

Tu Bi Sh'vat Seder
Temple B'nai Shalom Sisterhood

Jan 31, 2010

Compiled By
Sandi Kleinman and Deborah Coblenz



ותוצא הארץ דשא עשב מזריע זרע למינהו
ועץ עשה-פרי אשר זרעו-בו למינהו וירא אלהים כי-טוב

“The earth sent forth vegetation, plants bearing their own kinds of seeds, and trees producing fruits containing their own kinds of seeds. God saw that it was good.”
(Genesis 1:12)

INTRODUCTION TO SEDER

Leader: On the 15th day of the month of *Sh'vat* the Jewish community celebrates the holiday of *Tu BiSh'vat*, or what is commonly known as the “New Year for the Trees”. It is a time of year when we celebrate and honor the sacred and unique connection which exists between Judaism and nature; a time when we remember the biblical teaching that “the tree of the fields is man’s life” (Deuteronomy 20:19).

Additionally, it is at this time of year that we remember that spring is not too far away. Tu BiSh'vat marks the time that spring traditionally begins in Israel. It is a time when the winter rain subsides and budding begins. It is for this reason that we commonly eat fruits native to *Eretz Yisrael* – barley, dates, figs, grapes, pomegranates, olives, and wheat.

The Tu BiSh'vat seder was created in the 16th by Isaac Luria and other Kabbalists. The seder is full of imagery and symbolism meant to mark the four season. Additionally, the seder is split into four “spheres”, each of which represents a different Kabbalistic relationship that we have with the earth: *Assiya* (Actualization), *Yetzira* (Formation), *Beriah* (Creation), *Atzilut* (Nobility).

Additionally, in the nature of this holiday, this seder is a call to action. While the Tu BiSh'vat seder is meant to be a celebration of our relationship with nature, it is also a time of education and reflection, a time to look at our impact on the world around us and change the way to interact with our environment during the coming year.

Reader: Where does the name Tu B'Shvat come from?

The name Tu comes from the combination of the Hebrew letters tet (ט) and vav (ו) which have the numerical values of 9 and 6 respectively and are combined to make 15. The letters yud (י) which has a value of ten and hey (ה) which has a value of five are not used because they would spell out one of the names of God.

Reader: In Salonica two legends are related concerning Tu B'Shvat. The first states that an angel hits the head of every plant on this day saying to it: “Grow.” The second believes that, on this day the trees embrace. Anyone seeing that embrace will have his or her wish fulfilled.

Some barren Jewish women, believing in the power of sympathetic magic, would plant raisins and candy near trees, or embrace trees on Tu B'Shvat, at night, praying for fertility. Young girls eligible for marriage were brought to trees where an imitation marriage was enacted. If, shortly after, buds were found on the tree to which they were ‘married’ they knew their turn would soon come. In some areas the Tu B'Shvat celebrations were held in the homes of families who had lost a beloved during the past year, to remind of

the prohibition of mourning on that day, and also of the renewal of life from the trees being parallel to the resurrection.

In southern and rural Morocco, the rich would invite the whole town to their homes and fill their hats with fruit. In Persia there was a custom of climbing on the roof and lowering an empty basket through the chimney which would be returned laden with fruit. In Turkey there was a custom where each member of the family would have a special relationship with one species of fruit. In Persia and Afghanistan, Jews on Tu B'Shvat would purchase new fabrics from which clothing for Pesach would be sewn. Another custom performed 'in anticipation' was to eat jelly made from the last Sukkoth's etrog, and then to pray for etrogim of fine quality for the coming Sukkoth.

Reader: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, the wind and the water, the sky and the sea and although God planted flowers and trees in the earth's soil, God refrained from sending rain down. The Torah teaches that only once God had created man did God allow the vegetation to bloom. Only after God formed Adam out of the very earth that these plants lay dormant in, only after there was someone else to watch over their wellbeing, did God allow plant life to sprout and their seeds to spread. Humans were to be the earth's caretaker and guardian, a *Shomrei Adamah*. And during Adam's first night in the garden, God took him by the hand and led him to every seed bearing tree telling Adam "See my works, how lovely and praiseworthy they are. All that I created, I have created for you. Be careful though, that you don't ruin or destroy my world, for if you ruin it there is no one who will repair it after you" (*Kohelet Rabbah* on Eccl. 7:13).

Leader: Because Tu B'Shvat is a special day, we recite the Shehecheyanu:
 Baruch ata Ado--nai
 Eloheinu melech ha-olam,
 she-he-cheyanu
 ve-kiyemanu ve-higi-anu
 laz'man ha-zeh
 We praise You, Ado--nai our
 God, Ruler of the universe
 for giving us life,
 for sustaining us and for
 enabling us to reach this season.

Washing of the Hands

Leader: Benjamin Franklin once wrote, "When the well's dry, only then will we know the worth of water." Water provides sustenance for our stomachs and souls. It is the home for millions of plant and animal species and a regulator of world temperature.

Reader: However, water can also be devastating, causing mudslides and flooding, and carrying toxins that pollute our environment and endanger our health.

Leader: Trees anchor our soil, soak up our rain, and filter our drinking water. In essence, they make our life-force, livable. Our ecosystem as a whole and all that depends on it is completely interconnected. This idea is reflected in the teaching of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai who once taught, “three things are of equal importance: earth, humans, and rain. Rabbi Levi ben Hiyyata said: ... to teach that without earth, there is no rain, and without rain, the earth cannot endure, and without either, humans cannot exist” (Genesis Rabbah, 13:3).

Together, we recite the blessing for the washing of the hands:

ברוך אתה, יי אלוהינו,
מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצננו על נטילת ידים
Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam asher kid'shanu
b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al n'tilat yadayim.

Together:

And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing. –

Ezekiel 47:12

Reader: Trees hold a special place in the Jewish imagination. The Torah is described as a “tree of life” to those who hold it dear. The two trees in the center of the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, figure prominently in humanity’s birth story. Trees find their way into the greatest biblical love poem, the Song of Songs, that lovely evocation of a spring in which humanity at last learns how to live in loving, playful peace with all of earth as well as with each other. And in the Psalms it is written, “the righteous bloom like a date-palm; they thrive like a cedar in Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they flourish in the courts of our God” (Psalm 92:13-15).

Together:

Source of Creation and Life of the Universe, we gather together on Tu B'Shevat, as Jews of conscience, with a deep spiritual bond to your natural wonders, to affirm and preserve creation.

We are grateful for creation in all its majesty: the ever flowing waters, the azure blue skies, the complex life of Earth’s forests, the myriad of life forms—amoebae and falcon, black footed ferret and wild turkey, human being and soaring eagle.

The life of all creatures and our own lives are One, profoundly dependent upon each other.

We call our ancient scroll of wisdom, the Torah, an Eitz Chayim, a tree of life, for it, like the Earth's great forests, sustains us. Torah teaches us that creation, in its great diversity, is harmoniously interconnected. Like the trees, we too need strong and deep roots for nourishment.

The uplifted branches of trees point to our future. God, let us be strong, as strong as ancient trees. The Psalmist was right when he said, "like a tree planted by the waters, we shall not be moved."

We are grateful for the life we are lent. We pledge to lift up our voices, both in praise of You and in defense of Your Creation.

(Rabbi Warren Stone)

Leader: Together we sing:

Etz chayim hi lamachazikim ba,
v'tom'cheha m'ushar.

Shalom, shalom!

*It is a tree of life to them that hold fast to it
and all its supporters are happy.*

Four Questions

Leader: Of all of God's creations, why does this holiday honor trees specifically?

Reader: Trees are a symbol of our investment in the future, and because they take so long to grow, planting them is the most selfless act one can make for their children. Trees give us shade and food; they purify our waters and house our wildlife. Honoring trees honors the investment of our ancestors and reminds us of our obligation to our children.

There is a story told of a righteous man named Honi. One day he saw an old man planting a carob tree. Honi said to him: "Foolish man, do you think you will live to eat and enjoy the fruit of the tree you plant today? It will not bear fruit for many, many years." The old man replied: "I found trees in the world when I was born. My grandparents planted them for me. Now I am planting for my grandchildren." And so Honi learned the importance of planting seeds for future generations.

Leader: Why, today, do we specifically eat fruit that is grown in Israel?

Reader: In the *Tanach*, Isaiah is recorded as prophesizing that "In the days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will blossom and sprout, and they will fill the whole world with fruit" (Isaiah 27:6). For over 2000 years Jews were exiled from living in the Land of Israel; for over 2000 years the Jewish people were without a home. Now we can fulfill Isaiah's prophesy of not only filling the world with fruit, but partaking in its offerings as well.

Leader: Why are we thinking about planting when spring is several months away?

Reader: Although it is still winter here, in the Land of Israel one season is ending and another beginning. It is a period of transformation where “most of the rainy season has passed and the sap has risen; but the time of ripening has not yet begun” (Rashi on *Rosh HaShanah* 14a). Now is the time for us to thank God for the rain for which our Earth depends and celebrate the start of another season of greenery.

Leader: Why, today, do we remember the importance of conservation and environmental stewardship?

Reader: When we take our precious resources for granted we overlook their value in our lives, and we overlook their necessity for the future. This holiday is a time to reflect on our place in the world around us and to work to improve our relationship with the environment. Tu BiSh'vat is a time to remind us of the importance of completing God's work in the world, the holiest of deeds. The truth of this lesson is attested to in the teachings of Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai who once said: "If you have sapling in your hand, ready to plant, and the Messiah comes, plant the tree first and then go to greet him."

First Cup – Assiya (Actualization)

[Pour a full glass of white wine]

Reader:

I frequently tramped eight or ten miles through the deepest snow to keep an appointment with a beech-tree, or a yellow birch, or an old acquaintance among the pines

. ~Henry David Thoreau, 1817 – 1862

Leader: We now come to our first cup of white wine, symbolizing the barrenness of winter. As we recite the blessing we are reminded of the emptiness of the winter season, the same emptiness that existed before creation. Yet we are also reminded that just as God formed creation out of nothing, our winter landscape has the potential to one day change and our dormant plants will again grow, thrive, and blossom into spring.

ברוך אתה, יי אלוהינו, מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן
Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam borei p'ri hagafen
Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Leader: The Tu BiSh'vat Seder is split into four sections, each reflecting the seasons and symbolizing a different way that we relate to trees in our everyday lives. The first section is *assyya* or “actualization” and is symbolized by the eating of fruits and nuts with a hard outside and a fleshy inside.

Reader: We eat these fruit and nuts to remind us that appearance remains deceiving. Although seemingly inedible from the outside, each of the foods eaten during *assiya*, when peeled or shelled, will transcend their outward appearance. We call this section of the Seder “actualization” because like winter which has laid dormant for so long, these fruits and nuts contain in them the unique potential to reveal the hidden secrets of creation.

Reader: Additionally, because of their hard outsides, these foods represent the human tendency to judge others on their outer appearance. Judaism teaches us that people are so much more than they appear, and eating these fruit reminds us that despite our size, shape, or color, we all carry a divine spark within because each of us is created *B'tzelem Elohim*, in the image of God.

Leader: We now partake in the first five fruits and nuts of the fifteen that we will be eating today. On Tu BiSh'vat we are commanded to eat 15 different fruits symbolizing the 15 days of Sh'vat leading up to this holiday.

[Serve any five of the following hard shell fruits and nuts: Almonds, Walnuts, Pomegranates, Peanuts, Coconuts, Chestnuts, Pistachios, Bananas etc.]

Together, we recite the following:

<p>For Fruit From a Tree</p> <p>רוך אתה, יי אלוהינו בורא פרי העץ</p> <p>Bruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam borei p ri ha-eitz</p> <p>Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Creator of the fruit of t ree</p>	<p>For Fruit from anywhere other than a tree</p> <p>רוך אתה, יי אלוהינו בורא פרי האדמה</p> <p>Bruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam borei p adamah</p> <p>Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Creator of the fruit of the ea tree</p>
---	---

Reader: If you remove one nut from a pile of walnuts, every nut in the pile will be shaken. Similarly, if one person sins, the whole community will suffer. (Midrash Song of Songs Rabba 1)

Reader: "The Torah compares humans to trees because, like humans, trees have the power to grow. And as humans have children, so trees bear fruit. And when a human is hurt, cries of pain are heard throughout the world, so when a tree is chopped down, its cries are heard throughout the world." (Rashi)

Reader: Once when Rav Kook was walking in the fields, lost deep in thought, the young student with him inadvertently plucked a leaf off a branch. Rav Kook was visibly shaken by this act and, turning to his companion he said gently: “believe me when I tell

you that I never simply pluck a leaf or a blade of grass or any living thing unless I have to. Every part of the vegetable world is singing a song and breathing forth a secret of the divine mystery of the creation.” The words of Rav Kook penetrated deeply into the mind of the young student: For the first time he understood what it means to show compassion to all creatures.

-Wisdom of the Jewish Mystics

Second Cup – Yetzira (Formation)

[Pour a nearly full glass of white wine with a few drops of red wine]

Leader: The white wine with a dash of red symbolizes the gradual deepening of color which parallels the reawakening of colors in nature as the sun brings them back to life. In spring the sun's rays begin to thaw the frozen earth and the first flowers appear on the hillsides. In the full warmth of spring we go outdoors to be with nature. No longer coating ourselves in protective attire, we expose our soft bodies to the sun. We eat fruit containing pits and we are reminded that, despite the wondrous expressions of our spirit, we are still tied to the hard pit of our ego. We are still concealed, deep inside, protecting our divine sparks even from within.

Together:

בּוֹךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגָּפֶן
 Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam borei p'ri hagafen
Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Leader: This section of our Seder is called *Yetzira* or “Formation” and it is marked by eating fruits with pits at their center.

Reader: Although these pits are often discarded, we must remember that they are the seeds, the means to rebirth. We eat these fruits to remind us that every flowering tree was once barren, every budding field once bear, and that the means to growth can sometimes come from the most overlooked of places.

Reader: This lesson translates into how we treat the world. The Talmud teaches us “Everything that the Holy One, Blessed Be, created in God’s world, God did not create a single thing in vain” (*Shabbat 77B*). We eat pitted fruits during *Yetzira* to remind us that all of God’s creatures are valuable and significant and that before we discard anything or anyone, we should take the time to find that value, to explore the hidden spark within us all.

[Serve any five of the following pitted fruits: Dates, Cherries, Olives, Pears, Plums, Apricots, Hackberries, Avocados etc.]

Or Fruit From a Tree

רוך אתה, יי אלוהינו
 ל העול ׁ, בורא פ רי הע ץ

uch Atah Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam borei
 i ha-eitz

ssed are you, Adonai our God, Creator of the fruit of the

Or Fruit from anywhere other than a tree

רוך אתה, יי אלוהינו
 רי האדמה

uch Atah Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam borei
 adamah

essed are you, Adonai our God, Creator of the fruit
 the earth

Reader:

For the Lord your God
 is bringing you
 into a *good* Land
 a Land
 of brooks of water,
 of fountains and depths
 springing forth in valleys and hills,
 a Land of wheat and barley
 and vines and fig trees
 and pomegranates,
 a Land of olive trees and honey,
 a Land wherein
 you shall eat bread
 without scarceness,
 a Land whose stones are iron
 and out of whose hills
 you may dig brass.
 And you shall eat and be satisfied,
 and bless the Lord your *God*
 for the *good* Land
 which is being given unto you.
 —*Deuteronomy* 8:7–11

Dayeinu – A Modern Day Interpretation (read responsively)

Had we purchased 100% recycled paper but not reduced our paper usage... Dayeinu?
 Would it be enough?

*Had we reduced our paper usage, buying products with less packaging and printing on
 scrap paper but never saved electricity...Dayeinu? Would it be enough?*

Had we saved electricity, buying energy efficient appliances and installing compact
 fluorescent light bulbs but not planted a tree...Dayeinu? Would it be enough?

Had we planted a tree but not safeguarded our forests...Dayeinu? Would it be enough?

Had we safeguarded our forests, writing to Congress and asking for stricter logging restrictions but not cleaned up our streams...Dayeinu? Would it be enough?

Had we cleaned up our streams but not cleaned up our rivers...Dayeinu? Would it be enough?

Had we cleaned up our rivers but not taught our children about the importance of protecting our environment...Dayeinu? Would it be enough?

Third Cup – Beriah (Creation)

[Pour a glass that is half filled with red wine and half filled with white wine]

Reader:

I think that I shall never see
 A poem lovely as a tree.
 A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
 Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;
 A tree that looks at God all day
 And lifts her leafy arms to pray;
 A tree that may in Summer wear
 A nest of robins in her hair;
 Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
 Who intimately lives with rain.
 Poems are made by fools like me,
 But only God can make a tree.
 -Joyce Kilmer, "Trees," 1914

Reader: In order to serve God, one needs access to the enjoyment of the beauties of nature - meadows full of flowers, majestic mountains, flowing rivers. For all these are essential to the spiritual development of even the holiest of people. (Rabbi Abraham Ben Maimonides)

Leader: We now partake in our third cup of wine symbolizing the warmth and ripening of summer. We pour half a cup of red wine, and half a cup of white wine to remind us that growth is a gradual process, that although the trees are full and green and the flowers have blossomed, their growth is not complete. So much more will be created; so much more will come to be.

ברוך אתה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן
Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam borei p'ri hagafen
Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Leader: This section of our Seder is called *Beriah* or Creation and is symbolized by the eating fruits that are entirely edible.

Reader: We eat these fruits to remind us of the wholeness of the world, that after each day of creation, God paused, looking at all of his work, and remarking that it was good. As we partake in these fruits we remember that although our lives may feel rushed, we too must pause to look at the wholeness of God's creations and learn to love and appreciate them as well.

Reader: We also take this time to look at the wholeness of our own creations, to examine our relationship with the world, making the necessary changes so that like God, we might call our actions good. Do we recycle? Do we conserve energy? Are we conscious of where our food comes from? What kind of cars do we drive?

We now take a minute to reflect on questions like these and make our own New Year's resolutions.

Everyday Conservation Actions

by Barbara Lerman-Golomb, Director of Education and Outreach, HAZON

Since the "Tu" in Tu B'Shvat stands for the 15th day of Shvat, we would like to offer 15 tree and water conservation tips.

1. Dishtowels...the quicker picker upper.
Use dishtowels instead of paper towels for drying dishes and kitchen spills. Think how many paper towels you need to match the absorbency of only one dishtowel! Set up a simple system: one for spills, one for dishes, one for drying lettuce and other veggies.
2. Think cloth napkins are only for formal dinners? Think again!
You can use cloth napkins for all your meals. Use them with a napkin ring to help identify users for repeated use. By the way...kids rarely use napkins in their school lunches, but if you give them one, they'll throw it away. A cloth napkin in a child's lunch box will most likely go unused, yet saved.
3. Put Your Junk Mail to Work for You!
Instead of discarding junk mail, business mailings or any sheets of paper with only one side of use, use them again for writing drafts. Keep an in-box or recycling receptacle by your printer to hold sheets until you need them.
4. Yo, Yo Wrap!
Save previously used wrapping paper and use it again. Or, use swatches of fabric, newspaper, reusable gift bags or a cloth sack for gifts. If you need to purchase new wrapping paper, make sure it's recycled.
5. If it's Free, It's for Me!
Use toilet tissue and tissues with at least 50% "post consumer recycled content" free of dyes, perfumes and dioxin. (The process of bleaching paper to whiten it is responsible for creating the toxic substance, dioxin.) Stock up

- on handkerchiefs. Tip: Unused, vintage hankies are great finds in flea markets or antique shops!
6. It's in the bag. The cloth bag, that is.
Keep cloth bags in your car, with your bicycle or by your front door for all your shopping needs instead of taking a paper bag, or plastic bags (made of non-renewable sources).
 7. The Three P's--Precycle, Practical, Preservation
Buy items with little or no packaging or in bulk that you can stock in your own containers. Most stores carrying bulk items give money back for using your own bags or jars. Buy food in cardboard packaging that can be recycled or that has already been recycled (it's gray inside). Tip: Create file folders and post cards from used cereal boxes.
 8. Drink to Your Health
Keep a commuter mug in your car, in your backpack, at your office for a fill up of your favorite beverage instead of taking a new paper cup.
 9. Wood That's Too Good (to waste)
Avoid items made from rain forest woods such as rosewood, mahogany, teak, or ebony.
 10. Be Cool Keep a bottle of
cold water in the refrigerator instead of wasting water down the drain waiting for it to get cold.
 11. Don't Kick the Bucket
Keep a bucket in your shower (or outside to collect rainwater). Transfer it over to watering cans or jugs to water your indoor and outdoor plants.
 12. Go With the Flow
Take a shower instead of a bath and buy a low-flow shower head and a sink aerator for your kitchen or bathroom faucet to conserve water. To find these items, contact your local hardware store or visit www.greenpages.org or the Real Goods catalog at www.realgoods.com to check out their products for a healthy home and planet.
 13. Dear John
Use a jug filled with water or stones to take up space in the toilet tank or buy a special "toilet dam" so that less water is wasted. Or, conserve your flushes.
 14. Clean and Green
Don't waste water down the drain while washing dishes. Fill the sink up instead. Turn off the water while brushing your teeth and washing your face.
 15. A Healthy Lunch box
A reusable lunch box or cloth bag; a thermos; reusable storage containers, food that needs no packaging (e.g., fresh fruit) and a cloth napkin. Replace paper plates with reusables for picnics or casual meals.
 16. PLANT A TREE!

Leader: The final section of our Seder is called *atzilut* or nobility and it is the only section of the Seder when we do not eat fruit. Judaism teaches us that taste is intimately tied to this world. *Atzilut* is a reminder of our transcendence from this world, a chance to experience heaven if only for a short while.

Reader: The Talmud teaches us that “the apple tree has the fragrance of the Garden of Eden and the fragrance of Garden of Eden was that of a field of apples.” (*Ta’anit* 29b). Each day we must pause from our lives to notice the small wonders of earth, the smell of dew, the color of the changing leaves, the sounds of birds migrating south for winter. Only then will we know God’s paradise and experience that which lays hidden in the crevices of our world.

[Pass around a box of spices or a scented fruit]

ברוך אתה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מִיְנֵי בְשָׁמִים

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam borei minei v’samim
Blessed are you, Adonai our God, who creates different types of spices

Reader: The tree of life has five hundred thousand kinds of fruit, each differing in taste. The appearance of one fruit is not like the appearance of the other, and the fragrance of one fruit is not like the fragrance of the other. Clouds of glory hover above the tree, and from the four directions winds blow on it, so that its fragrance is wafted from world’s end to world’s end.” (Yalkut Bereishit 2)

Leader: From the very beginning of the creation of the world, God was busy planting, so when you enter the land you too shall plant. (Leviticus Rabba 25.3)

Together, we will now plant parsley which will be used on Passover.

Together: O God, we thank You for earth and seed; for all things that grow. We thank You that we are Your partners in planting.
We praise You, Adonai our God, for small seeds and rich earth.
(Plant seeds)

Conclusion

Leader: We have now concluded our seder. We have marked the four seasons, and explored how each one is tied to our relationship with God and to the physical world around us. As we finish, we remember that we have an obligation to care for the earth, to utilize it while at the same time preserving it for future generations. May the New Year be a year of growth; may it be a year of renewal; and may all our eyes be opened to the wonders of creation. May we come to appreciate everything that is around us and may we learn to build a brighter and better future for the generations to come.

Sing Together: Turn, Turn, Turn

Words-adapted from The Bible, book of Ecclesiastes
 Music-Pete Seeger

To Everything (Turn, Turn, Turn)
 There is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn)
 And a time to every purpose, under Heaven

A time to be born, a time to die
 A time to plant, a time to reap
 A time to kill, a time to heal
 A time to laugh, a time to weep

To Everything (Turn, Turn, Turn)
 There is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn)
 And a time to every purpose, under Heaven

A time to build up, a time to break down
 A time to dance, a time to mourn
 A time to cast away stones, a time to gather stones together

To Everything (Turn, Turn, Turn)
 There is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn)
 And a time to every purpose, under Heaven

A time of love, a time of hate
 A time of war, a time of peace
 A time you may embrace, a time to refrain from embracing

To Everything (Turn, Turn, Turn)
 There is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn)
 And a time to every purpose, under Heaven

A time to gain, a time to lose
 A time to rend, a time to sew
 A time for love, a time for hate
 A time for peace, I swear it's not too late

Together:

L'Shana tova uv'racha p'ri ut'nuvah
 May the year be fruitful and blessed!

May the Jerusalem of our souls be rekindled
 As we open our hearts to the world,
 And take good care of God's world.
 L'Shana Tova!

Appendix A

Citations

“Tu BiSh’vat Seder – Compiled by Marc Katz and Debra Eichenbaum”; A publication of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism in partnership with the North American Federation of Temple Youth:

1. Trees, Creation, and Creativity: A Hillel Tu BiSh’vat Seder (Publication by the Hillel Foundation)
2. The Tu BiSh’vat Seder (Publication by The Pirchei Shoshanim Shulchan Aruch Project-2006)
3. THE TREES ARE DAVENING: A Tu BiSh’vat Haggadah Celebrating Our Kinship with the Trees and the Earth- Dr. Barak Gale and Dr. Ami Goodman (Publication by the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life)
4. Tu B’shvat Seder - Rivka Zuckerman and Ilana Sobel (Publication by Hagshama Department of the World Zionist Organization.)
5. Seder Tu Bishvat: The Festival of Trees – Adam Fisher (Publication by Central Conference of American Rabbis – 1989)

“Tu B’Shevat Social Action Holiday Guide” – Compiled by Union for Reform Judaism and Religious Action Center.

“COEJL Tu B’Shvat Haggadah” – Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life

“A Seder for Tu B’Shvat” – The Tu B’Shvat Seder Toolkit, version 1.2 , Ari Davidow

Appendix B -

10 Human Plagues

Climate Change – Burning fossil fuels releases greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere, raising our global temperature, increasing the risk of coastal flooding, and threatening nearly every part of our lives.

Deforestation – Trees are our most important natural resource yet a forest area the size of 20 football fields is lost every minute to paper production.

Water Pollution –The United States dumps billions of tons of chemicals into our water every single day, causing health problems for millions of Americans. In fact, scientists predict that each year 7 million Americans become sick from contaminated tap water.

Lead Poisoning - Lead enters our ecosystem through industrial air pollution, corroded piping, and faulty irrigation practices. Without intervention lead can cause kidney problems and developmental disorders in children and can lead to stillbirths and miscarriages in pregnant women.

Habitat Destruction – The leading threats to the diversity of species in the United States are habitat destruction and degradation. In fact 80% of the coastline in the lower 48 states has been developed, thus increasing the rate of extinction to 1000 times the background rate.

Mountaintop Removal –Mountaintop removal strip mining is the practice of blasting off the tops of mountains in order to mine coal deposits underneath. When it rains the residue from these mountains form sludge causing huge mudslides in West Virginia and polluting drinking water.

Radiation Poisoning – Each year countless numbers of Americans are exposed to higher than normal levels of radiation due to nuclear waste and improper x-ray technology. Even small levels of exposure can cause cancer and immune system malfunctions.

Factory Farms –According to the EPA, waste from hogs, chicken, and cattle has polluted 35,000 miles of rivers in 22 states and contaminated water in 17 states. Additionally, factory farms do not treat God's creatures with the respect that Judaism demands that they receive.

Over fishing – Our current fishing practices are decimating fish populations, throwing off natural food chains and allowing evasive species like algae to bloom. In fact recent studies have shown that if current fishing practices continue all fish stocks could collapse in 50 years.

Acid Rain – Acid rain is caused when human chemicals like sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) mix with water vapor in the earth's atmosphere and return as precipitation, thereby destroying forests, poisoning wildlife, and affecting human health.

Appendix C

For More Information

To learn more about forests, contact RAC Legislative Assistant Marc Friend at mfriender@rac.org or 202-387-2800, or visit the following websites:

- <http://www.rac.org> The Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism
- <http://www.coejl.org> The Coalition on The Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL)
- <http://www.americanlands.org/> American Lands
- <http://www.earthjustice.org/index-1.html> Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund
- <http://www.sierraclub.org/forests/> The Sierra Club
- <http://www.fs.fed.us/> The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Forest Service
- <http://www.wilderness.org/> - The Wilderness Society
- <http://www.npca.org/> - National Parks Conservation Association
- <http://www.nrdc.org/land/forests/> - The National Resource Defense Council forest page