



Laws and Customs Tu B'Shevat

For the year 5777

According to Minhag Chabad

Comments, questions or to subscribe: rl@yeshivahcentre.org

🌿 ROSH HASHANAH OF TREES

Tu B'Shevat is the *Rosh Hashanah* for trees, as it is the time when fruit trees are infused with sap and their fruits begin the earliest stage of development. The 15th of *Shevat* is therefore one of the dates used when calculating the years for the purposes of *Orlah* (the first three years of a tree's growth – when its fruit is forbidden), *Revai* (the fourth year of a tree's growth – when its fruit must be consecrated), *Terumah* and *Maaser* (the tithes given to the *Kohen* and the *Levi*).

Outside of *Eretz Yisroel*, the laws of *Orlah* apply to any fruits **known** to have grown during a tree's first three years, and the laws of *Revai* apply to **grapes** which are **known** to have grown during a vine's fourth year. A *Rav* should be consulted to compute these times properly. [Even though *Tu B'Shevat* is the time of a fruit's development in the Northern Hemisphere, it is still the date used when calculating *Orlah* and *Revai* for fruits grown in the Southern Hemisphere.]

Contrary to popular misconception, *Tu B'Shevat* is not the day of judgement for trees. Rather, that occurs on *Shavuos*.

🌿 CUSTOMS

Tachnun is not recited on *Tu B'Shevat* and the *Mincha* beforehand, and one may not fast – not even a *Chosson* and *Kallah* on the day of their *Chuppah*. This year, when *Tu B'Shevat* coincides with *Shabbos*, *Av Harachamim* and *Tzidkosecha* are not recited.

On *Tu B'Shevat*, it is customary to consume the fruit of trees, especially the *Shivas Haminim* (the fruit with which *Eretz Yisroel* is praised –

grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates). Some have the custom of eating a new fruit and reciting *Shehecheyanu*. It is also customary to eat carobs. This is all to praise Hashem for renewing the fruits.

When eating fruits grown in *Eretz Yisroel*, one must ensure that there is no concern of *Orlah*, *Revai*, *Tevel* and *Shemita*. When shopping for fruit, one should take note of the country of origin.

The Rebbe encouraged gatherings in association with *Tu B'Shevat*, especially for children who are likened to a growing tree.

🌿 BROCHOS ON FRUITS

One recites *Shehecheyanu* when eating the fruit of a season for the first time. When eating several such types of fruit, one *Shehecheyanu* suffices for all.

When multiple types of fruit are present at the time of the *Brocho*, and one intends to eat more than one type of fruit:

- If one doesn't have a personal preference, the *Brocho* should be recited on one of the *Shivas Haminim*. The *Shivas Haminim* take precedence to other fruits – even if the *Shivas Haminim* are cut and the other fruits are whole. When several of the *Shivas Haminim* are present, the order of precedence is olives, dates, grapes, figs, pomegranates. When there are no *Shivas Haminim* present, one may recite the *Brocho* on any fruit.
- If one has a personal preference, he should recite the *Brocho* on the fruit he likes most. [This refers both to a fruit that one usually prefers, or to a fruit that one

prefers right now. If one has an equal liking for more than one type of fruit, he may recite the *Brocho* on either of them.] There are two exceptions: 1) If the fruit he likes is not whole, it is best to recite the *Brocho* on another fruit that is whole. 2) If the fruit he likes is not one of the *Shivas Haminim*, but one of the *Shivas Haminim* is present and he intends to eat it too, he may recite the *Brocho* on either of the two.

Fruits subject to infestation must be checked prior to making the *Brocho*.

When eating of the *Shivas Haminim*, one should remember to recite the special *Brocha Acharona* of *Al Ha'etz*. For all other fruits, one recites *Bore Nefashos*. [When eating both *Shivas Haminim* fruits as well as other fruits, the special *Brocha Acharona* of *Al Ha'etz* suffices for all the fruits.]

🌿 MAN IS LIKE A TREE

The *Torah* compares man to a tree. The lessons we can derive from *Tu B'Shevat* include:

- A healthy and vibrant tree produces fruit in abundance, both qualitatively as well as quantitatively. So too must every person grow and produce good fruits in *Torah*, *Tefillah* and *Tzedakah*.
- Just as fruits are not vital to existence, but are rather consumed for pleasure and enjoyment, so too must one serve Hashem in a way of pleasure.
- Just as a tree must be especially protected and nurtured when it is young, so too must we especially protect and nurture our young when we raise them to a lifetime of *Torah* and *Mitzvos*.