

לה"ו PHILOTORAH

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ויהי משה כבדים ויקווצו אבן ושימו תותתיו וישב עליה ואהרן וזור תמכו
בניו מנה אונד ומנה אונד ויהי ידיו אמונה ערבא השמש: שמות ייב

י"ג שבט ה'תשפ"ב ☂ January 14-15, '22

Yerushalayim in/out times for **B'SHALACH - SHIRA**

🕯️ 4:22PM Plag 3:53PM • 🕯️🕯️🕯️ 5:37PM R"ת 6:15PM

For other locales see Z'MANIM link

TU BISHVAT - Sunday night - Monday

CALNOTES



Take a bird to lunch

There is a minhag to feed birds on Erev Shabbat Shira. Doing so is an act of HAKARAT HATOV. From Parshat B'shalach, we owe bird two acknowledgments. 1) Main method of human communication is talking. For birds, it is singing. Bnei Yisrael at the Sea borrowed the bird's special talent to sing praise to HaShem for being saved by the Splitting of the Sea; and 2) the Midrash tells us that Datan & Aviram spread MAHN around the camp on Shabbat morning, to make a liar out of Moshe who told them that the MAHN would not fall on Shabbat. Birds came and ate up the MAHN. So we thank them for both.

TU BISHVAT

T"U BISHVAT (the 15th of Sh'vat), cannot fall on a Sunday or a Friday.

It falls on a Monday - as it does this year - 28% of the time - two days after Shabbat Shira.

If falls on Tuesday, only 4% of the time - 3 days after Shira.

It falls on Wednesday, 18% of the time - 4 days after Shira.

It falls on Thursday, 20% of the time -

sometimes, 2 days before Shira, and sometimes 5 days after Shira.

And it is on Shabbat Shira, 30% of the time.

TU BISHVAT is one of the four Rosh HaShanas in our Calendar. The others are Rosh Chodesh Nisan, Rosh Chodesh Elul, and Rosh Chodesh Tishrei - which we call Rosh HaShana.

Some mitzvot that deal with trees in Eretz Yisrael have TU BISHVAT as a dividing point between the previous year and the current year. Other mitzvot have Rosh HaShana as their turning point.

Rosh Chodesh Elul is the halachic cutoff date related to animals - specifically, the date to determine if a calf, lamb, or kid is considered to be born this year or last year. This is important for the mitzva of Maaseir B'heima.

We do not celebrate or otherwise mark the Rosh HaShana for Maaseir B'heima. But we seem to make a big fuss about Rosh HaShana La'ilanot. How come?

I would say that it is definitely the direct connection to Eretz Yisrael via all the Mitzvot HaT'luyot BaAretz. Even in Chutz LaAretz - probably, especially in Chutz LaAretz, TU BISHVAT is a way to identify with the

Land of Israel. And here in the Land, TU BISHVAT is a way to strengthen one's feelings for the Land.

But there is another reason. The meat of animals gets a Shehakol b'racha, like so many other things. And that is the only b'racha that does not connect directly to the Land.

All other five b'rachot for food are directly connected to the ground. Vegetables, fruit, products made with flour, including, of course, bread, and wine.

Connected to the ground as they are, these b'rachot are said over foods that come from the ground - any ground, all over the world.

But they connect more to the Land of Israel. The Torah's mitzva of Birkat HaMazon is to eat, be satisfied, and bless G-d for the Land of Israel. Sure, people say b'rachot wherever they live. But Eretz Yisrael is The Place we are meant to be and where mitzvot are observed in a more significant way.

But there is more. Tomatoes are fruits of the ground. Technically, so are Oranges. They grow on trees which grow in the ground.

Chazal could have kept vegetables and fruit in one category, and specializing wine, bread, and grain products.

But they gave trees a special status. Yes, dates are technically fruits of the ground, but only technically.

Fruit trees and their fruits are so much more than veggies.

There is a bracha upon seeing fruit trees in blossom in Nisan. There is a bracha for seeing a magnificent forest. Five of the Seven Species with which Eretz Yisrael is described. Trees give us oxygen to breathe. (Plants do too, but trees, much more so.) Trees are homes to birds and other animals. Trees provide shade. They prevent soil erosion. They give us wood and paper. Fruit trees are extra-protected from destruction.

Part of all this is KI HAADAM EITZ HASADEH, for man is the tree of the field.

We slaughter animals and eat their meat. They are gone. But pick fruit off a tree and next season, we get more. Trees keep on giving.

Grapes are fruits; they give us wine. Olives are fruits; they give us olive oil. Both of which have a special place in the Avoda in the Beit HaMikdash. (Yes, so do animals, but...)

Some of the above or all of the above, contribute to an excitement we feel towards trees and the Land of Israel.

That's (part of) why we celebrate TU BISHVAT.