

# The Significance of Tu B'Shevat

## A Brief Overview

We will outline the Halachic Significance and understanding of how one goes about observing **Tu B' Shevat** and how we can pass down the importance of this day to our children for the generations to come.

THE FIRST MISHNA IN ROSH HASHANA BRINGS DOWN THAT

*“There are four New Years” etc.*

*“On the Fifteenth of Shevat (according to Bais Hillel) is the New Year for Trees.”*

## The Laws

Starting with the *Gemara* on *Daf* 14a through 15b the *Halachas* are brought down including the impact this day has on the type of *Esrog* you will have on *Succos*. It is apparent that the *Rishonim* intended that *Tu B' Shevat* should be treated as a *Chag* as it is counted as one of the four New Years.

- A) Just like on three of the New Years a *Taanis* is forbidden (The first of *Nissan*, The first of *Elul* and the first of *Tisbri*), so to the fourth which is the Fifteenth of *Shevat* it is forbidden to fast.
- B) Even a *Chasan* on the day of his Wedding is not to fast on *Tu B' Shevat*. When the Community desires to institute a fast on a Monday, Thursday and Monday, they should push off their fast so a fast should not be decreed on *Tu B' Shevat*.
- C) *Tachanun* is not said on *Tu B' Shevat* and *Mincha* on the day before.
- D) We also don't say *Kaal Erech Apiem* on Monday and Thursday in addition to not saying *Av HaRachamim* on *Shabbos* as well as *Tzedkesecha Tzedek* by *Mincha* on *Shabbos*.
- E) Many are not accustomed to give Eulogy's (*Hespeidim*).

## Tu B' Shevat in Halacha Today

The *Rosh Hashana* or the New Year for Trees acts as the boundary or cut off date between one year and the next since most of the rains of the previous year, in *Eretz Yisrael* have already fallen. A certain percentage of the fruit have reached the stage where it has begun to ripen. This is defined as from the time of blossoming until the fruit has reached one third of its full growth. Fruit which have reached this stage are attributed to the previous year. Any new blossoming of fruit after this day falls into the category of the New Year. As a result *Tu B' Shevat* is a decisive factor in determining the Laws of *Maaser* and *Orlah*.

*The Fifteenth of Shevat is the midpoint of winter and we are looking forward to the spring. The sap of the trees is beginning to flow and rise in the roots of the trees, though unseen by man and as a result the fruits are manifesting their first stage of formation.*

The *Rosh Hashana* for Trees is a time of *Tefilla* (Prayer). We joyously celebrate this day in asking our creator to continue to shower his benevolence on his children the *Bnei Yisrael* as well as the rest of his creations in the world as it says in *Birvat HaMazon* “**Hazon es HaOlam Kulo Betuvo**” (He Nourishes the entire world in his goodness).

## The Tu B'Shevat Seder



Despite the fact that *Tu B' Shevat* is discussed in both the *Mishna* and *Gemara* there is very little information available about the Holiday as well as not having a well defined structure to follow it. In the mid 1500's the students of the *Ari*, *Rabbi Isaac Luria Ashkenazi Zt'l* formulated a special *Tu B'Shevat Seder* that was set up along the lines of the *Pesach* (Passover) *Seder*. They wrote a brief pamphlet entitled the **Pri Eitz Hadar** which offers us a structure that provides a positive and enjoyable way to celebrate this spiritual and meaningful holiday. *This is the first stage of the countdown to Pesach which is in exactly 60 days from tonight.*

THE SEDER IS BROKEN DOWN INTO 4 SEQUENCES:  
FOR THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE A COPY OF THE COMPLETE SEDER  
PLEASE CONTACT THE PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM OFFICE: 732-719-4308