

A Seder for Tu Bishvat

Midrash suggests that one of the ways we learn to walk in God's path is to plant trees. Each tree is home to birds, insects, other plants and organisms and many animals. A tree is a world in itself. With each tree that we plant, we are essentially saving a world. Thus, we see Tu Bishvat as a holiday of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). (adapted from *Vayikra Rabbah 25:3*)

New Israel Fund Introduction

For most of us Tu Bishvat is a time to reflect on our relationship and treatment of the environment- locally, but also in Israel. Although biblical festivals have some agriculture aspects to them, Tu Bishvat gives us a very special opportunity to engage with environmental issues in Israel. For years the focus was on tree planting and water scarcity. But is there more to it than trees and water?

In this Tu BiShvat Seder, we at New Israel Fund would like to explore the concept of **Environmental Justice** in Israel through some different aspects of Israeli society and stories reflecting a few of today's environmental challenges in Israel.

New Israel Fund's support to the Israeli environmental movement aims to strengthen and professionalise the movement, educate the public and promote sustainable growth and living while emphasising environmental justice.

If you wish to receive further information on the stories included and on any other issues that New Israel Fund is involved with, please do not hesitate to contact Amit at amit@uknif.org.

As Tu B'shvat is the New Year for the trees, we wish to take this opportunity of wishing you Shana Tova.

The challenge of Tu B'shvat – Environmental Justice

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services” (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25)

Israel is a country that has always faced unique environmental issues. Israelis have long had to balance growth with preservation of the country's ancient archaeological treasures, as well as developing both industry and agriculture in an arid landscape where water is precious and scarce. Today, environmental concerns in Israel, as in the rest of the world, are multiplying and becoming more urgent with the passage of time. In the past decade, consumption of electricity and cars have dramatically increased the carbon monoxide levels which, in addition to adding to global climate change concerns, have spurred an increase in respiratory illness and cancers. Irresponsible agricultural policies and industrial controls have placed water sources at risk, and once out-of-the-way open spaces are being devoured by unfettered development. And as with other areas of the world, environmental degradation disproportionately affects those on the lowest rungs of the socio-economic ladder.

This is what **Environmental Justice** is all about- the fair distribution of environmental burdens and resources i.e. not harming weakened populations by dumping rubbish near them, or building parks only in rich areas. It is also recognising the inter-connectedness of society, environment and policies and thus also strengthening democracy, equality and sustainability.

General Introduction

Tu Bishvat is the new year for trees. While it may not feel like spring, medieval mystics taught that on the 15th of the month of Shevat, the sap begins to flow within the trees and plants of the land of Israel—invisible to the human eye, but marking the beginning of spring nonetheless.

In the 16th century in northern Israel, in the town of Tzfat, the Jewish mystics created the Tu Bishvat seder. They recognized the many and varied dimensions of God's creation and used the fruits of Israel to symbolize their existence. The seder is divided into four sections, each containing a different juice and a plate of fruit, nuts or seeds. The fruit we will eat falls into three categories and represents three types of people; those who are good through and through (fully edible), those who seem good on the outside but are hard inside (fruits with inedible stones), and those who may have a tough exterior, but are sweet and good underneath (an inedible peel or shell with tasty fruit or nut underneath).

As with a Passover seder there are 4 cups of wine. Tied to these there are also four kabbalistic principles present through the seder; Asia, Yetsira, Bri'ah and Atzilut - through these principles we will look to NIF projects making a difference to the land of Israel today.

As it is a time to celebrate the land of Israel, fruits and foods that fall into the category of the Seven Species found in Deuteronomy are highlighted in green.

The First Cup white grape juice or wine. This cup represents winter, when nature is asleep. The earth can be snow covered, taking a rest from blooming and blossoming.

oŠg kŠF|n UbŠC r©jŠC rαJ£t, oŠkIg¨v
l†kαn Ubh¥vO;t wv v¨, ©t QUrŠC
oh|s...gIn UbŠk iα, |, ³u. uh¨, I%|n%
Ub¨JŠs|e±u iIJŠk kŠF|n Ub¨nŠnIrtu
oIh, v®Z©v yŠcŠa^c U"y oIh, αt,
iIG¨G%k oh°b©n±zU oh°d©j v¨jŠn|a%k
¨, Ša©s|e Ub¨, It±u¨, Šr©jŠC UbŠc h^F
.v¨n¨s£t¨v, <FŠr^c%k v²h¨sIv±u
vŠK^pŠ,
.Ub¨, %k©j±b|v iIG¨G%cU v¨jŠn|a%k
WαJŠs¨e h¥s...gInU oh|n<g¨v kŠF|n
.oh°b©n±z©v±u k¥t¨rŠa°h J¥s©eŠn
v¨, ©t QUrŠC
/itp²D©v h|r%p t¥rIC oŠkIg¨v l†kαn
Ubh¥vO;t wv v¨, ©t QUrŠC

TRANSLATE AND TRANSLITERATE

Blessed are You, Eternal our
 God, Ruler of the universe,
 who has kept us alive and
 sustained us and enabled us
 to reach this joyous occasion.

Q†kæʁn UbhæÿvO;t
 ²h±h v¨T©t QURŠC
 Ubæ¨n±H|e±u
 Ubæ²h;jʁvʁJ
 oŠkIg¨v
 /v®Z©v i©n±Z<k
 UbæŠgh°D|v±u

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

*With thanks that we are here celebrating Tu Bishvat together,
 we sing:*

How good and how pleasant
 it is when brethren live
 together!
 133:1

Psalm

oh^g²B >v©nU
 cIY >v©n v¯B|v
 s©j²h >o³D
 oh|j©t , †cʁJ

Hi-nay ma tov u-ma na-yim she-vet a-chim gam ya-chad.

The First Fruits

vhag Asia/ Action:

The world of action in the realm of the concrete, the physical, the here and now. At this level the need is greatest for protection, for hard exteriors. It is a risk to let our defenses down and open up, to peel off our protective shells. Being the

level furthest from perfection, this reality is represented by fruits or nuts with an inedible outer shell and an edible inner core.

Orange, Tangerine, Grapefruit, Kiwi, Coconut, Peanut, Walnut, Almond, *Pomegranate*, Banana, Pineapple

blessing over fruit of the tree (excluding Bananas!)

Blessed are you, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the tree

Q†kæʁn UbhæʁvO;t
²h±h v¨T©t QUrŠC
. ‡g¨v h|r%P
t¥rIC 'oŠkIg¨v

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam

borei p'ri ha-eytz

or blessing over fruit of the earth:

Blessed are you, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the earth

Q†kæʁn
UbhæʁvO;t ²h±h
v¨T©t QUrŠC
v¨n¨s£t¨v h|r%P
t¥rIC 'oŠkIg¨v

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam

borei p'ri ha-adamah

New Israel Fund FOCUS

vhag Asia: Breaking through the hard outer shells to real action:

Storms, droughts, water scarcity and other environmental issues are not bound by international borders. They are affecting people throughout the Middle East regardless of their nationality or religion.

New Israel Fund's grantee **EcoPeace /Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME)** is at the forefront of regional environmental cooperation and is a unique NGO with Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian Co-Directors. Their aim is to raise awareness of and offer solutions to water scarcity in the region through its **Good Water Neighbours (GWN)** project.

Their latest remarkable achievement was, in May 2013, to bring Israel and Jordan together to commit to the rehabilitation of the lower Jordan River. The Jordan River Valley, situated in the Great Rift Valley, is of cultural, religious and geographical importance. The river is significant to billions of people from diverse religions and countries worldwide but is presently under threat. In recent decades the water level of the southern Jordan River has dropped dramatically, because the flow of water into it from the Lake Kinneret in Israel and the Yarmuk River which runs along the Israel/Jordan border has been almost totally blocked by dams. The quality of the water has also seriously deteriorated because of the sewage of all the communities along the river has been flowing into it.

As a result of FoEME/GWN campaign, the Israel Water Authority will begin, for the first time, to pump water regularly from Lake Kinneret into the southern Jordan River in an effort to ecologically rehabilitate the river. The hope is that within two years 30 million cubic meters will be pumped to the river. The improvement will be primarily in the quality of the water as part of the agreement is the building of a waste treatment plant which will be treating the sewage that now flows into the river. In the future, treated wastewater will be suitable for agricultural use.

All of these improvements in water quality will translate into an ecological restoration process that will increase biodiversity and protect endangered species in the region. The ultimate purpose of the project is to restore historically valuable ecological habitats and

agricultural spaces while leveraging peace and cooperation along the way.

Long ago, there lived 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."

Honi sat down in the shade of a nearby tree to take a short nap. But his short nap lasted 70 years! When he awoke, he was surprised to see a full-grown carob tree where the old man had planted a seed just before Honi fell asleep. An elderly man was picking its fruit. "Are you the man who planted this tree?" asked Honi.

"No," replied the man. "My grandfather planted it for me." And so Honi learned the importance of planting seeds for future generations. (Adapted from Babylonian Talmud Taanit 23a)

The Second Cup This one is white juice or wine with a little red mixed in. It represents the spring approaching and the colours of the season changing as the snow melts and flowers begin to show themselves.

The Second Fruits

vrhmh Yetzira - Formation: The Kabbalists defined the realm of Yetzira as one of physicality. But it is also the realm of the internal, of emotions. The need for protection and

reinforcement is a matter of core, hidden emotions. It is represented by fruits with edible outer flesh, and inedible cores such as:

Peach, Plum, Avocado, **Date, Olive**, Cherry, Apricot

blessing over fruit of the tree (excluding Bananas!)

Blessed are you, Eternal our
God, Ruler of the Universe,
who creates the fruit of the
tree

Q†kææn UbhœÿvO;t
²h±h v¨T©t QURŠC
. †g¨v h|r‰P
tÿrIC 'oŠkIg¨v

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam

borei p'ri ha-eytz

or blessing over fruit of the earth:

Blessed are you, Eternal our
God, Ruler of the Universe,
who creates the fruit of the
earth

Q†kææn
UbhœÿvO;t ²h±h
v¨T©t QURŠC
v¨n¨s£t¨v h|r‰P
tÿrIC 'oŠkIg¨v

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam

borei p'ri ha-adamah

New Israel Fund FOCUS

v r h m h Yetzira - Formation: Changing communities at the core



In many ways the environment is an issue which is entirely dependent on political will and agenda. However, this does not mean that civil society cannot contribute to the cause. NIF's grantee, the **Israel Union for Environmental Defence (IUED)**, realised that communities and ordinary citizens can make an important difference.

IUED's **Environment & Community Initiative** empowers communities and local activists with the knowledge, tools and confidence needed to tackle the environmental evils which invade their towns and neighbourhoods.

The inspiring story of the Kiryat Sefer neighbourhood in Tel Aviv is just one of the amazing success stories of IUED. Central Tel Aviv is known for its density of population and the lack of public spaces. When Tel Aviv municipality decided to build 10 luxury residential towers and offices in the last open space in the neighbourhood, IUED and the community were fighting to stop it and instead demanded from the municipality establish a public park.

They called their campaign '**Green instead of Concrete**' and it took them over 10 years to change the decision but in 2009 the municipality accepted their claims and decided to build a park over the whole space. You can see the amazing transformation of that space in the pictures.

The IUED's expert team offers free legal, planning and technical advice and negotiates practical and sustainable solutions. Over the years IUED's sought-after expertise has enabled members from all spheres of Israeli society, Jews, Arabs & Bedouins, to take active measures to improve the environmental conditions in the walls of their communities.

The Third Cup This is mostly red wine or juice, with a little white mixed in. It reminds us of summertime, and flowers in full bloom.

The Third Fruits

vrhc- BriaH - Creation: Of the three lower worlds this one is closest to the state or pure spirit. It is represented by fruits which are edible and enjoyable both inside and out, such as: **Grape**, Raisin, **Fig**, Cranberry, Apple, Pear, Strawberry

blessing over fruit of the tree (excluding Bananas!)

Blessed are you, Eternal our	Q+kææn UbhœÿvO;t
God, Ruler of the Universe,	²h±h v¨T©t QUrŠC
who creates the fruit of the	. †g¨v h r‰P
tree	tÿrIC 'oŠkIg¨v

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam

borei p'ri ha-eytz

or blessing over fruit of the earth:

Blessed are you, Eternal our	Q+kææn
God, Ruler of the Universe,	UbhœÿvO;t ²h±h
who creates the fruit of the	v¨T©t QUrŠC
earth	v¨n¨s£t¨v h r‰P
	tÿrIC 'oŠkIg¨v

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam

borei p'ri ha-adamah

New Israel Fund FOCUS

vthrc- BriaH - Creation: Breathing in a pure spirit:

The air we breathe is being taken for granted by so many of us. When did we last stop to think about the quality of the air? Do we accept air pollution as an unchangeable fact in the western world?

In order to change this reality, New Israel Fund's grantee 'Green Course' is relentlessly campaigning to raise awareness and remind the government, local authorities and the citizens how precious the air we breathe is. This is the story of their campaign for reducing air pollution in Haifa.

For years, factories in Haifa's port have been polluting the air. Cancer and cardiac ailments levels in the area are 23% above the nationwide average.

Green Course's Clean Air Campaign in Haifa's industrial port area aided in raising public awareness of the issue and helped put forceful demands to the municipality. Green Course both monitors the activity of the local municipality and has begun working with the Ministry of Environmental Protection to urge it to tighten regulation. In 2011 they helped the Clean Air Bill become legislation and are now working to enforce it by participating in hearings of the Ministry of the Environment and hold meetings with local residents to promote issues of clean air (e.g. legislation, enforcement). They also keep high pressure on the polluting companies for the benefit of the Haifa area residents and the environment as a whole.

Or Ben-zvi Shoham, the Clean Air Campaign coordinator from the Haifa University has said, "Not enough has been done by the municipality to track and enforce the limits of pollution distribution in regard to the factories in Haifa Bay."

Public and educational activities followed by local and national coverage in the media, have increased the pressure on the municipality to address the issue. Green Course's determination of

bringing public awareness about the pollution problem is beginning to pay off.

'Green Course' is Israel's largest environmental volunteer organisation, with thousands of student volunteers in 19 campuses across Israel. Through 'Green Course', students are active in education and media projects to raise public awareness for environmental issues. Projects include work with schools, interacting with other Israeli environmental groups, citizen action and youth groups as well as work with students on issues relating to Israeli environmental sustainability. In addition, their leadership training program provides students with the tools they need to become the future environmental leadership of Israel.

Green Course has emerged over recent years as Israel's main platform for environmental activism in communities across the country.

The Fourth Cup:

This one is all red. It represents the rich and dark fall autumn colours. Leaves are changing, crops are growing, and the trees are filled with blossoms.

It is stated in the Zohar: "Wine has two colors -- white and red. White is from the right side [of kindness]; red from the left side [of strength and judgment]".

, ukhmg - Atzilut: Magnanimity

For the Kabbalists this realm was the world of pure spirit. We all must relate to both the physical, and the intangible. This realm is about our highest selves; where we are not eating, where we are not thinking of our bodies, but in which we have all that is necessary to bring in pure holiness while grounded in our bodies and this physical realm. Though our earthly realm is sacred, this realm floats above it. As we try to grasp the meaning of this for us in our own lives, we celebrate the trees as those before us have, trees which symbolise life, a life which should be without shells, but of replenishing the earth, and keeping in balance the needs of both humans and nature.

Blessed are you, Eternal our
God, Ruler of the Universe,
who creates the fruit of the
vine

Q†kœœn UbhœÿvO;t
²h±h v¨T©t QURŠC
i†pœ²D©v h|r‰P
tÿrIC 'oŠkIg¨v

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam
borei p'ri ha-gafen.*

New Israel Fund FOCUS

, ukhmg - Atzilut: Magnanimity: Meeting each other with a pure, generous and open spirit

Many perceive agriculture as a symbol of the very foundations on which the State of Israel was established. However, exploiting migrant workers in agriculture is a reality that is hiding behind this Zionist ideal. It is a reality that is reinforced by the inaction of the authorities.

Approximately 24,600 migrant workers in Israel are employed in the agricultural sector. Each year New Israel Fund's grantee, Kav LaOved (Hotline for Refugees and Migrants), assists approximately 3,000 agricultural workers who are deprived of fair employment terms and conditions. Kav LaOved raise awareness amongst the workers and put pressure on employers to grant workers full rights and conditions. They also lobby authorities to enforce the law in many cases.

For example, a recent Kav LaOved visit to Moshav Hatseva in the Arava region, showed a worrying picture of workers living in unsuitable accommodation that could reach temperatures of up to 50 degrees in the summer, working illegal hours with no extra pay and not being provided with protective clothing when dealing with pesticides.

Kav LaOved empowers workers by educating them about their basic employment rights through the distribution of informational flyers, encouraging dialogue and conducting field visits to reach out to workers in peripheral areas. Most importantly it is now evident that workers are aware of their rights and feel confident to demand them.

Similarly, Shatil (NIF's Initiative for Social Change), conducted training workshop for Bedouin women who work as contractual farm workers. The women learnt what a salary slip is (something they did not receive); that Israel has a minimum wage and laws that detail how

many hours a person can work (they were working from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m.); and that their employer must give them protective equipment when they work with pesticides (they didn't even receive gloves). Ms Amal Alnasasrah Alabid testified: "Since I began participating in Shatil courses four years ago, I'm a changed woman," she says. "Shatil gave me the courage, strength and self-confidence to pursue my dream of advancing my community."

"If any Muslim plants any plant and a human being or an animal eats of it, he will be rewarded as if he had given that much in charity." (Sahih Al-Bukhari, 8:41)

"If the Hour (Judgment Day) is about to be established and one of you is holding a palm shoot, let him take advantage of even one second before the Hour is established to plant it." (Hadith)

Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai taught that as important as the Messianic Age is, if you are planting a tree when someone tells you that the Messiah has arrived, you should finish your planting, and then go to greet the Messiah (Avot de Rabbi Nathan 31b).

As we think of the land of Israel, we are reminded that it is a place still struggling in war and strife, and that trees have been abused within this conflict by both sides.

As we pray for peace around the world, we particularly think of the Holy Land. The following prayer was written by Rabbis for Human Rights as part of their olive tree planting campaign in the West Bank:

May You guide us in the paths of peace and give us the insight to see Your Image in every human being, whether Jew, Muslim or Christian, whether Israeli or Palestinian. Guide us all “to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God” • (Micah 6:8) and help us realize that “we were not brought into this world for conflict and dissension, nor hatred, jealousy, harassment or bloodshed. Rather, we were brought into this world in order to recognize You, may You be blessed forever.” • (R. Nachman of Bratzlav)

We end with the blessing of thanks for the food and wine we have shared.

We recite together

May it be Your will that the trees whose fruit we have eaten and blessed be filled with the strength to flourish and grow during the coming year for goodness and for blessing, for life and for peace.

Conclusion

Hope, like trees, starts out in little packages and blossoms if nurtured, just like people. In every seed there is the promise of new life. May we, in our lives, plant seeds of growth, care, wisdom, friendship and peace.

!vŠcUb\$,U h|r%P vŠf`r%cU vŠcIy v²b`J%k
L'shanah tovah oo'veracha p'ri oo'te'nuvah

May the year be fruitful and blessed!