

Tu BiShvat Across Campus Hagaddah

Introduction

Tu BiShvat is the Jewish New Year for trees. As the environment is changing, and the idea of *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world) is changing with it, we must be more aware of how our generation has the potential (and responsibility) to change the current practices in our society. In Deuteronomy 20:19 we learn “A human is like a tree of the field.” Just as one tree does not make a forest, one person does not make up a community. It takes all of us working together to repair the spiritual and physical damage humans have inflicted upon the Earth. As we celebrate Tu BiShvat, following in the traditions of the Kabbalists in Tzfat (Safed), we must also think about our responsibility to the Earth and how to begin these repairs.

Tu BiShvat is an ideal time to focus on Israel. Right now spring is about to emerge in Israel and forests are beginning to show a tinge of green. We will read, discuss, and explore our connection to the land of Israel, while tasting fruits that symbolize the fruits of Israel.

In the book of *VaYikra* (Leviticus) 19:23-25 we begin to learn about the importance of nature and the environment to the Jewish people. “When you enter the land and plant any kind of fruit tree, regard its fruit as forbidden. For three years you are to consider it forbidden; it must not be eaten. In the fourth year all its fruit will be holy, an offering of praise to the LORD. But in the fifth year you may eat its fruit. In this way your harvest will be increased”. From these verses we can understand the importance of the festival of Tu BiShvat, which became an important marker of time in the Jewish tradition. It was a way to honor the trees, and by extension, the Earth that G-d gave us.



לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם

L'Shanna HaBa'ah BiYerushalayim
To next year in Jerusalem.

Created by Danielle Obrart, Eliav Rodman, and Shlomo Schwartz
In memory of Beth Uval - writer, teacher, and lover of the Land of Israel
Special Thanks to Nina Woldin, author of “Branching Out, JNF Tu BiShvat Hagaddah 2002”



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Your Voice in Israel

The Tu BiShvat Seder, taken from the Kabbalists and ported into Zionist culture, was actively revived in Israel even before the founding of the State, and is now celebrated by many Jews, religious and secular, around the world. This Hagaddah is designed to follow the tradition of a Seder, modeled after the *Pesach* (Passover) Seder, where a story is told through reenactment, reading of texts, and the idea that in every generation we must learn for ourselves the lessons of our heritage.

The relationship that humans have to nature has always been a complicated one. During Tu BiShvat we examine this relationship and do our best in reflecting on how we can give back to the land which has given us so much. The “green movement” and environmental groups are making daily strides to change the way we treat our resources, however, we can always make more of an effort. These action items will be a theme throughout this Tu BiShvat Seder.

You are encouraged to select segments of interest to you from the Hagaddah, and add contributions of your own. Take turns reading aloud and share with other participants.

As you follow this Hagaddah you will find within each of its four sections:

- **Introductions & Reflections**
- **Foods and Blessings** – a *Bracha*, the traditional Jewish blessing over food and events, reminds us that we should thank G-d for what we have and what we receive
- **Scientific Facts** – about the environment in Israel
- **Action Items** – reminders of ways to connect to the environment in our own lives
- **Discussions** – a basis for an educated debate about environmental issues facing Israel today

You may add activities to your Seder that will help making this experience fun and interactive. For more information check www.jnf.org/tbsac.

Level 1 – עשייה Assiyah – Action

Assiyah means action. Think about nature and the physical world—about actions we can take to repair the world and keep it whole. The earth (ארץ *eret* – specifically, The Land of Israel) is a symbol of *Assiyah* because it is permanent and solid.

Why is Israel compared to the Olive Tree? Just as the leaves of the olive tree do not fall, neither during summer nor during the rainy season, so too, Israel can never be destroyed, neither in this world nor in the world to come. (Babylonian Talmud 53b)

As a symbol of *Assiyah*, we eat fruits and nuts with a tough outer shell and a soft inside; reminding us that G-d protects us always – both our bodies (outside) and our souls (inside).

Raise the Pomegranate and Almonds and recite this blessing:

Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam, Borei pri ha-etz.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ

Blessed are You, our G-d, Sovereign of the universe, who creates the fruit of the tree.

Our first cup of wine is white, reminding us of winter, when nature is asleep. The white wine symbolizes purity and represents the beginning of creation. In winter the earth is sometimes barren, covered with snow – in Israel snow is a winter treat that covers the mountains in white-sometimes even in the desert! Winter is the only rainy season in Israel.

Pour white wine, lift the cup and say:

Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam, Borei pri ha-gafen.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן



Blessed are You, our G-d, Sovereign of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink the first cup.

“I went down to the nut grove...” (Song of Songs 6:11)

Just as with nuts, if you remove one from the pile, all of them move and roll after each other. So to with Israel, if you hit one of them, they all feel it. (Song of Songs Rabbah 6:26)

Scientific Fact:

The Negev desert in the south of Israel makes up 60% of the country's land, but only 8% of Israel's population lives there. Since the founding of the state, Israelis have been working to fulfill the dream of David Ben Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, to "make the desert bloom." Through pioneering spirit, coupled with innovations in science and technology, Israel is succeeding in this task.

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev was established in Be'er Sheva in 1969 with the aim to bring development to the Negev, and today has more than 19,000 students enrolled. The desert is blooming not only with vegetation, but with innovation as well. Projects like Ayalim (www.ayalim.org.il), whose goal is to revive a Zionist model of community building in Israel are led by young Israeli men and women. Ayalim nurtures values such as Zionism, young entrepreneurship and the bonds between man and land and between individual and society - in a way that fits the 21st century.

Blueprint Negev, a project launched by JNF in 2010, is a \$600 million project aimed at attracting 500,000 Israelis to the Negev through expansion and construction of new communities to accommodate them. The project aims to increase the Negev's population by 250,000 new residents by 2013, improving transportation infrastructure, adding businesses and employment opportunities, preserving water resources and protecting the environment.

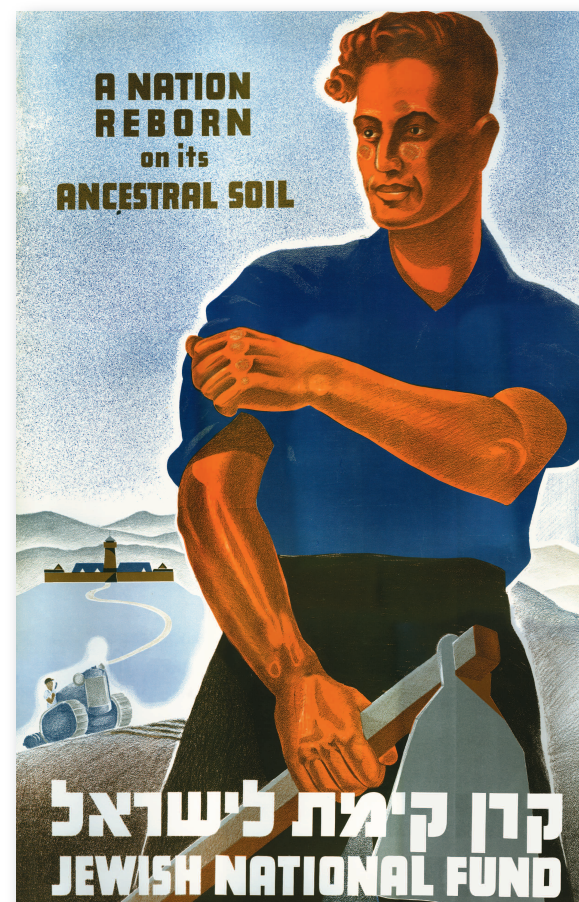
Action Items:

Just as these amazing pioneers are working to improve the Negev, you can contribute to your local land preservation:

- **Encourage your school to compost food scraps.** Set up a compost barrel and volunteer to help out with it. The resulting dirt is rich in nutrients for plants, and it keeps landfills from filling up with biodegradable waste.
- **Plant seeds from your seder.** Using the seeds from the fruits you ate during your Tu BiShvat seder, place each seed in a small paper cup with potting soil. Put the cups in a sunny spot, and remember to water them.
- **Participate in Jewish service programs.** Visit www.jewishservice.org to learn about different ways to get involved both locally and globally. You can also volunteer this spring break with JNF on Alternative Spring Break (ASB). ASB gives Jewish people between the ages of 18 and 30 the opportunity to participate in hands-on volunteering in the Negev.

Discussion:

We did not grow or pick the pomegranate and almonds that we ate for Assiyah/Action - we purchased them from the store from someone else that planted and harvested them. Slowly but surely modern Western society is removing us from our basic connection to the earth. As the Jewish people, we want to have a personal connection with land - and with the land of Israel specifically - through our roots and our heritage. How do you as an individual and as a part of contemporary society challenge yourself to reconnect? Do you connect more to Tel Aviv (the metropolis) or to Dimona (the small Negev town)? Do you connect through Jewish values; through a connection with the modern State of Israel; or simply as a human being? What role do you see as your own in solving this 21st century dilemma?



Level 2 – Yetzirah יצירה – Formation

Yetzirah means formation. Think about how things are formed in acts of creation and what it means to create. Think about creation not just in the physical sense, but also in our ability to be creative and flow – our capacity to feel, speak and sing. Think of a transformation in nature such as water changing to ice. We can also think of personal transformation, focusing on our own spirituality.

As a symbol of *Yetzirah*, we eat fruits with soft outer shells and hard pits, reminding us that if we have strong inner energy, we don't need to be hard on the outside.

These foods symbolize the **spring** season because of their protective outside. Just as in spring, the earth is slowly becoming soft and changing from the difficult icy cold. Removing the hard shell of winter exposes a fleshy vulnerable inside. A similar concept has come to identify Israelis – the Sabra (or prickly pear) has a sharp exterior, but is sweet on the inside.



Raise the Olives and Dates.

Mix some red wine in with the white and drink the second cup.



Scientific Fact:

Israel requires more water for consumption than its resources yield. Annually, Israel faces a deficit of almost 53 billion gallons. By the year 2020, Israel's population is expected to increase to 11 million (from approximately 8 million in 2010) and the country will require another 80 billion gallons of drinking water.

Over the last decade, JNF has invested nearly \$70 million to build Israel's reservoirs, which hold recycled waste water and flood water used for irrigation. With a combined capacity of 66 billion gallons, JNF reservoirs increase Israel's water economy by 12% - providing almost half of the water used by the agricultural sector, thus freeing up fresh water for domestic consumption.

More than 70% of the sewage water in Israel is purified, the highest amount in the world. (Spain comes in second, recycling just 17%).

Action Items:

In Israel, the average rainfall total in the Negev from June through October is zero. For most Americans it is difficult to imagine how devastating a water shortage can be, largely because of the ample availability of water in North America, but as parts of the U.S. face severe and unprecedented drought conditions, it is important to begin to develop habits that preserve our local water supplies.

Join water preservation worldwide by following these following action items:

- Instead of waiting for tap water to get cold enough for drinking, **keep a bottle of tap water in the refrigerator.**
- **Wait until you have a full load of laundry** before running the machine to save both water and energy. If you can't wait for a full load, use the right water level to match the size of the load.
- **Turn off the bathroom faucet** while brushing teeth or shaving.
- **Take short showers** rather than long showers or baths, and turn the water off while soaping.
- **Wash your car with a bucket of soapy water** and use a nozzle to stop the flow of water from the hose between rinsing.
- **Give Israel a drink.** Water, vital to Israel, is in very short supply. JNF is working to help manage water by recycling, building reservoirs, using brackish water to grow fruits and vegetables, and more. You can help by collecting coins in the Jewish National Fund Blue Box.

Your change will soon add up, helping to give Israel a drink of water through projects such as JNF Water Reservoirs.

Discussion:

Due to the shortage of water in Israel, we are put in a tough position. Israel is currently harming its natural resources by taking water from the *Kinneret* (Sea of Galilee) and thereby slowly depleting underground aquifers. A significant amount of money is currently being spent desalinating water from the Mediterranean Sea. This process uses large amounts of electrical energy, ultimately harming other environmental resources. On the other hand, Israel has discussed the idea of buying water from other countries in the region, specifically Turkey, as a possible temporary solution to the water shortage. In August 2002 Israel came to an agreement with Turkey for the supply of 13.2 billion gallons of water to Israel annually - about 3 percent of its water supply. Israel agreed to pay Turkey approximately three times what it would cost them for the same amount of recycled water and about twice that of desalinated water. The 13.2 billion gallons are estimated to offset the water that Israel supplies to Jordan as part of their 1994 peace agreement.

What should Israel do? Buy water at the risk of compromising national security by 'outsourcing' vital resources to other countries? Should Israel spend the money desalinating water while potentially harming the environment?



Level 3 – בריאה Bri'ah – Creation

Bri'ah means creation. Think about your ideas, hopes and dreams, the natural laws and patterns of nature that govern the universe. The wind (*ruach*) is the symbol of Bri'ah. In Hebrew, *ruach* means wind, breath or spirit. Creation helps us find wholeness (*shelmut*). Think about how we can create this wholeness in ourselves and with the world around us. Wholeness in our lives comes from the contrasts of G-d's creations – light and dark, sky and earth, sun and moon, land and sea, birds and fish. These contrasts create balance through the use of energy. It takes energy to struggle through imbalances in order to eventually create harmony. We have to find balance in the opposing forces of humans and the natural world.

We are instructed to cultivate for our human needs, but we must do so in a manner that does not deplete or degrade creation and the environment. We need to use our energy effectively, in order to find a balance between the two. This will create *shlemut*.

As a symbol of *Bri'ah*, we eat fruits that are soft throughout with no protective shells or pits inside so that the whole fruit can be eaten. Here there is no difference between our inner feelings and our outer selves.

Raise the Grapes, Raisins and Figs.

Summer in Israel is hot, hot, hot! Between relaxing on the beach and enjoying nature's trails, Israelis love to take advantage of the long daylight hours to relax in the sun. During the summer, fruits and vegetables are plentiful, the air is warm, and we are reminded of the richness of life. As a symbol of this change, we mix more red wine or grape juice into the white for a deeper color.



Mix mostly red wine with a little white
and drink the third cup.

Scientific Fact:

The Negev Desert and the surrounding area, including the Arava Valley, are the sunniest parts of Israel (one of the sunniest places in the world) and have become the center of the Israeli solar industry. Today, almost every building in Israel, public and private, heats its water with the energy of the sun in what's known as a "Dood Shemesh" (sun tank) located on the roof. Israel (and its Mediterranean neighbor, Cyprus) are the world's per-capita leaders in the use of solar hot water systems with over 90% of homes using them.

Israel is on the forefront of modern forms of alternative energy. In 2008 construction began on three solar power plants near Ashdod (in the northern Negev) - two thermal and one photovoltaic.

Action Items:

- **Turn off lights** and appliances when leaving a room.
- **Open your shades** for sunlight instead of using artificial light.
- **Un-plug appliances** that are not in use. They continue to use energy even when they are not on. This action can save 1,000 lbs. of carbon dioxide and \$256 per year.
- **Switch to** compact fluorescent light bulbs instead of incandescent bulbs.
- **Air-dry clothes after washing.** Even using the dryer to partially dry your clothes and letting them air-dry the rest of the way can save more energy and money than using the dryer for all your needs.
- **Move your heater thermostat** down two degrees in winter and up two degrees in the summer.



Green Israel Tu BiShvat Hagaddah

Discussion:

In a world of environmental problems, there are many voices calling for attention and government funding. Considering the many issues that face Israel today, which one is the most important to focus on?

If you were the Prime Minister of Israel and you had 5 billion dollars to spend on the environment, how would you prioritize your environmental budget between education, alternative energy, or transportation? Remember to evaluate the cons.

- **Education** – Spend time educating youth on alternative means of energy, creating environmental projects in the schools, working with teachers to create a better curriculum, putting better technology in schools to reduce the use of paper.
- **Alternative Energy** – Creating renewable energy sources – water & wind farms along with improving recycling countrywide.
- **Transportation** – Reducing carbon emissions, building stronger infrastructure, investing into mass transportation, research in eco-friendly electric and hybrid cars.



Green Israel Tu BiShvat Hagaddah

Level 4 – Atzilut – אצילות – Nobility

Atzilut means nobility. Think about pure noble spirit, loving-kindness, power and beauty. Feel close to G-d and remember that each creature is part of just one universe. Fire (*aish*) is the symbol of *Atzilut*. Fire is the energy of life, yet it can also destroy as we have witnessed during the 2010 devastation in the Carmel Mountain Range. We must become active citizens in order to stave off our own burning consumption.

As summer turns to **fall**, plants turn inward to prepare their seeds. Animals turn inward for rest, and we turn inward to think about the year that has passed and the one that is beginning. Our purpose is to live in balance and harmony with all of G-d's creations. We must be active in discovering that balance and repairing the places in our lives where it does not exist.

Atzilut is the closest level to infinity, according to Kabbalists, the true abstract form. To symbolize *Atzilut* we eat fruits that are the raw materials for the creation of food – the grain. As in the time of Abraham, we eat pita to remind us of our origins as a wandering tribe, now at home in the land of our ancestors.

Lift the bread and recite:

Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam, HaMotzi Lecham Min Ha'Aretz

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Blessed are You, our G-d, Sovereign of the universe, who brings bread from the earth.

The fourth cup of wine is fully red to symbolize the full bloom of nature before the cold winter. The strength of the red represents our strength, similar to that of healthy trees with solid roots in the ground and with arms open to the love that connects everything around us.



Pour red wine and drink the fourth cup.

Scientific Fact:

Did you know that Israel is one of only two countries in the world that entered the 21st century with a net gain in its number of trees? Since 1901 JNF has planted over 240 million trees in Israel, covering more than 250,000 acres. In over 100 years of work, you can see that change not only on a drive through Israel, but even from space! Check it out for yourself.

On December 2, 2010 the deadliest forest fire in Israel's history broke out on the Carmel Mountain Range near Haifa. For more than 82 hours the blaze spread rapidly across northern Israel—fanned by strong winds and dry conditions—killing 43 people, forcing the evacuation of 17,000 residents from dozens of towns, and destroying or severely damaging 250 homes. The wildfire burned more than five million trees across 12,500 acres of natural wood lands and planted forests, an area comparable to 7,142 football fields or 40% of the entire city of Jerusalem. Thousands of animals were also killed in the blaze. Recovery will take years.



Action Items:

Each of us must take responsibility for our own part in the worldwide environmental problems. We must act now in order to turn around the devastation that we recognize all around us. As Gandhi said, *"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."*

Discussion:

"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger."

– Leviticus 19:9-10

The Torah speaks of the relationship, through the Land of Israel, that we have to our community. In this text we can see two different values. First, the idea of using as much as we need and not more than we have to ... and secondly, understanding that all of the resources of the world are to share. Relate this passage to your energy consumption habits. How do we adapt our energy usage to meet the current environmental concerns without sacrificing our comfort? What is our responsibility to the "poor and the stranger" when it comes to energy? What is our responsibility to Israel - the State and the Land?

How, in your personal life, will you move closer to living a sustainable lifestyle?

Conclusion

Tu B'Shvat embodies the important Jewish teaching that "The earth is the Lord's" (Psalm. 24:1).

All people are to be stewards of the earth, to see that its produce is available for all G-d's children. Property is a sacred trust given by G-d; it must be used to fulfill G-d's purposes. No person has absolute or exclusive control over his or her possessions. Our task is to be those who go out and do – and while we continue to believe, as we find in the teachings of Jewish tradition, in making the world a better place, we know that it is upon us to make it so. The concept that people have custodial care of the earth, as opposed to ownership, is illustrated by this ancient story:

Two men were fighting over a piece of land. Each claimed ownership and bolstered his claim with apparent proof. To resolve their differences, they agreed to put the case before the Rabbi. The Rabbi listened but could come to no decision because both seemed to be right. Finally he said, "Since I cannot decide to whom this land belongs, let us ask the land." He put his ear to the ground and,

after a moment, straightened up. "Gentlemen, the land says it belongs to neither of you but that you belong to it."

The Shehecheyanu blessing is a common prayer said to celebrate special occasions. As we conclude this festive celebration of Tu B'Shvat, let us recite it together:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה ,

Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam shecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higyanu lazman hazeh.

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, who has granted us life, sustained us and enabled us to reach this occasion.

