



TU BISHVAT HAGGADAH

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WHAT IS TU BISHVAT?

Tu BiShvat (the fifteenth day of the month of Shevat) the New Year for the Trees dates back to talmudic time. It is one of the four “new years” of the Jewish calendar Rosh HaShanah and Nisan (the first month) being the two most prominent. (Excerpted from *The Jewish Holidays* by Michael Strassfeld) Tu BiShvat hearkens back to creation as told in Genesis, where it is written, “And God said, Let the Earth sprout vegetation: seed-bearing plants, fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it” (Genesis 1:11). Several lines later, God created man to “rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on the earth” (Genesis 1:26). The creation of man itself is even connected to the earth, where it is written, “the Lord God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7).

Regardless of your interpretation of the Torah, it is from the very origins of our sacred texts that Jewish teachings connect humankind to the earth we reside in. Fittingly, Tu BiShvat is a holiday to celebrate the fruits we are so blessed to have available for us, to call attention to climate change and our carbon footprint on the earth. This year particularly, we are focused on how we can make our houses more sustainable and minimize the amount we waste by reusing, recycling, and composting everything we currently throw away. We hope that the materials and resources will inspire you to make small, daily changes in your lives.

If you're confused, think of the holiday as Jewish Arbor Day. And hey, confusion is okay, since Tu BiShvat hasn't always been considered a major festival. Since its revival in conjunction with the creation of the modern Jewish State of Israel, Tu BiShvat has been utilized to bring attention to environmental issues, as dictated by a seder (order) to celebrate the holiday. On the following pages is a miniature seder for you to utilize in your chapter, a way to break bread (and fruit!) with brothers and to learn more about how your chapter could make a difference in your world.

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THE ORDER

1. Handwashing
2. The First Cup of Wine
3. The First Fruit
4. The Second Cup of Wine
5. The Second Fruit
6. The Third Cup of Wine
7. The Third Fruit
8. The Meal and Motzi
9. The Fourth Cup of Wine
10. The Fourth Fruit
11. Gold and Blue

Handwashing marks the start of the seder. In water. Just water. Please don't use anything that isn't water. Pour from a bowl two (2) **splashes of warm water** over each of the hands of your brother to your right until all have washed their hands. **You should have poured in total four (4) splashes of water on your bro.** While doing so, recite this blessing:

Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us concerning the washing of the hands.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam, asher kidshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu al netilat yadayim.

“And God said, Let the Earth sprout vegetation: seed-bearing plants, fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it” (Genesis 1:11). The origins of this holiday as we know it today in its modern form come from Tzfat, in Israel. These men of Kabbalah, Jewish mysticism, used fruit to symbolize their existence.

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Speaking of water, did you know that Israel recycles 80% of its water? This makes Israel the country that recycles the highest amount out of any country in the world! Much of this is done through the support of Jewish National Fund and its focus on water recycling, desalination and wastewater management. Although water is not always immediately thought when thinking about the zero waste movement, Israel does a great job at making sure it has the water needed to support the ever growing community and needs.

The First Cup of Wine (or grape juice for you youngins') symbolizes the winter (the season where Tu BiShvat takes place).

Read out loud: We fill our glasses to the top, as our lives are filled with blessings, and we recite the following blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam, borei pri hagafen.

Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, ruler of the universe, who creates fruit of the vine. God created this world for us. For you. Similarly, Alpha Epsilon Pi was created for you, the Jewish college student, to celebrate your identity surrounded by brothers like you. It is up to all of us to take each brother and his individual qualities and to celebrate them just as we celebrate God's creation, whether that means listening to each other more or working together as a family instead of just a fraternity.

The First Fruit eaten during the seder should be hard on the outside and soft on the inside. You can use walnuts, almonds, or even coconuts! The reason we choose a hard shell for this fruit is to symbolize the protection we are given by our earth, but also to remind us to nourish our own strength as human beings and to celebrate our bodies and all their capabilities.

Read out loud: We take our first fruit, hold it in our hands, and appreciate it just as we do our Earth and ourselves, and we say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הָעֵץ

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam, borei pri ha-etz.

TU BISHVAT HAGGADAH

And we say, in English, blessed are you, Adonai, our God, ruler of the universe, who creates fruit of the tree.

As we bless the fruit of the tree, let's celebrate that Israel is one of the few countries in the world that entered the century with a net gain in trees rather than a net loss. Since 1901, JNF has helped Israel plant over 250 million trees. Don't worry, Israel is taking care of your Bar Mitzvah trees just fine!

The Second Cup of Wine is special, as while it is mostly white, there is a little bit of red mixed in. Why is this? Here, the wine serves as a symbol for the passing of seasons. Recite the following and drink up, young lads.

Read out loud: Let us appreciate the changing of seasons and the beauty that accompanies it. Let us also appreciate the transitions in all of our lives, some of us just starting our college careers, and others excitedly and eagerly waiting for it to come to an end. We celebrate and appreciate these changes, and we say say the following blessing:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam, borei pri hagafen.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, ruler of the universe, who creates fruit of the vine.

The Second Fruit should be soft on the outside with a pit on the inside. Olives or dates are the fruits most native to Israel, but hell, why not make like the Allman Brothers and Eat a Peach? The pitted fruit symbolizes the life-sustaining power of our earth. Let it also symbolize how each of us, as brothers of AEPi, have the opportunity to change the way we connect with the earth and make sure we are practicing Tikun Olam and leaving the world a cleaner, more sustainable place than we found it.

Read out loud: We take our second fruit, hold it in our hand with gratitude, and say:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הָעֵץ

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam, borei pri ha-etz.

TU BISHVAT HAGGADAH

Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the tree.

Wine bottle check: Now that we have drunk two cups of wine, it might be time to open another bottle to refill everyone's cup. This would be a great time to make sure that any glass or plastic wine bottles are being recycled. Remember that all plastic or glass wine bottles must be clean in order to be recycled properly! This means they need to be rinsed out and have any labels or stickers removed.

The Third Cup of Wine, just as the second, is a mixture of red and white, this time with a majority red and a small amount of white mixed in. Again, this is to symbolize the change of seasons.

Read out loud: Let us appreciate again the changing of seasons, the creation of seed-bearing fruits and vegetation that sustains us, and the creation of humankind, which has brought us all here today to join together in this meal. And we say...

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam, borei pri hagafen.

Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, ruler of the universe, who creates fruit of the vine. It is said in our Torah, “the LORD God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7). According to Judaism, we come directly from the earth. The word for the first man, Adam (אָדָם) is taken from adama (אֲדָמָה), the ground, where he is created to care for the land, “to till it and tend it” (Genesis 2:15). As brothers, we have a responsibility to care for the earth, to care for the many worlds we live in, and to care also for our brothers.

The Third Fruit does not include a hard outside shell or a pit inside, and is instead completely edible. For this fruit, figs, grapes, and raisins are appropriate. The third fruit symbolizes God's omnipresence and His connection with the earth.

Read out loud: We take our third fruit, hold it in our hand with gratitude, and say:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הָעֵץ

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam, borei pri ha-etz.

TU BISHVAT HAGGADAH

Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, ruler of the universe, who creates fruit of the tree. It is told in the first chapter of Torah that the earth was “unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep” (Genesis 1:1). It was not until the sixth day that God had created everything in the world that would come to be known to humankind. Is this story of creation legitimate? Maybe. Maybe not. But what we can learn from it is largely important in understanding the importance of patience in our brothers. Building our chapters as a strong and competitive force in the Greek community is not easy. It takes time and effort, and it takes the collective effort of everyone, not just one brother, or the Brother-at-Large, the LT Master or the Master.

THE ORDER

It is recommended to eat a vegetarian meal, for obvious reasons (the holiday is centralized around that which the earth gives us). Be it an assortment of the seed-bearing fruits described in Genesis, vegetable lasagna, or maybe an eggplant parmesan. This year, try to have this seder create as little waste as possible. Use non-plastic plates, compost all leftover food and recycle empty jars, bottles and cans.

Before we eat, it is customary to recite a blessing to recognize the meal itself.

Read out loud: Thank you, Adonai, for bringing brothers together for this moment, to break bread together in celebration of this season. And we say:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמּוֹצֵא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam, HaMotzi Lechem Min HaAretz.

Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

YOU MAY NOW EAT THE MEAL!

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The Fourth Cup of Wine is all red, baby! This is to symbolize the idea that God exists everywhere, in everything. Wanna know what else is everywhere? Brotherhood. Brotherhood is everywhere. Yeah. Bet you didn't see that one coming.

Read out loud: Let us appreciate the creation of humankind, of our brothers who sit across the table from us and by our side, the creation that has brought us all here today to join together in this meal. And we say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam, borei pri hagafen.

Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, ruler of the universe, who creates fruit of the vine.

The Fourth Fruit should have a tough outer skin and a soft, sweet interior. For this, consider mangos, bananas, or avocados. This fruit serves to represent the mystery of our world and the mystery inherent within our Torah. Once we peel back the skin of this fruit, we find within it the same sweetness we find when we uncover the secrets of Judaism.

Read out loud: We take our fourth and last fruit, hold it in our hand with gratitude, and say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הָעֵץ

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam, borei pri ha-etz.

Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, ruler of the universe, who creates fruit of the tree.

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Look for the light in each and every one of your Brothers, think not of the shell they hide underneath.

The beauty of the fourth fruit is that it represents us all as people. All of our desires, all of our insecurities, all of our questions and all of our answers. Consider us all to be an orange. Our skin, a shell. In Hebrew we call this *klippah* or קליפה. Skin, in Hebrew, is *Or*, spelled with an Eyin, or עור. When we peel back our skin, our *klippah*, we find within it the sweet fruit. We are tempted, when we see a beaten and bruised orange to assume that its taste will be horrible, disgusting, rotten. This is not the case. In most situations, these are the sweetest of fruits. Sometimes, in life, in our chapters, with our brothers, we fail to see the beauty and the goodness within, because we are so focused on vanity and on what someone should be or should look like. When we peel back the shell, we should seek to find the *Or*, but not עור, instead, אור, which is light. When God creates the world, he separates the darkness, *Choshech* or חשך, from the light or אור.

GOLD & BLUE

(Sung to the tune of Love Me Tender by Elvis Presley)

True to colors gold and blue,
as the heavens above.
Born beneath old NYU,
to thee we give our love.

Gold and blue, gold and blue,
thy colors wave on high.
We will always trust in you,
Alpha Epsilon Pi.

Gold is for the gleaming sun,
of courage, faith, and truth.
Blue is for the heavenly one,
who guides us on our way.

Gold and blue, gold and blue,
thy colors wave on high.
We will always trust in you,
Alpha Epsilon Pi.