

New Israel Fund

Progress. Together.

Tu B'shvat Seder 2014

Exploring Environmental Justice



Reading: Environmental Justice

Midrash suggests that one of the ways we learn to walk in God's path is to plant trees. Each tree is home to birds, insects, other plants and organisms and many animals. A tree is a world in itself. With each tree that we plant, we are essentially saving a world. Thus, we see Tu B'Shvat as a holiday of tikkun olam (repairing the world). (adapted from Vayikra Rabbah 25:3)

While it may not feel like spring in the UK, medieval mystics taught that on the 15th of the month of Shevat, the sap begins to flow within the trees and plants of the land of Israel—invisible to the human eye, but marking the beginning of spring nonetheless. In the 16th century in northern Israel, in the town of Tzfat, the Jewish mystics created the Tu B'Shvat Seder. They recognized the many and varied dimensions of God's creation and used the fruits of Israel to symbolize their existence.

But caring for the environment in Israel is not limited only to tree planting. Israel is a country that has always faced unique environmental issues. Israelis have long had to balance growth with preservation of the country's ancient archaeological treasures, as well as developing both industry and agriculture in an arid landscape where water is precious and scarce. Today, environmental concerns in Israel, as in the rest of the world, are multiplying and becoming more urgent with the passage of time. In the past decade, consumption of electricity and cars have dramatically increased the carbon monoxide levels which, in addition to contributing to global climate change concerns, have spurred an increase in respiratory illness and cancers. Irresponsible agricultural policies and industrial controls have placed water sources at risk, and once out-of-the-way open spaces are being devoured by unfettered development. And as with other areas of the world, environmental degradation disproportionately affects those on the lowest rungs of the socio-economic ladder.



This is what **Environmental Justice** is all about- the fair distribution of environmental burdens and resources i.e. not harming weakened populations by dumping rubbish near them, or building parks only in rich areas. It is also recognising the inter-connectedness of society, environment and policies and thus also strengthening democracy, equality and sustainability.



Note: As it is a time to celebrate the land of Israel, fruits and foods that fall into the category of the Seven Species found in Deuteronomy are highlighted in green.

The First Cup

White grape juice or wine. This cup represents winter, when nature is asleep. The earth can be snow covered, taking a rest from blooming and blossoming.

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר בחר בנו מכל עם ורוממנו מכל לשון וקדשנו במצותיו. ונתת לנו מועדים לשמחה חגים וזמנים לששון, את יום ט"ו בשבט הזה, יום תפלה והודיה לברכת האדמה. כי בנו בחרת ואותנו קדשת מכל העמים ומועדי קדשך בשמחה ובששון הנחלתנו. ברוך אתה מקדש ישראל והזמנים. ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן.

Blessed are You, our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who chose us from all the nations, and elevated us above all languages, and sanctified us with God's commandments. And You gave us, Eternal our God, festivals for happiness, holidays and times for joy, this day of Tu B'Shvat, a day of prayer and thanksgiving for creation and the earth. Because You chose us, and sanctified us from all the nations, and through Your holy festivals in happiness and in joy You have given us as a heritage. Blessed are You, God, Who sanctifies Israel and this holiday. (Amen)

Blessed are You Eternal, Sovereign of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who has kept us alive and sustained us and enabled us to reach this joyous occasion.

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam shecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higyanu lazman hazeh.

With thanks that we are here celebrating Tu B'Shvat together, we sing:

How good and how pleasant it is when brethren live together! Psalm 133:1

הנה מה טוב ומה נעים שבת אחים גם יחד

Hi-nay ma tov u-ma na-yim she-vet a-chim gam ya-chad.

The First Fruits

עשייה Asia/ Action: The world of action in the realm of the concrete, the physical, the here and now. At this level the need is greatest for protection, for hard exteriors. It is a risk to let our defenses down and open up, to peel off our protective shells. Asia is a call to action, a reminder that we must not wait for the world to change, but must be the change. Even if we cannot complete the work, it is not for us to desist from it!

Being the level furthest from perfection, this reality is represented by fruits or nuts with and inedible outer shell and an edible inner core.

Orange, Tangerine, Grapefruit, Kiwi, Coconut, Peanut, Walnut, Almond, Pomegranate, Banana, Pineapple



blessing over fruit of the tree

Blessed are you, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the tree

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי העץ

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-eytz

or blessing over fruit of the earth (bananas fall into this category):

Blessed are you, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the earth

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי האדמה

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-adamah

New Israel Fund FOCUS

עשייה Asia: Breaking through the hard outer shells to real action:

Storms, droughts, water scarcity and other environmental issues are not bound by international borders. They are affecting people throughout the Middle East regardless of their nationality or religion.

New Israel Fund's grantee **EcoPeace /Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME)** is at the forefront of regional environmental cooperation and is a unique NGO with Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian Co-Directors. Their aim is to raise awareness of and offer solutions to water scarcity in the region through its **Good Water Neighbours (GWN)** project.



Their latest remarkable achievement was, in May 2013, to bring Israel and Jordan together to commit to the rehabilitation of the lower Jordan River. The Jordan River Valley, situated in the Great Rift Valley, is of cultural, religious and geographical importance. The river is significant to billions of people from diverse religions and countries worldwide but is presently under threat. In recent decades the water level of the southern Jordan River has dropped dramatically, because the flow of water into it from the Lake Kinneret in Israel and the Yarmuk River which runs along the Israel/Jordan border has been almost totally blocked by dams. The quality of the water has also seriously deteriorated because of the sewage of all the communities along the river has been flowing into it.

As a result of FoEME/GWN campaign, the Israel Water Authority will begin, for the first time, to pump water regularly from Lake Kinneret into the southern Jordan River in an effort to ecologically rehabilitate the river. Furthermore, a waste treatment plant will be treating the sewage aiming for treated wastewater will be suitable for agricultural use. The ultimate purpose of the project is to restore historically valuable ecological habitats and agricultural spaces while leveraging peace and cooperation along the way.

Reading

One day Honi was journeying on the road and he saw a man planting a carob tree. He asked, "How long does it take [for this tree] to bear fruit?" The man replied: "Seventy years." Honi then further asked him: "Are you certain that you will live another seventy years?" The man replied: "I found [already grown] carob trees in the world; as my forefathers planted those for me so I too plant these for my children."
(Babylonian Talmud Taanit 23a)

The Second Cup

This one is white juice or wine with a little red mixed in. It represents the spring approaching and the colours of the season changing as the snow melts and flowers begin to show themselves.

Blessed are you, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.

The Second Fruits

יצירה Yetzira - Formation: The Kabbalists defined the realm of Yetzira as one of physicality. But it is also the realm of the internal, of emotions. The need for protection and reinforcement is a matter of core, hidden emotions. We must not allow our hidden emotions to allow us to become defensive and closed off to one another. When we work together as communities and as a society, we can create more, achieve more, and be more. Yetzira is represented by fruits with edible outer flesh, and inedible cores such as:

Peach, Plum, Avocado, Date, Olive, Cherry, Apricot

blessing over fruit of the tree (excluding Bananas!)

Blessed are you, Eternal our God, Ruler of the
Universe, who creates the fruit of the tree

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי העץ

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-eytz

or blessing over fruit of the earth:

Blessed are you, Eternal our God, Ruler of the
Universe, who creates the fruit of the earth

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי

האדמה

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-adamah

New Israel Fund FOCUS

יצירה Yetzira - Formation: Changing communities at the core

In many ways the environment is an issue which is entirely dependent on political will and leadership. However, this does not mean that civil society cannot contribute to the cause. NIF's grantee, the **Israel Union for Environmental Defence (IUED)**, has realised that communities and ordinary citizens can make an important difference.



IUED's **Environment & Community Initiative** empowers communities and local activists with the knowledge, tools and confidence needed to tackle the environmental evils which invade their towns and neighbourhoods.

The inspiring story of the Kiryat Sefer neighbourhood in Tel Aviv is a wonderful success story.



Central Tel Aviv is known for its density of population and the lack of public spaces. When the Tel Aviv municipality decided to build 10 luxury residential towers and offices in the last open space in the neighbourhood, IUED and the community fought to stop it and instead demanded that the municipality establish a public park. They called their campaign '**Green instead of Concrete**' and it took them over 10 years to change the decision but in 2009 the municipality accepted their claims and decided to build a park over the whole space. You can see the amazing transformation of that space in the pictures.

The IUED's expert team offers free legal, planning and technical advice and negotiates practical and sustainable solutions. Over the years IUED's sought-after expertise has enabled members from all spheres of Israeli society, Jews, Arabs & Bedouins, to take active measures to improve the environment around their communities.

Hashkediya Porachat

Israel Dushman/ Menashe Ranina

השקדיה פורחת

ישראל דושמן / מנשה רבינא

The almond tree is growing,
A golden sun is glowing;
Birds sing out in joyous glee
From every roof and every tree.
Tu B'Shvat is here,
The Jewish Arbor Day
Hail the trees' New Year,
Happy holiday

Hashkediya porachat
V'shemesh paz zorachat;
Tziporim merosh kol gag,
M'vasrot et bo hechag.

Tu B'Shvat higiya Chag ha'ilanot
Tu B'Shvat higiya Chag ha'ilanot

השקדיה פורחת,
ושמש פז זורחת.
צפורים מראש כל גג
מבשרות את בוא החג:

ט"ו בשבט הגיע – חג האילנות!
ט"ו בשבט הגיע – חג האילנות.

Reading- Blessing for Planting a Tree of Peace

As we think of the land of Israel, we are reminded that it is a place still struggling in war and strife, and that trees have been abused within this conflict by both sides.

As we pray for peace around the world, we particularly think of the Holy Land. The following prayer was written by Rabbis for Human Rights as part of their campaign for planting uprooted, cut or burnt olive trees belonging to Palestinian farmers in the West Bank:

May You guide us in the paths of peace and give us the insight to see Your Image in every human being, whether Jew, Muslim or Christian, whether Israeli or Palestinian. Guide us all "to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8) and help us realize that "we were not brought into this world for conflict and dissension, nor hatred, jealousy, harassment or bloodshed. Rather, we were brought into this world in order to recognize You, may You be blessed forever." (R. Nachman of Bratzlav)

As we honour the fullness of being of all who live in the land, and hope for a time of peace and harmony for all, we remind ourselves that many faiths honour the importance of planting and nurturing:



Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai taught that as important as the Messianic Age is, if you are planting a tree when someone tells you that the Messiah has arrived, you should finish your planting, and then go to greet the Messiah (Avot de Rabbi Nathan 31b).

"If the Hour (Judgment Day) is about to be established and one of you is holding a palm shoot, let him take advantage of even one second before the Hour is established to plant it." (Hadith)

New Israel Fund FOCUS Shared Responsibility



The Galilee in northern Israel is characterised by tens of Jewish and Arab communities intertwined. For this exact reason New Israel Fund is introducing the concept of Shared Society rather than coexistence, as we believe that we have to share space, resources and life rather than simply coexist with each other.

Our grantee **Shchenim/Jiraan for Joint Development in the Galilee** ('Neighbours' in Hebrew and Arabic) comprises professional architects, urban and regional planners, engineers, environmentalists and mediators. The organisation is made up of Arabs and Jews who have joined together to create a different planning reality in the Galilee. One of the most difficult and sensitive causes of tension and conflict between the two populations is land, its planning and distribution, and it is imperative to address this issue in a way that will make honest, result-oriented work possible.

Planning for a Shared Landscape is a model that views the region as one planning entity populated by many different ethnic and cultural groups who should live as equals and with mutual respect. This model promotes centres that serve all of the populations, thus providing a more efficient use of the land that will maximise open green spaces. Thus Neighbours fuse environmental concern for the land together with our social concern for the well-being of the communities living on it and the relations between them.

The positive impact of 'Neighbours' in the area is enormous. Not only in the field of research and advocacy but in real partnership between Jewish and Arab local authorities that consciously decided to work together to the environmental, social and economic benefit of the region.

The Third Cup

This is mostly red wine or juice, with a little white mixed in.
It reminds us of summertime, and flowers in full bloom.

Blessed are you, Eternal our God, Ruler of the
Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.

The Third Fruits

בריאה - Briaah - Creation: Of the three lower worlds this one is closest to the state of pure spirit. As the realm of creation it reminds us that as the trees we celebrate sustain us, and so much of creation, we must work towards a spirit of harmony with all creation, so that we might all continue to flourish and grow. Nature continues unabated without us, but we rely on the world around us for nourishment and even the basics; breath. If we want to continue to receive such blessings, we must be careful to be creation's partners, not her overlords.

Briaah is represented by fruits which are edible and enjoyable both inside and out, such as:

Grape, Raisin, Fig, Cranberry, Apple, Pear, Strawberry

blessing over fruit of the tree (excluding Bananas!)

Blessed are you, Eternal our God, Ruler of the
Universe, who creates the fruit of the tree

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-eytz

or blessing over fruit of the earth:

Blessed are you, Eternal our God, Ruler of the
Universe, who creates the fruit of the earth

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-adamah

New Israel Fund FOCUS

בריאה - Briaah - Creation: Breathing in a pure spirit:

The air we breathe is being taken for granted by so many of us. When did we last stop to think about the quality of the air? Do we accept air pollution as an unchangeable fact in the western world?

In order to change this reality, New Israel Fund's grantee **Green Course** is relentlessly campaigning to raise awareness and remind the government, local authorities and the citizens how precious the air we breathe is. This is the story of their campaign for reducing air pollution in Haifa. 'Green Course' is Israel's largest environmental volunteer organisation, with thousands of student volunteers that has emerged over recent years as Israel's main platform for environmental activism in communities across the country.



For years, factories in Haifa's port have been polluting the air. Cancer and cardiac ailments levels in the area are 23% above the nationwide average.



Green Course's **Clean Air Campaign** in Haifa's industrial port area aided in raising public awareness of the issue and helped put forceful demands to the municipality. Green Course both monitors the activity of the local municipality and has begun working with the Ministry of Environmental Protection to urge it to tighten regulation. In 2011 they helped the Clean Air Bill become legislation and are now working to enforce it by participating in hearings of the Ministry of the Environment and hold meetings with local residents to promote issues of clean air (e.g. legislation, enforcement). They also keep high pressure on the polluting companies for the benefit of the Haifa area residents and the environment as a whole.

Public and educational activities followed by local and national coverage in the media, have increased the pressure on the municipality to address the issue. Green Course's determination of bringing public awareness about the pollution problem is beginning to pay off.

The Fourth Cup

This one is all red. It represents the rich and dark fall autumn colours. Leaves are changing, crops are growing, and the trees are filled with blossoms.

Reading

It is stated in the Zohar: "Wine has two colors -- white and red. White is from the right side [of kindness]; red from the left side [of strength and judgment]".

אצילות - Atzilut: Magnanimity

For the Kabbalists this realm was one of pure spirit. It asks us to relate to both the physical, and the intangible. This realm is about our highest selves. Though our earthly realm is sacred, this realm floats above it. As we try to grasp the meaning of this for us in our own lives, we celebrate the trees which symbolise life, a life which should be without shells, and which also keeps in balance both the physical and the spiritual of creation. We can ourselves work towards that balance when we work to maintain that balance in this world, honouring every individual's whole being, physical and spiritual, and their place in creation.

Blessed are you, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.

New Israel Fund FOCUS

אצילות - Atzilut: Magnanimity:

Meeting each other with a pure, generous and open spirit

Many perceive agriculture as a symbol of the very foundations on which the State of Israel was established. However, the exploitation of some migrant workers in agriculture is a reality that is hiding behind this Zionist ideal. It is a reality that is reinforced by the inaction of the authorities.



Approximately 24,600 migrant workers in Israel are employed in the agricultural sector. Each year New Israel Fund's grantee, **Kav LaOved (Workers' Hotline)**, assists approximately 3,000 agricultural workers who are deprived of fair employment terms and conditions.

For example, a recent Kav Laoved visit to Moshav Hatseva in the Arava region, showed a worrying picture of workers living in unsuitable accommodation that could reach temperatures of up to 50 degrees in the summer, working illegal hours with no extra pay and not being provided with protective clothing when dealing with pesticides.

Kav LaOved empowers workers (Jews, Arabs and migrants) by educating them about their basic employment rights, encourages dialogue with employers and the authorities and conducts field visits to reach out to workers in peripheral areas. It also put pressure on employers to grant workers full rights and conditions and lobby authorities to enforce the law. Most importantly it is now evident that workers are aware of their rights and feel confident to demand them.

Similarly, **Shatil (NIF's Initiative for Social Change)**, conducts training workshop for Bedouin women who work as contractual farm workers. The women learn what a salary slip is; that Israel has a minimum wage and laws that detail how many hours a person can work; and that their employer must give them protective equipment such as gloves, when they work with pesticides. Ms Amal Alnasasrah Alabid testified: "Since I began participating in Shatil courses four years ago, I'm a changed woman," she says. "Shatil gave me the courage, strength and self-confidence to pursue my dream of advancing my community."



We end with the blessing of thanks for the food and wine we have shared.

We recite together:

May it be Your will that the trees whose fruit we have eaten and blessed be filled with the strength to flourish and grow during the coming year for goodness and for blessing, for life and for peace.

Conclusion

Hope, like trees, starts out in little packages and blossoms if nurtured, just like people. In every seed there is the promise of new life. May we, in our lives, plant seeds of growth, care, wisdom, friendship and peace.



לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּבִרְכָה פְּרִי וַתְּנוּבָה!

L'shanah tovah oo'veracha p'ri oo'te'nuvah

May the year be fruitful and blessed!

Songs

Bashana haba'a Ehud Manor/ Nurit Hirsch

Bashana haba'a Neishev al hamirpeset
Ve'nispor tziporim nodedot,
Yeladim bechufsha Yesachak'u tofeset
Bein habayit l've'in hasadot

Od tireh, od tireh
Kama tov yihiyeh
Bashana, bashana haba'a

Anavim adumim Yavshilu ad ha'erev
Ve'yugshu tzone'nim lashulchan,
Ve'ruchot redumim Yis'u al em haderech
Itonim yeshanim v'anan.

Od tireh, od tireh
Kama tov yihiyeh
Bashana, bashana haba'a

Bashana haba'a Nifros kapot yadayim
Mul ha'or hanigar halavan,
Anafa levana Tifros ka'or k'nafayim
V'hashemesh tizrach b'tochan.

Od tireh, od tireh
Kama tov yihiyeh
Bashana, bashana haba'a

בְּשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה אהוד מנור / נורית הירש

בְּשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה נִשֵּׁב עַל הַמִּרְפֶּסֶת
וְנִסְפָּר צִפּוֹרִים נוֹדְדוֹת
יְלָדִים בְּחֻפְשָׁה יִשְׁחָקוּ תוֹפְסֵת
בֵּין הַבַּיִת לְבֵין הַשָּׂדוֹת

עוֹד תִּרְאֶה, עוֹד תִּרְאֶה
כְּמָה טוֹב יִהְיֶה
בְּשָׁנָה, בְּשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה

עֲנָבִים אֲדָמִים יִבְשִׁילוּ עַד הָעֶרֶב
וְיִגְשׁוּ צוֹנְנִים לְשִׁלְחָן
וְרוּחוֹת רְדוּמִים יִשְׂאוּ עַל אִם הַדָּרֶךְ
עֲתוּנִים יִשְׁנִים וְעָנָן

עוֹד תִּרְאֶה, עוֹד תִּרְאֶה
כְּמָה טוֹב יִהְיֶה
בְּשָׁנָה, בְּשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה

בְּשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה נִפְרֵשׁ כְּפוֹת יָדַיִם
מוֹל הָאוֹר הַנִּגָּר, הַלֶּבֶן
אֲנַפָּה לְבָנָה תִּפְרֹשׁ בְּאוֹן כְּנָפִים
וְהִשְׁמֵשׁ תִּזְרַח בְּתוֹכָן

עוֹד תִּרְאֶה, עוֹד תִּרְאֶה
כְּמָה טוֹב יִהְיֶה
בְּשָׁנָה, בְּשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה

With many thanks to:

The Movement for Reform Judaism

United Charities Fund of The Liberal Jewish Synagogue

Based on Jewish Theological Seminary's (JTS) Seder

אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֵלֶב וְדָבָשׁ

Eretz zavav chalayv u'dvash (Exodus 3:8)
A Land flowing with Milk and Honey