" Since the sages neither believed him nor accorded him the honor due him, he was so mortified that he besought [HaShem](hashem.html)'s mercy, and he died.

Rava observed: For this reason mortals say, "The fellowship of men or the fellowship of death."

# VIII. [Insights](insights.html)

***Amos 9:13-15*** *"The days are* [*coming*](coming.html)*," declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, "when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the* [*one*](one.html) *treading grapes.* [*New*](new.html)[*wine*](wine.html) *will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills. I will bring back my* [*exiled*](galuyot.html) *people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined* [*cities*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Ccity.html) *and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their* [*wine*](wine.html)*; they will make gardens and* [*eat*](eating.html) *their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your G-d.*

## Gematria

There is a custom in Eretz Yisrael to [eat](eating.html) [fifteen](fifteen.html) different types of fruits on Tu B’[Shevat](feasts.html). The Gematria of the word "Tu", which is "tet" and "vav" in [Hebrew](hebrew.html), is 15, and the 15th of the month of [Shevat](feasts.html) is the date of this [holiday](festival.html). It is an opportunity to show our appreciation for all the varieties of fruits with which [HaShem](hashem.html) has blessed us.

This is the interpretation of the Beracha:

**"Borei Nefashos Rabos Vechesronan"** - He created many creatures and that which they lack-i.e., basic necessities without which man could not exist, such as bread and water;

**"Al** [**Kol**](voice.html) **Ma She'Barasa"** - In addition to all that which You created, i.e., all the varieties of [foods](food.html);

**"Le'Hachayos Bahem Nefesh** [**Kol**](voice.html) **Chai"** - To give life to all living beings...

This idea is hinted at in the Gematria:

This is the Day to Give Thanks for All Types of Fruit of the Tree! =

Zeh Yom Lehodos Al [Kol](voice.html) Minei Pri Haetz =

12 + 56 + 451 + 100 + 50 + 110 + 290 + 165 = 1234

The 15th Day of the Month of Shvat =

chamisha asar shvat =

353 + 570 + 311 = 1234

**\* \* \***

Written by Rav Yehuda Samet

Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html), the 15th of [Shevat](feasts.html), is the [New](teruah.html) Year for trees. On this day, it is customary to [eat](eating.html) from the [seven](seven.html) species for which the [land of Israel](city.html) is praised: "...a land of wheat and barley and (grape) vines and [fig](bethphag.html) trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and (date) honey." (Devarim (Deuteronomy) 8)

Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) is the day when [new](new.html) sap starts to rise in the tree, when [new](new.html) life is starting to emerge. Even though we are still in the middle of winter and all looks bleak, cold and lifeless, Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) comes, a day of [new](new.html) life with the promise of rejuvenation.

That's why Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) can be compared to the [coming](coming.html) of the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) and the final [redemption](redemption.html) of mankind. Everything looks bleak and there seems to be no [sign](signs.html) of life; we are threatened by increasing assimilation and the loss of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) identity; [Jewish](gen-jew.html) life seems frozen and moribund. But even at that very moment, the sap is rising. On the surface, you can see no change whatsoever, but precisely at that moment, life secretly and inexorably starts to burgeon anew.

## Mystical [Insights](insights.html)

Based on Sefer B'nai Yesaschar

The [mazzaroth](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cmazaroth.html), constellation, for [Shevat](feasts.html) is Deli, “The water bucket”. The water bucket draws water from its source, and brings the water to where it is used. This symbol also represents an object that serves someone. It draws water. It is written of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 24:7*** *"He shall pour waters from his bucket, moistening his* [*seed*](flower.html) *plentifully. ."*

The symbolism of the water bucket is very important. A bucket has but [one](one.html) function, design, and purpose: to draw and carry water. That is, to be a vessel of transmission. Its whole essence is [one](one.html) of serving. It is not an end unto itself. It is meant to be a vehicle for something else. This is the function of a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [teacher](teacher.html).

Water, in many places throughout [Jewish](gen-jew.html) thought, is a metaphor for the wisdom of Torah. There are a [number](nchart.html) of qualities that water has, which are conceptually parallel to Torah.

[One](one.html) of the qualities of water is that it always flows to the lowest spot. How is this parallel to Torah? The out-pouring of wisdom that comes from God rests on the most humble personality. The more selfless a person is, the more wisdom flows toward him. If a person devotes himself to ideals, to living truth, to helping others... then he becomes a vessel fitting to receive the Torah's wisdom.

At the beginning of the [month](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cchodesh.html), the abundant [rains](rains.html) fill the wells which overflow, even after the buckets of water have been extracted. Towards the end of the month, however, the plentiful rain tapers off and the [signs](signs.html) of spring appear. Trees begin to grow leaves again, and the [first](one.html) blossom of the almond tree (Israeli almond trees are the [first](one.html) to blossom shortly after Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html), followed by peaches and apricots) is seen in the fields and gardens.The countryside becomes a carpet of wildflowers, including the colorful spring flowers: anemones, daffodils and primroses.



Israeli Almond Tree

The fact the [New](teruah.html) Year for Trees falls under the [mazzaroth](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cmazaroth.html) of Deli is, of course, no coincidence. Most obviously, trees need water for their survival, and the needed delivery of water to the trees so that fruit forms is a focus on the [New](teruah.html) Year for Trees. The deeper significance arises from the comparison made in the Torah:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:19*** *When you lay siege to a* [*city*](city.html) *for a long* [*time*](time.html)*, fighting against it to capture it, do not destroy its trees by putting an ax to them, because you can* [*eat*](eating.html) *their fruit. Do not cut them down. Are the trees of the* [*field*](field.html) *people, that you should besiege them?*

"For the trees of the [field](field.html) are like man." Man, like trees, [needs](needs.html) "water" for sustenance. Just as [physical](physical.html) water enables a tree to bring forth fruit, so too does the Torah, [spiritual](physical.html) water, enable man to bring forth fruit. And just as [Messiah](mashiach.html) [Yeshua](yeshua.html) is the Living Torah, and therefore Living Water, so too does He expect us to bring forth fruit:

***Matityahu (Matthew) 7:15-20*** *"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or* [*figs*](bethphag.html) *from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the* [*fire*](fire.html)*. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.*

The above passage is given more emphasis in this next passage:

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 6:43-45*** *"No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick* [*figs*](bethphag.html) *from thorn bushes, or grapes from briers. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his* [*heart*](body.html)*, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his* [*heart*](body.html)*. For out of the overflow of his* [*heart*](body.html) *his* [*mouth*](body.html) *speaks.*

***Matityahu (Matthew) 12:33-37*** *"Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the* [*heart*](body.html) *the* [*mouth*](body.html) *speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."*

Trees are often a metaphor for humans:

***Tehillim (***[***Psalm***](psalms1.html)***) 1:3*** *And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

Many of us have heard the injunction that during war [one](one.html) may lay siege to a town, but [one](one.html) may not cut down the trees. The entire verse, Devarim 20:19, reads:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:19*** *"When you lay siege to a* [*city*](city.html) *for many days to capture it by making war against it, you shall not destroy its tree, wielding an axe against it; for you shall* [*eat*](eating.html) *of it but not cut it down; for man is a tree of the* [*field*](field.html)*..."*

Man is a tree?

In the [Talmud](orallaw.html) we read:

***Ta'anit 7a*** *R. Jeremiah said to R. Zera:* [*Pray*](prayer.html)*, Master, come and* [*teach*](teacher.html)*. The latter replied: I do not feel well enough1 and am not able to do so. [Then said R. Jeremiah]* [*Pray*](prayer.html)*, Master, expound something of an aggadic character, and he replied: Thus said R. Johanan: What is the meaning of the verse, For is the tree of the* [*field*](field.html) *man?1 Is then man the tree of the* [*field*](field.html)*? [This can only be explained if we connect the verse with the words immediately before it] where it is written, For thou mayest* [*eat*](eating.html) *of them, but thou shalt not cut them down; but then again it is written, ‘It thou shalt destroy and cut down’?1 How is this to be explained?-If the scholar is a worthy person learn [*[*eat*](eating.html)*] from him and do not shun [cut] him, but if he is not destroy him and cut him down.*

Hakham [Yoseph](joseph.html) Hayyim states that the Tzaddikim (righteous) are likened to a tree and that the [wicked](wicked.html) are likened to grass. Just like grass has no roots, so too the [wicked](wicked.html) have no roots or foundation and even a small wind can uproot them.

The righteous, on the other [hand](fourteen.html), have deep roots like the palm tree, making it virtually impossible to uproot. And even when they leave this [world](worlds.html) their ways and [teachings](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cteacher.html) will remain and continue to flourish through their children and students.

The [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people are likened to the vine. Just as the vine is weak and soft (when compared to other trees), but its fruit which can be used both for [eating](eating.html) and drinking is excellent, so too the [Children of Israel](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cgen-jew.html), even though we may be soft and weak, our Torah and [mitzvot](cmds613.html) bear fruit, as we see in the Nazarean Codicil:

***Yochanan (John) 15:1-5*** *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3 Now ye are* [*clean*](purity.html) *through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

Others consider the fruit of [one](one.html)'s "tree" as the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) that we do, or indeed, our children which we train in the [mitzvot](cmds613.html). [One](one.html) can also see that [one](one.html)’s talmidim are also his “fruit”:

***Mishle (Proverbs) 11:30*** *The fruit of the righteous [is] a* [*tree of life*](eternal.html)*; and he that winneth ouls [is] wise.*

***Matityahu (Matthew) 3:10*** *And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the* [*fire*](fire.html)*.*

The etrog, the fruit of the beautiful tree, is said by our Sages to be the fruit of the [Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil](knowledge.html), in the [Garden of Eden](eden.html). This tree was the only tree that obeyed [HaShem](hashem.html) at its [creation](bara.html). The fruit of the Etrog and the bark of the etrog tree taste the same. All the other trees disobeyed in this regard. (see Rashi on Bereshit 1:11) [Adam](adam.html), therefore, felt he could disobey [HaShem](hashem.html) as the trees had, and not bear a consequence. Thus we have the [connection](connection.html) of man to a tree.

Now we can understand why [HaShem](hashem.html), when he created the [world](worlds.html), created the trees with the bark and the fruits having the same taste! A man is a "tree of the [field](field.html)". The lesson is clear. The fruits of the tree should have the same taste as the tree itself! The parent must insure that his fruits, his children(and his talmidim), have the same taste, the same path in life as the parent himself. Look at the way a tree produces fruits. [First](one.html), the tree brings forth blooms. As the bloom withers, the tree is setting the fruit, and only then does it begin to grow. Each fruit in turn will produce its own [seeds](flower.html) which will be capable of producing a tree which can bring forth identical fruits. Of primary importance is the bloom and the setting of the fruit, for this is the beginning of the fruit. So the parent must begin to train and nurture the child in the ways of Torah from the [time](time.html) that he [first](one.html) blooms forth, while he is still very, very young. If the blooming period is successful, then certainly the period of the growth of the fruit will be successful and the fruit will surely be delicious, bearing the same taste as the tree which brought it forth.

Was the “bloom” and “setting of the fruits” accomplished with the objective of instilling into them the values of and love for the Torah? If so then the judgment will surely be favorable, and the fruits will mature and ripen retaining the same delicious taste as the tree from which they came.

Yochanan (John) the Baptist also [spoke](mashal.html) of this fruit:

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 3:7-11*** *Yochanan (John) said to the crowds* [*coming*](coming.html) *out to be* [*baptized*](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cforty.html) *by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the* [*coming*](coming.html) *wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *can raise up children for* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the* [*fire*](fire.html)*." "What should we do then?" the crowd asked. Yochanan (John) answered, "The man with* [*two*](two.html) *tunics should share with him who has none, and the* [*one*](one.html) *who has* [*food*](food.html) *should do the same."*

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 13:6-9*** *Then he told this parable: "A man had a* [*fig*](bethphag.html) *tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For* [*three*](three.html) *years now I've been* [*coming*](coming.html) *to look for fruit on this* [*fig*](bethphag.html) *tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' "'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for* [*one*](one.html) *more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'"*

***Yochanan (John) 15:1-8*** *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already* [*clean*](purity.html) *because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the* [*fire*](fire.html) *and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

[***Ephesians***](ephesians.html) ***5:8-12*** *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) And find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in* [*secret*](sod.html)*.*

Trees are also a metaphor for Torah. The most famous expression of this is in:

***Mishle (Proverbs) 3:18*** *It is a* [*tree of life*](eternal.html) *for those who hold fast to it.*

As we mentioned before, producing fruit requires work and toil. So that we remember that we have help in our task, we celebrate the [New](teruah.html) Year for Trees on the [fifteenth](fifteen.html) day of the month. Until the [fifteenth](fifteen.html) day, the [moon](chodesh.html) has been growing in light. The [fifteenth](fifteen.html) day is typically the day of the full [moon](chodesh.html). It signifies the completeness and fullness that we have right when we are born, we have been [taught](teacher.html) the entire Torah. We start our toil realizing that [HaShem](hashem.html) was there to help us, to plant a [seed](flower.html) within us.

The [fifteenth](fifteen.html) day of [Shevat](feasts.html) is a day on which we [pray](prayer.html) that growth should begin. Trees should get the water they sorely need so that they bear fruit. Man should properly immerse himself in Torah so that he reaches his full potential. The [fifteenth](fifteen.html) day of [Shevat](feasts.html) is a day on which we recognize that [HaShem](hashem.html) is there to help us with our endeavors. He provides us with what we need to be successful, although our success depends on our efforts as well. Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) should be the start of a truly fruitful year for all of us.

The [tribe](tribes.html) of Asher is kabbalistically associated with [Shevat](feasts.html). "Asher" in [Hebrew](hebrew.html) grammar [connects](connection.html) the subject of a sentence to a verb. It supports the subject.

The [letter](letters.html) kabbalistically associated with [Shevat](feasts.html) is the *tzadi*, which represents the *tzaddik*. *Tzaddik* in [Hebrew](hebrew.html) means "righteous [one](one.html)."

The human attribute kabbalistically associated with [Shevat](feasts.html) is "[eating](eating.html)."

\* \* \*

There are supposed to be [thirty](thirty.html) (30) types of fruit:

10 (from 'Olam Habbereeah) which have no pit and no peel, but are [eaten](eating.html) the way they are:

Grapes

[Figs](bethphag.html)

Apples

Ethrogh (Citron)

Lemon

Pears

Quince

Raspberries

Blueberries

Carob

10 (from 'Olam Hayeseera) which have pits inside:

Olives

Dates

Cherries

Jujubes

Peaches

Plums

Apricots

Morels

Medlars

Azaroles

10 (from 'Olam Ha'aseeya) which have a peel:

Pomegranates

Walnuts

Almonds

Chestnuts

Hazelnuts

Coconuts

Capers

Pine nuts

Pistahios

Pecans

When [eating](eating.html) these fruits, there is an opinion that [one](one.html) should have in mind (the Kavanah) that through [eating](eating.html) them we are making a Tiqqun (reparation) for the [sin](sin.html) of [Adam](adam.html), who sinned by [eating](eating.html) the forbidden fruit. In truth, we should have this Kavanah all year round, but on Tu Bishbat it is all the more appropriate.

**X. Tu B’**[**Shevat**](feasts.html)[**Seder**](haggada.html)

This section comes from the Virtual [Jerusalem](city.html) site.

**Introduction**

The Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) [Seder](haggada.html) (modeled after the [Pesach](passover.html) [Seder](haggada.html)) is an old-[new](new.html) custom which is being revived in our day. Based on a kabbalistic work, the [Seder](haggada.html) takes the participants on a [journey](stages.html) through different [physical](physical.html) and metaphysical realms. Fruits are [eaten](eating.html), blessings are recited and tales are told about trees and Nature and the "repairing of the [world](worlds.html)."

The [Seder](haggada.html) provides a means to celebrate the change of seasons: [Four](four.html) cups of [wine](wine.html) are drunk - each [one](one.html) redder than its predecessor - symbolizing the shifting pattern of wildflowers in Israel during the year, and evoking the awakening of the earth from slumber to eventual ripening.

   

Fruits of the Land are [eaten](eating.html) during the ceremony, each [offering](korbanot) a metaphor for [four](four.html) metaphysical realms of existence, and a corollary with human nature and the people of Israel's collective personality.

The [Seder](haggada.html) offers an opportunity to contemplate our [connection](connection.html) with the [world](worlds.html), and to reflect on the Source of all nurturing on our planet.

**The** [**Seder**](haggada.html) **Structure**

Our [Seder](haggada.html) is adapted from a variety of sources. There are [five](five.html) [stages](stages.html) to our [Seder](haggada.html). In the [first](one.html) stage, the youngest member of the assembled group asks [four](four.html) questions about Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html), and responses are given. Each of the next [four](four.html) [stages](stages.html) of the [Seder](haggada.html) features a different [type](types.html) of [wine](wine.html) and fruit.



**The** [**First**](one.html) **Cup**:

White [Wine](wine.html) and the Walnut

1. Say: The [first](one.html) cup of [wine](wine.html) is wintry white. It represents the potential of the seedling, beginnings, [first](one.html) light. . . .

2. Take the cup of [wine](wine.html) in the [hand](fourteen.html) and say the blessing:

*Blessed are You, our* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *and King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.*

The Fruit - Walnut

1. Point to the walnut on the plate and say: The walnut has a hard outer shell, but its inner fruit is soft. In the kabbalistic tradition, it recalls our [world](worlds.html) of Action in which we peel away the outer boundaries to pierce to the [spiritual](physical.html) within.

2. Everyone present takes a piece of walnut and utters the blessing:

*Blessed are You, our* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *and King of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the tree.*

If this is the [first](one.html) [time](time.html) in the season that the walnut is being [eaten](eating.html), add the blessing:

*Blessed are You, our* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *and King of the Universe, Who has kept us alive, sustained us and brought us to this special occasion.*

3. [One](one.html) of those present reads the following: "Rabbi Tarfon likened the people of Israel to a pile of walnuts: He would say: If [one](one.html) walnut is removed, each and every walnut in the pile will be shaken." - Avot de Rabbi Nathan 18:1

**The Second Cup**:

Blush [Wine](wine.html) and the Date

Note: Any pale pink [wine](wine.html) is fine. The blessing indicated below, HaTov V'Hametiv, acknowledges [HaShem](hashem.html)'s bounty. It is intended to be recited when [one](one.html) samples a better [wine](wine.html) than the [one](one.html) preceding it. The blush [wine](wine.html) should be more expensive or of a better taste than the white [wine](wine.html) before it.

1. Say: The second cup of [wine](wine.html) is light pink, for the [first](one.html) flowering of the spring anemones. It symbolizes the Divine spark, the stirrings of growth drawn from primeval elements.

2. Take the cup of [wine](wine.html) in the [hand](fourteen.html) and say the blessing for a second drink of [wine](wine.html): ". . . HATOV VEHAMEITIV."

*Blessed are You, our* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *and King of the Universe, Who is good and does good.*

The Fruit - Date

1. Point to the date on the plate and say: The soft outer fruit of the date recalls the [world](worlds.html) of Formation. The date's inner core is hard, its impenetrable nature drawing us to contemplate the core of our being and the [cycle](cycles.html) of our lives.

2. Everyone present takes a date and says: May it be His will that we should be as upright as the date-palm, as it is written: "The righteous shall bloom as the date-palm."

3. [One](one.html) of those present reads the following: "The date palm abounds in blessing, for every part of it can be used; every part is needed. Its dates are for [eating](eating.html); its branches are for blessing on [Succoth](succoth.html); its fronds are for thatching roofs; its fibers are for ropes; its webbing for sieves; its thick trunk for building. . . So it is with Israel: each person plays a part in building the people." - [Midrash](orallaw.html), Bamidbar Rabbah

**The** [**Third**](three.html) **Cup**:

Rose [Wine](wine.html) and the [Fig](bethphag.html)

1. Say: The [third](three.html) cup of [wine](wine.html) is half-white, half-red for the mix of red and white wild flowers in the Land. Blooming trees now provide us with [physical](physical.html) and [spiritual](physical.html) sustenance. And, in return, we provide them with their [needs](needs.html). The equality in colors indicates interdependence and reciprocity.

2. Take the cup of [wine](wine.html) in the [hand](fourteen.html) and say:

*"LECH ECHOL BESIMCHAH LACHMECHAH; USHTEH BALEV TOV YEYNECHAH.""*

*Go,* [*eat*](eating.html) *your bread in gladness, and drink your* [*wine*](wine.html) *in joy. . . ." - Ecclesiastes 9:8*

The Fruit - [Fig](bethphag.html)

1. Point to the [fig](bethphag.html) on the plate and say: A [fig](bethphag.html) - [one](one.html) of the symbols of peace - has no protective shell or hard pits inside. It evokes the [World](worlds.html) of [Creation](bara.html) - harmony between opposing forces and the completion of our relationships with each other and nature.

2. Everyone present takes a [fig](bethphag.html) in [hand](fourteen.html) and says: ". . . ETZ NASO PIRYO TE'EINAH NATNU CHEILAM." - ". . . for the tree bears its fruit, the [fig](bethphag.html) tree and the vine yield their strength." - Joel 2:22

3. [One](one.html) of those present reads the following: "The rabbis asked - 'Why are the words of the Torah compared to the [fig](bethphag.html) tree?' They answered: 'Since all the [figs](bethphag.html) do not ripen at the same [time](time.html), the more [one](one.html) searches the tree, the more [figs](bethphag.html) [one](one.html) finds in it. So it is with the words of Torah. The more they are [studied](study.html), the more delight that is taken in them.'"- [Talmud](orallaw.html), Eruvin

**The** [**Fourth**](four.html) **Cup**:

Red [Wine](wine.html) and the Etrog

1. Say: The [fourth](four.html) cup of [wine](wine.html) is red, the dominant color of early summer flora. Red symbolizes omnipresent reality, the Source of Everything.

2. Take the cup of [wine](wine.html) in the [hand](fourteen.html) and say the blessing:

"You shall be blessed in the [city](city.html),

And blessed in the [field](field.html).

Blessed shall be the fruit of your [body](body.html),

And the produce of your land,

And the offspring of your cattle,

The increase of your herd,

And the young of your flock.

Blessed shall be your basket

And your kneading trough.

You shall be blessed when you come in,

and blessed when you go out."

**The Fruit - Etrog (Citron)**

1. Point to the etrog on the plate and say: No fruit can actually represent the Upper Realm beyond our senses. Yet the perfect fruit of "the goodly tree," the etrog, comes close. The kabbalists named their [seder](haggada.html) service Pri Etz Hadar after this fruit, and even planted the etrog tree on Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) to provide themselves with beautiful etrogim for [Succoth](succoth.html).

2.Everyone present takes a piece of etrog and says:

*"VEHAYA K'ETZ SHATUL AL PALGEI MAYIM ASHER PIRYO YITEN B'ITO VE'ALEYHU LO YIBOL."*

*"And he shall be like a tree, planted by streams of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, and whose leaf does not wither."*

3.[One](one.html) of those present reads the following: "Rabbi Yochanan used to say - "If you happen to be [standing](mashal.html) with a sapling in your [hand](fourteen.html) and someone says to you: 'Behold the [Messiah](mashiach.html) has come. . . !' [First](one.html), plant the tree - and then go out to greet the [Messiah](mashiach.html)." - Avot de Rabbi Nathan 31

4. All say:

"LESHANAH HABA'AH B’[YERUSHALAYIM](city.html)!"

Next Year in [Jerusalem](city.html)!

Before you begin:

Prepare [four](four.html) types of [wine](wine.html), [one](one.html) cup per person:

1. white

2. blush (or any light pink [wine](wine.html), like a white zinfandel)

3. rose (or any dark pink [wine](wine.html), like a cabernet blanc, or zinfandel)

4. dark red (such a cabernet sauvignon, bordeaux or burgundy)

Prepare a plate with these [four](four.html) fruits: walnut, date, [fig](bethphag.html) and etrog (citron). Where the fresh variety is unavailable, used dried fruits instead.

Try to have as many fruits on the table as you can, so that you can also [eat](eating.html) up to [fifteen](fifteen.html) fruits to symbolize the day. After you finish the [fourth](four.html) cup of [wine](wine.html) and etrog, you can enjoy the other fruits.

Invite as many people as you wish to the [seder](haggada.html) table, which should be decorated festively with fruits and plants. The children could have garlands in their [hair](hair.html) to add to the atmosphere.

In addition to the readings we provide, you can add your own thoughts, songs, and sources to enrich your [seder](haggada.html), according to the spirit that you want to create.

**The Questions**

While everyone is [sitting](mashal.html) around the festive table, the youngest person present asks [four](four.html) questions:

1.WHY are we having a [seder](haggada.html) in the winter?

2.WHY do we [eat](eating.html) different kinds of fruit?

3.WHY do we drink [four](four.html) cups of [wine](wine.html) in

different shades from white to red?

4.WHY do we tell stories about trees?

**The Response**

[One](one.html) of the older members of the assembled group responds:

From the earliest days of [Creation](bara.html), when the [world](worlds.html) was in its pristine state, trees and plants played a major role in shaping the character of the planet. From the [time](time.html) of the [first](one.html) stirrings of life, flora featured in our consciousness, [offering](korbanot) color, shade, [food](food.html), protection and any [number](nchart.html) of useful by-products, as well as a critical role in the universal eco-system.

An appreciation of nature was already expressed in the Biblical account of the appearance of trees during the [third](three.html) day of [Creation](bara.html):

"And the earth brought forth grass, herb yielding [seed](flower.html) after its kind, and tree bearing fruit, wherein is the [seed](flower.html), after its kind. And [HaShem](hashem.html) saw that it was good." - Bereshit (Genesis) 1:12

Another member of the assembled group continues:

When our ancestors entered the Promised Land, they were told:

"And when you come to the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for [food](food.html) . . ." - Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:23

This verse contained the promise to the Children of Israel that they will enter the [Land of Israel](city.html), their planting of trees symbolized the people striking strong roots in their land. Trees were to be planted, but also respected. For instance, when making war against enemies, the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people were commanded not to destroy trees by wielding an ax against them: ". . . for you may [eat](eating.html) of them, but you shall not cut them down . . . For is the tree of the [field](field.html) man, that it should be besieged by you?"

The Torah stresses that the aim of conquest is to settle the land and develop it; the principle of conservation needed to be stressed even in the midst of fighting. The tree has done you no harm, therefore, do not harm it.

The next in the group continues:

The tree is associated with lofty ideas in Judaism. For example, in the Song of Songs, [HaShem](hashem.html)'s love of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people is portrayed as follows:

"As a lily among thorns,

So is my love among the daughters.

As an apple tree among the trees of the wood,

So is my beloved among the sons."

- Song of Songs 2:2-3

And we [know](daat.html) that [Abraham](avraham.html) attached a great symbolic value to the relatively simple concept of planting a tree in the [Land of Israel](city.html), as it is written: "[Abraham](avraham.html) planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and called there in the [name](name.html) of the Lord, the ever-lasting [HaShem](hashem.html)."

The next in the group continues:

While fruit trees were to be planted in Eretz Yisrael, the inhabitants of the Land were to appreciate the Source of all [food](food.html). [One](one.html) way this was achieved was by bringing their [First](one.html) Fruits (bikkurim) to the [Temple](temple.html) in [Jerusalem](city.html), once a year, in a very moving ceremony in which the farmers and their families recorded their appreciation for the bounty with which they were blessed.

Another [command](cmds613.html), required the population to put a tenth of their produce aside to be [eaten](eating.html) by the [priests](priests.html) in the [Temple](temple.html), or by poor people. Thus were the people [taught](teacher.html) not to take their [food](food.html) for granted nor to neglect the needy in society. In order to calculate the dates from which the fruits needed to be tithed, however, it was necessary to fix a [New](teruah.html) Year.

Since the Torah didn't fix such a date, the Rabbis in the [Mishna](orallaw.html) fixed the [fifteenth](fifteen.html) of [Shevat](feasts.html) as this day, in common with other [New](teruah.html) Years in the [Jewish calendar](gen-jew.html).

The next in the group continues:

Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html), the [fifteenth](fifteen.html) of [Shevat](feasts.html), is the [time](time.html) when the trees in the [Land of Israel](city.html) begin to bear fruit. The almond trees begin to blossom, and the wild [flowers](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cflower.html) begin to color the landscape. Over the months the wild flowers in Israel change their colors from white to pink to red as the different varieties bloom.

When the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people went into [exile](galuyot.html), the original significance of Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) as a demarcation of the [new](new.html) tax year was no longer relevant. Instead the strong links to the [Land of Israel](city.html) were recalled through a ceremony which celebrated this transition in nature.

The Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html) [Seder](haggada.html) that we have today reinforces our links with the [Land of Israel](city.html), the spring rebirth, our strong regard for trees and conservation and our appreciation for the Source of all sustenance. The kabbalists of the 16th century saw other, hidden meanings embodied in particular fruits.

What hidden meanings?

While the [Land of Israel](city.html) is blessed with many fruits, the [seven](seven.html) described in the Torah verse, below, had special status: They were brought to the [Temple](temple.html) as [First](one.html) Fruits, once a year, and on Tu B'[Shevat](feasts.html), it became customary to make a point of [eating](eating.html), and saying blessings, on these fruits in particular. As such they both symbolize the Land and the close links of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people with that land.

"For the Lord your [HaShem](hashem.html)

is bringing you into a good land. . .

of wheat and barley and

grapevines and [figs](bethphag.html) and pomegranates;

a land of olives and honey (from dates).[[17]](#footnote-17)"

 1. WHEAT - Chitah

Wheat's essential role puts it [first](one.html) among the [seven](seven.html) species. Since ancient times, it has been considered [one](one.html) of man's most basic crops: from wheat flour, bread is produced. On [Shavuot](shavuot.html), the [festival](festival.html) of the [First](one.html) Fruits, the [first](one.html) of the wheat crop would be brought to the [Temple](temple.html).

2. BARLEY - Se'orah

Barley was, and still is, an important grain in Israel. Because it requires less water than wheat, it grows even in the arid fields of the Negev. Since it ripens before wheat, its harvest begins in the month of [Nisan](feasts.html) (spring). [Two](two.html) weeks later, the [Omer](omer.html) [offering](korbanot) brought to the [Temple](temple.html) in [Jerusalem](city.html) as part of the [Pesach](passover.html) [festival](festival.html) was a barley [offering](korbanot). Bread prepared from barley was considered to be "poor man's" bread, possibly because it was not considered as tasty as bread made from wheat.

3. GRAPES - Gefen

Man has been cultivating grapes from the earliest times: the [first](one.html) vineyard mentioned in the Bible was planted by [Noah](noach.html) after the Flood. The cluster of grapes, brought to the Children of Israel in the wilderness by the Spies, symbolized the bounty of the [Land of Israel](city.html). Throughout the [generations](toldot.html), grapes have provided fruit and [wine](wine.html), and contributed to the economy of the indigenous [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [community](community.html). [Wine](wine.html), indicative of joy, is used in many [Jewish](gen-jew.html) rituals and ceremonies.

4. [FIG](bethphag.html) - T'einah

The broad [fig](bethphag.html) tree gives a lot of shade, hence the prophet Micha proclaims in his vision of peace in the Land: "Each man will sit beneath his grapevine and his [fig](bethphag.html) tree, and no [one](one.html) will [fear](fear.html). . . ." The sweet tasting fruit ripens in the hottest part of the summer, and the [figs](bethphag.html) are [eaten](eating.html) fresh or dried.The Tanach refers to the [fig](bethphag.html) as a symbol of fertility: it was also [one](one.html) of the fruits brought back by the spies to prove that the Land bore fruit.

5. POMEGRANATE - Rimon

An old [Hebrew](hebrew.html) song by [Yaakov](israelja.html) Orland portrays the pomegranate:

The pomegranate tree has aromas that flow Out from the Dead Sea and on to [Jericho](stages.html)…

The pomegranate also has rich red flowers and dark red fruit, and its abundant [seeds](flower.html) serve as a powerful symbol of fertility.

The pomegranate's shape has been used in many decorative objects, such as the rimonim bells used to decorate [Torah scrolls](letters.html), the 200 rimonim of copper on the beams of the [Temple](temple.html) and the rimonim which decorated the [High Priest's](priests.html) [garment](garment.html) in the [Temple](temple.html).

6. OLIVE - Zayit

The olive tree is [one](one.html) of the oldest and most common trees in the [Land of Israel](city.html). There are olive trees in the Galilee that are estimated to be thousands of years old. Its leaves are green all year round, its roots are strong and the silvery underside of the leaves gives off a sheen of light.

In Biblical times, olive [oil](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5Ctubshev%5Cconnection.html) was used to anoint [priests](priests.html) and kings; in its [purified](purity.html) form it was used to light the [seven](seven.html)-branched Menorah (candelabra) in the [Temple](temple.html). The olive itself is [eaten](eating.html) after being preserved; its oil is used for cosmetics, healing compounds and soaps, as well as for [food](food.html).

The olive branch is a symbol of peace: it was evidence for [Noah](noach.html) that the flood had ended. It is part of the emblem of the State of Israel, its deep roots symbolizing the people's strong attachment to the land.

7. DATE (Honey) - Tamar (D'vash)

The date is both [one](one.html) of the [Seven](seven.html) Species for which the [Land of Israel](city.html) is noted, and [one](one.html) of the [Four](four.html) Species used on the [festival](festival.html) of [Succoth](succoth.html). The date tree is a tall [one](one.html), and its fruit grows in clusters near the top. The sweet dates, which ripen at the end of summer, are [eaten](eating.html) fresh or dried - and are also used to make honey. The tree itself is very versatile, its branches being used for cover (as in the [Succah](succoth.html)), its fibers for rope and its trunk for building.

**Tu B'**[**Shevat**](feasts.html) **Sameach!**

\* \* \*

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1. Orech Chayim 131 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. And the trees now begin to blossom. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The cycle of Tevet; i.e., the winter season beginning at the winter solstice. V. supra p. 30, n. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The second tithe for the second year and the poor tithe for the third. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The poor tithe. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The second tithe. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Who say that the New Year begins only on the fifteenth of Shevat. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Bek. II, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. `Orlah, v. Glos. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. And its tithe-year is determined by its blossoming. Being in doubt whether to follow R. Gamaliel or R. Eliezer, R. Akiba gave two tithes. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Where two authorities give each two rulings with regard to a certain subject, one being more stringent in respect of one point and the other in respect of the other. For instance, Beth Shammai rule that the lack of one vertebra in a human spine still leaves it capable of defiling by `overshadowing' (v. Glos. s.v. ohel) but does not make an animal trefa (v. Glos.) whereas Beth Hillel says that it makes an animal trefa but leaves it incapable of defiling by overshadowing. Here Beth Shammai are more stringent in the matter of defilement and Beth Hillel in the matter of trefa (v. `Er. 6b). So here, R. Akiba took on himself two burdens when one would have sufficed. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Eccl. II, 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. And he followed Beth Hillel only. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Most of this study comes from: The Joint Authority for Jewish Zionist Education [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The Jewish Holidays, by Michael Strassfeld, page 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Vayikra Rabba 28 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Devarim 8:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)