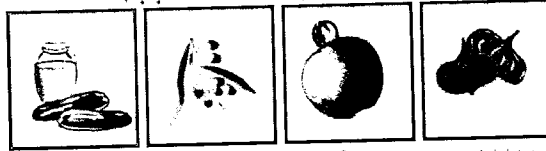


גֶפֶן      שְׂעֵרָה      חֶטֶה



דָּבֵשׁ      זֵית שֶׁמֶן      רִמּוֹן      תְּאֵנָה

# Seder for Tu B'shevat

In the 16th century, the Kabbalists of Tzfat compiled a Tu B'Shvat seder, somewhat similar to the seder for Passover. It involves enjoying the fruits of the tree, particularly those native to the Land of Israel, and discusses philosophical and Kabbalistic concepts associated with the day.

## Four Questions

Why is this day different from all other days?

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

## First cup

Our first cup of grape juice is entirely white, reminding us of winter, when nature is asleep. We join in the blessing over the wine.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרִי הַגֶּפֶן

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-gafen.  
Blessed be You, the One who creates the fruit of the vine.

## Seder Plate – fruits with peel

On the table we have plates with three different kinds of fruit. The first plate has fruits with a peel or shell that cannot be eaten.

Before we taste the fruit, we recite the blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרִי הָעֵץ

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-etz.  
Blessed be You, the One who creates the fruit of the tree.





## Why is there a New Year for Trees?

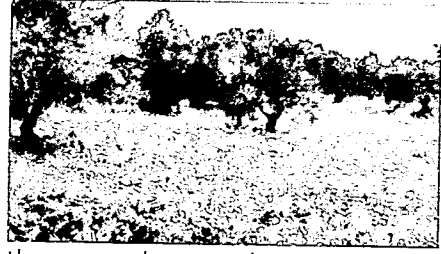
To fulfil some mitzvot in the Torah, we need to know the age of trees. For the tithe given to the Temple, Tu-b'shevat marked the beginning of the year. The Torah also prohibits eating fruit from trees until the fourth year, and Tu B'shevat is involved in deciding how old the trees are.

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*One day Honi the circle-drawer was journeying on the road and he saw a man planting a carob tree. He asked, "How long does it take [for this tree] to bear fruit?" The man replied: "Seventy years." Honi then further asked him: "Are you certain that you will live another seventy years?" The man replied: "I found [already grown] carob trees in the world; as my forefathers planted those for me so I too plant these for my children."*

## Second Cup

The second cup of grape juice is darker, with some red mixed with the white. Israel in the spring heralds the start of the most incredible



display of wild flowers. In the Galilee and the Golan Heights glorious flowers burst into bloom and cover the hills and fields with color beginning during January and lasting until late spring. During

these months even the Desert comes alive with a diversity of beautiful flowers. We join in the blessing over wine.

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן

## Seder Plate – fruits with pit

Now we choose fruits from the second plate, fruits with pits or seeds that cannot be eaten such as dates. We join in the blessing.

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי העץ

## Why do we eat fruits grown in Israel?

In our time with the rebirth of the state of Israel, Tu B'shevat has taken on new meaning. One vital part of our history is the Jewish National Fund, established in response to Herzl's speech at the fifth Zionist congress in 1901. The JNF achieved its goal of purchasing the land that would become the State of Israel, then helped to develop that land into a thriving nation – by planting over 240 million trees, building more than 200 dams and reservoirs, developing more than 250,000 acres of land, and creating over 1,000 parks.



## Third Cup

The third cup of grape juice is still darker. As summer arrives, Israel becomes red with tulips and poppies. We join in the blessing over wine.

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן

## Seder Plate – fruit fully edible

Now we choose fruits from the third plate, fruits that are edible both inside and out. We join in the blessing.

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי העץ

## Why do we think about sharing?

The Torah commands us to leave the edges of the field, the overlooked gleanings, the malformed fruit and the forgotten sheaves for the poor. This may also teach us to remember those people at the periphery of our society, overlooked, challenged, and often forgotten, and to help them. A portion of this Kiddush will be delivered to a homeless shelter.

## Fourth Cup

Our fourth cup is all red. Summer ends and the trees are filled with fruit, the crops grow tall as we reach autumn, the season of the harvest, of Sukkot. We join in the blessing over wine.

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן

## Why do we think about planting?

In Israel, Tu B'shevat has become a day for planting trees. When Israeli children plant, they sing a song about the almond tree, the first to bloom in spring. Let's sing it too.

Hashkediya porachat, Veshemesh paz zorachat, Tziporim merosh kol gag, Mevasrot et bo hachag. Tu bishvat higiya, Chag la'ilanot, Tu bish'vat higiya, Chag la'ilanot.

The almond tree is blooming, And the golden sun is shining, Birds atop each roof, Announcing the arrival of the festival. Tu bishvat has arrived, (it's) the festival of trees.

## Conclusion

May it be Your will, O God, that through our eating of the fruits, which we have blessed, that the trees will be filled with the glory of their ability to renew themselves, to blossom and grow, from the beginning of the year to its end. May our lives, as well, be renewed and filled with goodness, blessings, and peace. May the year be fruitful and blessed! Next year in rebuilt Jerusalem!

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם על הגפן ועל פרי הגפן, העץ ועל פרי העץ

