



בס"ד Laws and Customs Tu B'Shevat

For the year 5778

According to Minhag Chabad

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🌀 ROSH HASHANAH OF TREES

Tu B'Shevat (15th of *Shevat*) is the *Rosh Hashanah* for trees, as it is the time when they are infused with sap and their fruits begin the earliest stage of development.

Tu B'Shevat is one of the dates used to calculate the years for *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 fruit-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 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* or the *Mincha* beforehand, and one may not fast – not even a *Chosson* and *Kallah* on the day of their *Chuppah*.

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, which are especially associated with miracles. All this it 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 *Shemitah*. When shopping for fruit, one should note the country of origin.

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

The Rebbe also encouraged giving extra *Tzedakah* on *Tu B'Shevat*.

🌀 BROCHOS ON FRUITS

Shehecheyanu is recited when eating the fruit of a season for the first time. This applies even to species that experience two seasons per year.

Multiple varieties of the same species (e.g. white peach and yellow peach) are deemed separate, and one recites a separate *Shehecheyanu* when eating them on separate occasions.

When eating several types of new fruit at the same time, 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 the *Shivas Haminim*, which takes 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 none of the *Shivas Haminim* are present, one may recite the *Brocho* on any fruit, with whole fruits taking precedence to cut fruits.
- 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 equally likes more than one type of fruit, he may recite the *Brocho* on either.] There are two exceptions: 1) If the fruit he likes is cut, it is best to recite the *Brocho* on another fruit that is whole (unless the cut fruit that he likes is of the *Shivas Haminim*). 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 constantly grows and produces fruit in abundance, both qualitatively as well as quantitatively. So too, a person must grow and produce fine fruits in *Torah*, *Tefillah* and *Tzedakah*.
- Fruits are not vital to existence, but are rather consumed for pleasure and enjoyment. So too, one must serve Hashem with pleasure and enjoyment.
- A tree must be especially protected and nurtured when it is young. So too, we must especially protect and nurture our young when we raise them to a lifetime of *Torah* and *Mitzvos*.