

# KOL MEVASSER

## Rabbi's Message Tu Bishbat, The Transformation of a Forgotten Holiday

A casual Google search for the 15th of Shebat demonstrates the popularity that the “New Year of the Trees” enjoys among the Jewish people. Between the English spellings of “Tu Bishvat” and “Tu B’shevat” there are nearly a million hits, while a Hebrew search turns up a further six hundred and fifty thousand.

Yet if we turn back the clock beyond the “early modern period” of history (16th-18th centuries), Tu Bishbat was hardly noticed in the lives of most Jews beyond the pietists of Ashkenaz, who were then the clear minority of the world Jewish population. So little did the date register in people’s minds that even major anthologies of rabbinic literature on Jewish holidays skip Tu Bishbat entirely, jumping straight from Hanukkah to Purim.

So, what happened? How could a holiday become so famous from such humble origins? A look into Jewish history reveals that the changing status of Tu Bishbat has followed many important developments in our global situation, and in a sense we can view the holiday as a mirror to the progression of our national aspirations and values.



In the ancient world of pre-expulsion Erets Yisrael, Tu Bishbat played an important role in the laws of agriculture in the Holy Land. Many Biblical commandments depend on the ages of fruit trees or the specific year in which a fruit was grown, and hence the need for a “Rosh Hashanah” for trees. These include Orlah (not eating fruit from a tree for

the first three years after planting), several types of Terumot (heave offerings) and Ma’aserot (tithes) and, according to some opinions, Shebi’it (fruit grown during a sabbatical year).

After the exile from Erets Yisrael, there was much less practical significance to a date like this since the majority of the Jewish community lived abroad. While many halakhic decisors forbade fasting on the day because of its status as a “New Year,” it essentially fell by the wayside for several centuries. Apart from a few references in the Talmudic and Geonic periods, the day had no significant ritual life until the Haside Ashkenaz (a 12th-century pietistic movement) resurrected it as a day for eating dried fruits.

In the 16th century, when Kabbalism took on new life in Ottoman Safed, we see the modern

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## Parashat Beshalah

*Torah:* Ex. 13:17–17:16, 116 Pesukim  
Hertz 265–281; Stone 366–393  
*Haftarah:* Judg. 5:1–31  
Hertz 283–287, Stone 1153–1154  
*Tefillot:* Mashib Haruah, Birkat Halebanah

## KJ Schedule

### Ereb Shabbat

*Friday, January 22nd*

Shaharit ..... 6:25 am  
Minha..... 5:00 pm  
**Shabbat Candle Lighting 4:55 pm**  
Arbit / Kabbalat Shabbat.... 5:30 pm

### Yom Shabbat

*Saturday, January 23rd*

Shaharit / Morning Prayer.. 8:30 am  
Keri’at HaTorah ..... 10:15 am  
Musaf ..... 11:30 am  
  
Minhah..... 4:30 pm  
Se’udah Shelisheet..... 5:15 pm  
  
Arbit ..... 5:45 pm  
Habdallah ..... 5:59 pm

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# Shabbat Kiddush

is sponsored  
in loving memory of

Shaul Saberi, z"l

by Simon Saberi  
& Family

Thank You

Mrs. Hannie Kelly

for sponsoring the delicious  
food & refreshments at this Sunday's  
**Tu Bishbat Seder & Celebration**  
for families and the KJ community

Thank You

The Board of Directors would like to  
express their thanks and gratitude to  
**The Ironi and Kamara Families**

for the significant contribution  
they have made in loving memory of  
**Mr. & Mrs.**

**Menashe & Marcel Kamara, z"l**  
that will be dedicated by naming our  
synagogue sanctuary in their names.

## KJ Schedule

(continued)

### Weekdays

*Sunday, January 24th*

Shaharit ..... 7:30 am

Talmud Torah & Sunday School ..... 10:00 am

**Tu Bishbat Family Celebration ..... 12 noon**

*Monday, January 25 to Friday, January 29*

Shaharit ..... 6:25 am

### Ereb Shabbat

*Friday, January 29th*

Shaharit ..... 6:25 am

Minha ..... 5:00 pm

**Shabbat Candle Lighting ..... 5:01 pm**

Arbit / Kabbalat Shabbat ..... 5:30 pm



Norma & Sam Dabby  
Jewish Education Center

**Kahal Joseph  
Talmud Torah**

**Friends Creativity  
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**For information contact  
Mrs. Hanna Elkouby, Director  
424-283-0893**

### Refuah Shelemah

Abe Abraham • Moselle Amron  
Mordechai Cohen • Esther Duke  
Sassoon Ezra • Miriam bat Yetta  
Sylvia Cohen • Tilda Levy • Sally Amron  
Maurice Ovadia • Florice Newberry

## In Memoriam

We remember yahrzeit anniversaries from  
January 23 to 30, 2016. It is customary to  
light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka &  
attend Shabbat services.

### 13 Shebat / Shabbat, January 23rd

Sheila Cohen *Sulha Khatoon bat Rivka*  
Nanejan Davoudian *Nanejan bat Hacham Mo-  
la Rabbi*  
Alex Sassoon

### 14 Shebat / Sunday, January 24th

Shaul Saberi  
Albert Harry Saltoun *Avdala ben Eliyahu*

### 15 Shebat / Monday, January 25th

Ezekiel Albert *Yehezkel ben Abdullah*  
David Sarraf *David ben Ezra*  
Joseph Mussry

### 16 Shebat / Tuesday, January 26th

Yehudah Hai Judah *Yehudah Hai Yehudah*  
Menashe Sarraf *Menashe ben Yousef*  
Yehudah Sarraf *Yehudah ben Mordechai*

### 17 Shebat / Wednesday, January 27th

Simon Irani *Shimon ben Eliyahu*  
Ashraf Nassi

### 18 Shebat / Thursday, January 28th

Manachi Kemareh *Yehezkel ben Abdullah*  
Raphael Mizrahie *Raphael Hai ben Eliyahu*  
Mordehai

### 19 Shebat / Friday, January 29th

Doris Shemtov David *Doris bat Kahala*  
Sassoon Moshe Sassoon *Sasson ben Moshe*

### 20 Shebat / Shabbat, January 30th

Edward David *Ezra ben Meir Shemtov*  
Georgette Solomon

## Rabbi's Message

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"Tu Bishbat Seder" for the first time. By using this custom to connect Jewish hearts to the Land of Israel, the Great Redemption of the Jewish people would be hastened, and what better way to do it than through enjoying the fruits of Erets Yisrael? Moreover, an old rabbinic tradition held that the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was an etrog tree, so by consuming fruits in groups of 10 to symbolize the Kabbalistic "Tree of Life," we would create a "tikkun" (restitution) for eating from the opposite tree in the Garden of Eden.

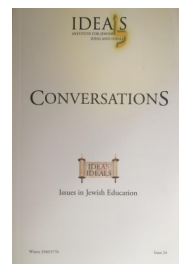
The first textual source that we have of the Tu Bishbat Seder is the pamphlet "Peri Ets Hadar," named for the etrog tree. It establishes the rituals that we now recognize for Tu Bishbat: 4 cups of wine, 3 groups of typed fruits, and readings from the Tanakh and Zohar. This text was extremely popular among the Jews of Islam, but it was very slow to take hold in Ashkenaz because the book that it was quoted from (*Hemdut HaYamim*) was thought to have been written by the Sabbatean, Natan Azati. This is no longer believed by many scholars, and Ashkenazim now enjoy the Tu Bishbat seder alongside their Sephardic brethren.

As modern Zionism became a political reality, Tu Bishbat took on a further new meaning as it grew into the "holiday of Erets Yisrael." Pioneers and settlers adopted it as a

time to showcase the Zionist project, and successfully reimagined it as a celebration of the modern nation, with tree-planting as the key symbol. Building on this imagery some decades later, the day reemerged in yet another new form as the holiday of choice for climate activists and social justice workers, giving it a new resonance for Diaspora Jews.

How far the day has come from a simple demarcation for tithes! Observances of Tu Bishbat have ebbed and flowed as our hold on Israel has waxed and waned, with each stage embodying how we connected with the land and with contemporary issues at different points in history. May we continue to draw strength from its varying messages, and may the day guide us closer to the values that we cherish the most!

Shabbat Shalom



## Conversations

*The Journal of the Institute for Jewish Ideas & Ideals*

Kahal Joseph is excited to offer FREE copies of the newest edition of "Conversations," the journal of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals. The Institute's founder, Rabbi Marc D. Angel, visited us in October, so if you enjoyed meeting him and hearing his reflections, you'll be sure to find the journal worth a read. This edition focuses on the challenges of Jewish education, and features articles from Rabbis, academics, politicians, and laypeople who approach the question from many different angles and perspectives.

Copies will be given away at one copy per household on a first-come, first-served basis (contact: Rabbi Melhado at [rabbimelhado@kahaljoseph.org](mailto:rabbimelhado@kahaljoseph.org)). Each edition addresses topics that touch our lives as Orthodox Jews in modern society.

## KJ Purim

*Save these dates in March 2016*



### Purim Baking

Sunday, March 13th

*Join the fun & bake traditional Iraqi sweets for KJ's Community Gift Baskets. We are so happy to use our beautiful new ovens for this mitsvah!*



### Purim Carnival

Sunday, March 20th

*KJ's annual festive celebration filled with carnival booths, fun games & rides, amazing costumes & wonderful food court with hamburgers, hot dogs & more.*





## Tu Bishbat Seder & Celebration

Sunday, January 24th @ 12 noon

Parents! Grandparents! Kids!  
Join us for a fun-filled afternoon  
with lunch, a short Tu Bishbat seder  
and activities for kids and parents  
including toddlers, preschoolers  
and grade schoolers.

Fruit! Grape juice!  
Music! Arts and crafts!

Questions?  
Call Jessica at 217.972.8993  
or e-mail at [jessica@kahaljoseph.org](mailto:jessica@kahaljoseph.org)

קום כי עליך הדבר, ואנחנו עמך



Arise, for this is your task, and we are with you

# *Kahal Joseph Congregation*

JOYOUSLY INVITES YOU

TO CELEBRATE WITH US AT

THE INSTALLATION OF

## *Rabbi Raif S. Melhado*

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: RABBI ASHER LOPATIN  
PRESIDENT, YESHIVAT CHOVEVEI TORAH

SUNDAY, MARCH 6 - 26 ADAR I

INSTALLATION AT 5:30PM

CELEBRATORY DINNER TO FOLLOW

10505 SANTA MONICA BLVD, LOS ANGELES, CA



RSVP BY SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28

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