

The Daily Portion

- Sivan Rahav Meir

Five Sh'vat Points

Translated by Janine Muller Sherr

1) Earlier this week was Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat, the fifth month of the year.

2) There are many laws and customs observed on Rosh Chodesh: a special Torah reading, the addition of the passage YA'ALEH V'YAVO to the Amida and Birkat HaMazon, and the festive recitation of Hallel. Rosh Chodesh is a day of joy and renewal.

3) Tu BiShvat, which we will celebrate in two weeks (in the middle of the month), is considered a special day. It is known as “the New Year of the Trees”, and it is a day to affirm our deep connection to the land of Israel and its fruit.

4) HaRav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook expressed a beautiful thought about the month of Sh'vat: “The planting of fruit trees on holy ground will sprout hope for many generations.” We have become accustomed to seeing the land of Israel in full bloom. But it is important to remember that throughout thousands of years of exile, our ancestors longed to see the land of Israel blossoming again. When we see the gorgeous trees and flowers that surround us in the Land of Israel, we

must not take this miracle for granted. It is the realization of the dream of generations – a dream that continues to develop and grow.

5) Pay attention to the rhythm of the Jewish calendar: Monday was Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat, in two weeks it will be Tu BiShvat, two weeks later – Rosh Chodesh Adar, two weeks later – Purim, two weeks later – Rosh Chodesh Nissan, and two weeks after that we will arrive at Seder night. The Torah readings of this time of year also depict the process of redemption, the release from servitude to freedom. If only we could truly feel the abundance of all that we experience in nature and in the yearly cycle during this season.

May we merit to grow and blossom in all aspects of our lives and on all levels.

Chodesh tov!

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