

מוקדש  
לב"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח



לעילוי נשמת  
ר' שמעון ב"ר יעקב ע"ה נפטר י"ז שבט

ולעילוי נשמת

אמי מורתי פריידא בת משולם ע"ה נפטר כ"ה שבט  
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

נדפס ע"י בנם

ר' דניאל דוד ב"ר שמעון שיחיו לאופר



לעילוי נשמת  
יהודה בערל הלוי בן לייב



לזכות

הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' צבי מרדכי בן שרה  
וזוגתו שלומית בת שושנה

בניהם ובנותיהם:

יוסף יצחק, משה, מנחם מענדל, חנה וחי' מושקא  
שיחיו גודמאן



**יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד**

Do you enjoy reading a CALL to ACTION? We need you to actualize our goals. To donate online, visit [ichossid.com](http://ichossid.com). If you would like to dedicate specific dates on the calendar, a full month of the Rebbe's directives or to participate in book dedications, contact Levi at 347-268-3299.

*Thank you*

# *a* CALL *to* ACTION

Shabbos Shira

Tu B'shevat

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION  
FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE REBBE  
5748-5752

A PROJECT OF  
HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar

## Foreword

We are pleased to bring you this newly revised edition of *a CALL to ACTION*. Translated from its Hebrew counterpart, *HaMaaseh Hu Halkar*, this presentation is a collection of practical instruction from the Rebbe's Sichos pertaining to Shabbos Shirah (the Shabbos of Song) and Tu BiShevat (Rosh Hashanah L'ilanos (New Year for Trees)).

*HaMaaseh Hu Halkar* is a compilation of Hora'os ("directives") culled from the Rebbe's talks in the years 5748 to 5752 (1988-1992), from both edited and unedited sources ("Muga" and "Bilti Muga"); we have expended great effort in our attempt to capture some of the Rebbe's carefully calculated and instructive phrasing. This edition's English translation was provided by Rabbi Yaakov Paley.

At this time, when Moshiach's arrival is imminent, the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, has emphasized the primacy of action. We are now beginning to experience the era when we will fully appreciate "the superiority of deed" above scholarship. May this take place completely and immediately!

Editorial Office of  
*HaMaaseh Hu Halkar*  
Erev Shabbos Shirah, 5768



**a CALL to ACTION**

*Published and Copyrighted by*

**המעשה הוא העיקר**

**"HaMaaseh Hu Halkar"**

280 Troy Av, Brooklyn, NY 11213

Tel: (718) 363-3448 • Fax: (718) 467-6919

e-mail: [info@iChossid.com](mailto:info@iChossid.com)

5768 • 2008

**NEW!** [www.iChossid.com](http://www.iChossid.com)

In each place (city or district, etc.), a vast number of its residents should gather to publicly fulfill the customs associated with Tu BiShevat, such as consuming fruits and the like.

This is in addition to each individual performing these customs in their respective homes and in a homely environment.<sup>33</sup>

### DISCUSS TORAH

- Needless to say, we should discuss Torah topics at these events – particularly in light of our Sages' teaching that the verse "Man is a tree of the field" refers specifically to a Torah scholar, and that each of the seven species with which the Torah praises the Land of Israel are compared to the Torah itself.<sup>33</sup>

### EVERY JEW PRODUCTIVE IN TORAH AND MITZVOS

- Additionally, we should make new, positive resolutions regarding *all* aspects of Torah and Mitzvos. In a broader sense, we should ensure that each and every person clearly reflects the message of "Man is a tree of the field," in actuality: They should grow ever larger in all aspects of Torah and Judaism, and they should become a tree that produces goodly fruit. As our Sages explain, "What are one's "fruit"? Mitzvos!" – and "The fruit of the righteous are their good deeds."

*Translated in the memory of Yitzchok Yosef ben Yaakov Mordechai*

#### 33. This year – public Tu BiShevat Sedarim

Amongst the new matters that we are able to do in connection with the beginning of the fortieth anniversary of the Yahrtzait [of the Previous Rebbe]: The coming Shabbos, the first Shabbos after the Yahrtzait, is Tu BiShevat.

The customs associated with Tu BiShevat are well known, starting with the most widespread custom "to partake of many fruits" and particularly those species with which the Land of Israel is praised (grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates). There are many other customs besides, with each community having their own practices – in the spirit of "each river follows its own course."

However, there is not normally an emphasis on eating the fruit in public. Rather, the normal procedure is for each person to consume them at home, either by themselves or during a meal with their families, and so on.

This year, however, is different. Since Tu BiShevat coincides with Shabbos – the first Shabbos following the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Yahrtzait [of the Previous Rebbe] – I therefore propose, accompanied with a request to publicize this proposition in every location, that on the day of Tu BiShevat ... [See main text above for continuation]. (Parshas Bo 5749; Hisva'aduyos p.225)

species). This should be explained even to infants – and certainly to five, four, or even three year olds.<sup>32</sup>

### YEARN AND ANTICIPATE MOSHIACH

- In particular, we should arouse a yearning, a heartfelt stirring – and also a feeling of real joy, based on the awareness that we will immediately be entering the Land of Israel – to “enjoy its fruits and be satiated from its bounty,” and to fulfill in the most perfect manner all of those precepts that are dependent upon living within the Holy Land.

### CENTRAL FARBRENGENS

- [In 5749, the Rebbe declared:] I propose this year, that on the day of Tu BiShevat we should arrange a Central Farbrengen (or at least a Farbrengen with very large attendance), in each and every location – and certainly in the Holy Land.

#### 32. Seven branches to the tree of observance

During these gatherings, we should explain and elucidate how all seven species mentioned in the verse, “A land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and date honey” are all to be found within the “desirable land” that is each and every Jew. They are the seven dimensions of our divine service.

##### One day, seven kinds

On a regular basis, each of these aspects has its own established time. A Jew, however, has the ability to rise beyond all limitation, at which point he contains all the seven species at once – and openly.

This transcendence is able, and should, occur even while a Jew finds himself in the lessened spirituality of a plain weekday. Why, Tu BiShevat itself is just an ordinary weekday!

##### Every Jew a treasure-trove

... This then is the lesson which we should explain to each Jew: Even if at present you are able to discern only one of the seven dimensions of spiritual service in your current performance, you should nevertheless be aware that you contain within yourself a wondrous treasure-house containing all “seven species.”

That being the case, what a pity it is to waste such a precious treasure-house ... After all, with just a little effort, each Jew is able to reveal *all* seven species *at once* – including even [the final species] “honey,” which alludes to the Torah’s mysteries, as we have explained [earlier in the Sichah].

It is possible to explain this concept to every single Jew, including the extremely young – and certainly to five, four, or three year olds. They too, are able to understand that they contain a spiritual treasure – and that they should obviously strive to utilize all of it. (Parshas Beshalach 5752; Sichos Kodosh p.600-601)

## Table of Contents

### Shabbos Shirah

Introduction .....	4
Perfecting Yud Shevat activities .....	6
Study his teachings, follow his directive .....	6
Farbreng with song and joy .....	6
Ahavas Yisrael and actual deeds .....	6
When to Farbreng .....	6

### Maharal’s custom

Introduction .....	7
Do not feed birds on Shabbos .....	8
Discuss the custom .....	8
Gather kids to recount miracle .....	8
Ingrain compassion for all .....	9

### TU BISHAVAT

Introduction .....	9
Prepare from Yud Shevat .....	10
New Year resolutions .....	11
Time to Add .....	11
A full and fruitful divine service .....	11
Lessons from trees and fruits .....	12
Take pleasure in serving Hashem .....	12
Keep growing .....	12
Activate a ripple effect of observance .....	14
Eat fruit .....	15
The five species .....	15
Carobs .....	15
Train children to observe Tu BiShevat .....	16
Teach them the message of Tu BiShevat .....	16
Farbreng .....	17
Hakhel year – largest crowds, many days .....	17
Explain Tu BiShevat – each on their level .....	17
Yearn and anticipate Moshiach .....	18
Central Farbrengens .....	18
Discuss Torah .....	19
Every Jew productive in Torah and Mitzvos .....	19

# Shabbos Shirah

## INTRODUCTION

The Torah portion of Beshalach includes the “Song of the Sea” (Az Yashir) with which the Jews praised Hashem as they crossed the split sea on their journey out of Egypt. Consequently, the Shabbos when Parshas Beshalach is read is known as “Shabbos Shirah,” the “Shabbos of Song.”

In addition, the Haftarah for Parshas Beshalach is also a song – the “Song of Devorah” that was composed by the prophetess following the miraculous victory wrought in her days on behalf of the Jewish people.

Spiritually, the concept of raising one’s voice in song represents elevation. Shabbos, too, is an elevation of the past week’s spiritual achievements. So, when the two come together – as they do on Shabbos Shirah, the *Shabbos of Song* – the result is a day of foremost elevation.

Further, on the day of one’s Yahrtzait, their lifetime’s combined spiritual achievement is further elevated and magnified. And if the Yahrtzait is that of a Leader of Jewry – then the elevation of his holy soul and its sacred achievements results in an unparalleled elevation for all Jewry. Such a Yahrtzait is that of the Previous Rebbe, Leader of our generation, which takes place on Yud Shevat.

As explained earlier, the elevation of a week’s spiritual attainment occurs on the subsequent Shabbos. It follows, then, that it is specifically on the Shabbos following Yud Shevat that Jewry’s immense spiritual elevation is finalized and completed.

## FARBRENG

• In addition to the continued Farbrengens to make up for – as well as perfect<sup>28</sup> – our spiritual service relating to Yud Shevat, we should also hold Farbrengens in each possible place, on Tu BiShevat.<sup>29</sup>

## HAKHEL YEAR – LARGEST CROWDS, MANY DAYS

• [In 5748, a Hakhel<sup>30</sup> year, the Rebbe stated:] We should choose the most appropriate time for each location, in keeping with local conditions, to ensure that these Tu BiShevat Farbrengens will draw the largest possible attendance.

• At least, these Farbrengens should occur on either 1) on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Shevat, following Minchah; 2) on Tu BiShevat itself; or 3) on any of the subsequent days up until and including the following Shabbos – the Shabbos of Matan Torah [when the portion describing the Giving of the Torah is read]. Ideally, though, we should farbreng on *all* of these dates, in alternative locations.<sup>31</sup>

## EXPLAIN TU BISHEVAT – EACH ON THEIR LEVEL

• We should make certain to properly utilize these Farbrengens, by explaining and promoting the abovementioned lessons in divine service (that are alluded to by the seven

28. See also Parshas Beshalach 5752; Sichos Kodosh p.600.

29. Parshas Beshalach 5752; Hisva’aduyos p.181.

30. **During Hakhel: Inspirational gatherings**

[Throughout 5748, the Rebbe constantly emphasized, and called for new activities that were based upon, the theme of “Hakhel,” i.e., rallying together all Jewish men, women and children, for the sake of strengthening their observance of Torah and Mitzvos. This corresponds to the Biblical obligation for all Jewry to gather in the Beis Hamikdash once every seven years (at the close of the Shemitah year), where the Jewish monarch exhorts them to carefully observe the Torah and reminds them of the Giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai.]

31. **Hakhel: Large groups, many Mitzvos**

We should utilize this propitious day to gather men, women and children in order to yet further increase all matters of Torah and Mitzvos – and particularly, adding and perfecting in following the paths of the Previous Rebbe; beginning with Ahavas Yisrael, love for our fellow Jews, Achdus Yisrael, unity among Jews, Tzedakah distribution and so forth – as we have mentioned at length. It is worthwhile to hold these gatherings with very large groups. (Parshas Beshalach 5748; Hisva’aduyos p.309)

## TRAIN CHILDREN TO OBSERVE TU BISHEVAT

- We should train our children to observe the custom of eating fruit on Tu BiShevat.<sup>26</sup>

## TEACH THEM THE MESSAGE OF TU BISHEVAT

- At the same time, we should explain the message of Tu BiShevat to them, in a manner to which they can relate; namely, that 1) there should be a fresh “sprouting” and growth in all areas of Judaism, Torah and Mitzvos and 2) they should be “trees” that bear goodly “fruit.”<sup>27</sup>

### Eat carobs

Now is the perfect time to promote a matter in which has lately fallen into neglect: In the past, it was taken for granted that, in keeping with Jewish custom, housewives would prepare the seven species with which the Land of Israel was praised by the Torah – including *carobs* – in honor of Tu BiShevat. We should now promote and strengthen observance of this practice. (Roshei Devarim, Parshas Beshalach 5751)

... We should again mention and promote the observance of the Jewish custom to taste and consume the seven species with which the Land of Israel is praised, sometime during the 24hrs of Tu BiShevat. (Tu BiShevat, at a Yechidus, 5751; Hisva'aduyos p.243)

### Make a blessing to receive a blessing

... Particularly after having actually eaten from the fruits. Blessing will come upon all who increase in this matter – and meanwhile, they will have already have recited yet another blessing over fruit, which *itself* naturally elicits blessing and a bestowal from Above. (17<sup>th</sup> of Shevat 5752, at a Yechidus; Sichos Kodesh p.621)

26. ... And particularly those fruit with which the Land of Israel is praised.

### 27. Tzedakah and education on Shabbos Tu BiShevat

It is worthwhile and fitting to immediately commence with a real act – in a manner that is not only permissible, but is indeed strongly encouraged on Shabbos ...

1) An increase in Tzedakah, i.e., furthering love and unity between fellow Jews, by resolving to donate an *established figure* (as opposed to simply making a general “resolution” to give Tzedakah) – which will be set aside immediately upon the conclusion of Shabbos. (Parshas Beshalach 5749; Hisva'aduyos p.270)

This comes in addition to our ability to immediately and literally fulfill the commandment of Tzedakah – via sharing our food and drink, as well as extending Tzedakah in its *spiritual* forms. (ibid, footnote 116)

Despite it being nighttime as well as Motze Shabbos, when some are particular not to spend money at all, they can nevertheless set aside the money on their own, and only actually give it to a Tzedakah collector or pauper the next morning. (ibid, footnote 117).

2) An addition in the education of children, by promoting the custom of eating fruit. (ibid, p.270)

No wonder then, that the Shabbos following Yud Shevat is considered the ultimate Shabbos of elevation – Shabbos Shirah!<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Every Shabbos is a song

[The concept of Shabbos is strongly associated with “song,” as we will explain. Shabbos Shirah, then, can be regarded as the “ultimate” Shabbos:]

#### Lechu Neranenah

1) At Kabbalas Shabbos, the service welcoming the Shabbos [on Friday Night], we begin by reciting the entire psalm that starts “Lechu Neranenah,” “Come, let us sing to Hashem; let us raise our voices in jubilation ... Let us approach Him with thanksgiving; let us raise our voices to Him in song, etc.” ...

#### Mizmor Shir

2) The concept of joyous singing is especially associated with Shabbos [to the extent that the psalm recited each Shabbos by the Levites in the Beis HaMikdash, and which is still recited by all Jewry in their Shabbos prayers, is] “Mizmor Shir LeYom HaShabbos,” “A psalm of *joyous song* for the day of Shabbos.”

#### Uplifting tune

3) Then there is the Chassidic insight into the Mishnah in Tractate Shabbos, which states, “Kol Ba’alei Sheir Yotza’in BeSheir VeNimshachin BeSheir, “All [animals] that bear a collar, [may] go forth with a collar [in a public domain, on Shabbos], and [may] be drawn by a collar.”

[Simply, the Mishnah teaches a law of Shabbos governing animals in the public domain. However, the word for collar, “Sheir” (שׂיר), is related to “Shir” (שיר), meaning “joyous song” – both of which are “circular.”

Chassidus therefore finds an allusion in this law to the spiritual affect of song:] Every elevation from one spiritual level to a higher spiritual level (whereby a soul “goes forth” from its previous standing and is “drawn” upwards) is accomplished by Shir, “song.”

[Chassidus further explains that on Shabbos, the spiritual accomplishments of the past week are elevated – and indeed, all realms of creation are then “elevated.”] This elevation, which takes place on Shabbos, is accomplished through “song.”

#### The ultimate Shabbos

4) We could even say that the chief “elevation through song” that Shabbos accomplishes occurs on *Shabbos Shirah* – and that it is from Shabbos Shirah that all the remaining Shabbosos of the year receive the power to do likewise! (Parshas Beshalach 5752; Hisva'aduyos p.168)

#### The first Shabbos

5) Note that the *original* command to observe Shabbos is given in Parshas *Beshalach* – Shabbos Shirah. (ibid, footnote 9)

#### After Yud Shevat – elevating the elevation

[The Rebbe there continues to explain that the principle of elevation that occurs on Shabbos also occurs on the day of one’s Yahrzeit: Throughout the year, the soul of the departed rises to ever higher levels in Heaven. Yet, on the day of its Yahrzeit, it receives an *unparalleled* elevation.

Significantly, the Yahrzeit of the Previous Rebbe, Leader of our generation,

### PERFECTING YUD SHEVAT ACTIVITIES

- We should fully utilize this special Shabbos by increasing and perfecting all of our activities that we undertook in honor of Yud Shevat.

### STUDY HIS TEACHINGS, FOLLOW HIS DIRECTIVE

- This includes studying the Previous Rebbe's teachings in public sessions, and following the path he laid out in the dissemination of Torah and Chassidus.<sup>2</sup>

### FARBRENG WITH SONG AND JOY

- We should certainly continue the Farbrengens in honor of Yud Shevat, and do so amidst joy and song – for it is specifically on Shabbos Shirah (song) that the service of Yud Shevat reaches its perfection.<sup>3</sup>

### AHAVAS YISRAEL AND ACTUAL DEEDS

- These Farbrengens should be conducted with Ahavas Yisrael (love for our fellow Jews), and should inspire concrete action on our part.<sup>4</sup>

### WHEN TO FARBRENG

- We should hold these Farbrengens on 1) Yud Shevat; 2) Shabbos Shirah; and 3) Motzei Shabbos Shirah.<sup>4</sup>

---

always occurs in the week leading up to Shabbos Shirah. As we have explained, all the days of the week are elevated on the following Shabbos, and therefore, the complete affects of the Yahrzeit occur on the following Shabbos – Shabbos Shirah. In this way, the day of ultimate elevation (the Yahrzeit) coincides with the Shabbos of ultimate elevation (Shabbos Shirah.)

2. Parshas Beshalach 5752; Hisva'aduyos p.180.

3. Ibid, p.319-20.

4. From the telegram composed by the Rebbe, to be sent to Lubavitchers worldwide in honor of Yud Shevat (5748-5752).

### EAT FRUIT

- It is our custom to partake of many fruit on Tu BiShevat – and particularly when it coincides with Shabbos.<sup>22</sup>

### THE FIVE SPECIES

- Special attention is paid to the fruits with which the Torah praises the Land of Israel.<sup>23</sup>

### CAROBS

- Although, for some reason, this custom has been neglected in many locations,<sup>24</sup> it is our custom to make a point of specifically eating carobs.<sup>25</sup>

---

service]. As a result, we should *add* to the Shlichus (mission) by appointing an additional Shliach – in the spirit of “Shliach Oseh Shliach – an emissary may appoint another emissary in turn” – or even a hundred new Shluchim! (Tu BiShevat 5749; Hisva'aduyos p.269)

#### 22. Use fruit to fill quota

When Tu BiShevat coincides with Shabbos, we place greater emphasis on the custom of eating many fruits. After all, it is customary on *every* Shabbos to attempt to “complete the total 100 daily blessings [some of which are lacking on Shabbos due to the alternative form of prayers, etc.] by reciting blessings before and after eating fruit” (Rambam, Laws of Prayer 7:15-16; Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, beg. of ch.46). (Tu BiShevat 5750, footnote 40; Hisva'aduyos p.254)

#### 23. Tu BiShevat 5748; Hisva'aduyos p.322 and elsewhere.

Some (particularly in Sefardic communities) have the custom to recite a selection of verses from Tanach, Zohar and the like, which discuss the uniqueness of the fruit of trees. (ibid, in the footnote)

#### 24. ... So that Jews everywhere will observe the custom of eating fruit – and that the custom will be greatly strengthened.

#### Miraculous fruit

... Note that it is also customary to eat *carobs* on Tu BiShevat. Carobs are especially associated with miracles; as is seen, for example, in the Talmudic account of Rabbi Chaninah Ben Dosah, who was able to suffice with just one measure of carobs that would last him from one Shabbos to the next – in continuation of which, the Talmud states that he was “well versed in miracles.” (Parshas Beshalach 5751; Hisva'aduyos p.222)

#### 25. Miracles in the Holy Land

This strengthens our bond with the Land of Israel – “The Land upon which, from the beginning of the year until the end of the year, the eyes of Hashem Your G-d rest.” This also further increases the miracles which Hashem performs on behalf of the Jewish people. (ibid)

[The message of a “tree,” therefore, is that] we should continually<sup>19</sup> add innovative increases to our divine service – incomparably increasing our performance even beyond the perfection in divine service that we attained on Yud Shevat...<sup>20</sup>

### ACTIVATE A RIPPLE EFFECT OF OBSERVANCE

• The Torah describes fruit as “fruit of trees that produce fruit according to its kind, with which to seed” [the soil] to produce many more similar trees. In other words, it is from the seeds of fruit that yet additional fruit-bearing trees are produced.

We should derive a lesson from the growth of fruit, and act to positively influence others – beginning with our own family and associates. Our influence should spur those we affect to in turn positively influence additional people – in an ever-widening pattern.<sup>21</sup>

---

#### 19. Ever higher

We should not assume that because we have already achieved “a complete world,” we are now able to rest and relax... On the contrary: We should now add with yet greater vigor, each and every second, in the manner of continual growth. (Parshas Beshalach 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.274)

#### 20. Tu BiShevat 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.269.

#### 21. The Jews are Hashem’s orchard

Accordingly, we could shed light on the common name for Tu BiShevat, “New Year for *Trees*,” in the plural, despite the Mishnah referring to the 15<sup>th</sup> of Shevat as the “New Year for *Tree*,” in the singular:

Our divine service begins with “VeAhavtah LeRe’achah Kamochah” – love for our fellow Jews. At the beginning of each day, even before the morning prayers, we all recite, “Hareini MeKabel – I hereby accept upon myself the positive precept to ‘love your fellow as yourself.’” Only after that do we begin focusing on ourselves, with our personal service of prayer. In other words, the start of divine service is that of “trees” – specifically in the *plural*. (Tu BiShevat 5750; Hisva’aduyos p.262)

#### Add branches

Therein lies a unique lesson for all those who merited to be Shluchim (emissaries) or Shluchei Shluchim (emissaries appointed by the original emissaries) of the Rebbe, the Leader of our generation – who is himself the emissary of Hashem

... The direct continuation and perfection of the Yom Hilulah (Yud Shevat) occurs on the following holy day of Shabbos, the 15<sup>th</sup> of Shevat, Tu BiShevat [for 1) it is on every Shabbos that the accomplishments of the past week are *elevated* and *perfected*; 2) it is on the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month that the accomplishments of that month are at their *fullest*; and 3) Tu BiShevat represents an *increase* in divine

## Maharal’s custom

### INTRODUCTION

On Shabbos Shirah 5702, the Previous Rebbe related that the Maharal of Prague (Rabbi Yehudah Loewe<sup>5</sup>) instituted the custom – which will hopefully be reinstated – whereby during the week before Shabbos Beshalach he would inform all the teachers and parents of small children to bring their children to the courtyard of the synagogue on Shabbos Shirah.

There they were told the story of the splitting of the sea and how the birds sang and chirped at the time that Moshe and the Jewish people burst out into the song of “Az Yashir.” The children picked fruits from the trees that had sprouted in the sea-bed and fed the singing birds.

The Maharal then distributed “Kasha” (buckwheat) to the children with which to feed the birds and fowl as a remembrance of the miraculous fruits of the sea which the children gave to the birds.

After this ceremony, the Maharal would bless the children and their parents with the traditional blessing – to raise and educate them in a manner that results in the children growing up to “Torah, Chupah and good deeds.”<sup>6</sup>

The Alter Rebbe, however, in his Shulchan Aruch (Orech Chayim 324:8) rules that it would be incorrect to place food before the birds on Shabbos itself.

- 
- [Rabbi Yehudah Loewe, the “Maharal of Prague” (1525-1609), was an outstanding Torah scholar, author of classic Torah works (upon which – together with other works – the Alter Rebbe based his Tanya), philosopher, Kabbalist and Jewish leader. Popularly known for his extraordinary efforts to protect the Jewish community of Prague from the frequent threat of blood libels, the Maharal was a direct descendant of King David, and direct ascendant of the Rebbes of Chabad. His Yahrzeit is on a highly significant day in the Chassidic calendar, the 18<sup>th</sup> of Elul.]
  - Based on Sichos In English, vol.34, Shabbos Parshas Beshalach, Tu BeShevat 5747.

Note that while Chabad do not distribute “Kasha” to the birds, it is nevertheless customary to *eat* “Kasha” on Shabbos Shirah.<sup>7</sup>

### DO NOT FEED BIRDS ON SHABBOS

• Although the Previous Rebbe publicly *recounted*<sup>8</sup> the practice instituted by the Maharal (of feeding the birds on Shabbos Shirah), he [notably] was *never* observed keeping this practice himself [and it is therefore *not* the Chabad custom to feed the birds during Shabbos Shirah].<sup>9</sup>

### DISCUSS THE CUSTOM

• However, since the Previous Rebbe made a point of publicizing this custom [including the detail of feeding the birds], we should therefore *mention* and *discuss it* on Shabbos Shirah.<sup>10</sup>

### GATHER KIDS TO RECOUNT MIRACLE

• In keeping with the first part of the Maharal’s custom, we should certainly gather children and tell them of the miraculous

7. Sefer HaMinhagim; HaYom Yom, p.20; Likutei Diburim, vol.2, p.521.

8. Sefer HaSichos 5702, p.73.

9. **Fed by Heaven**

One of the reasons for [not feeding the birds on Shabbos Shirah] is based on the ruling of the Alter Rebbe in his Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 324:8), “There are those who have the custom to place wheat before the birds on Shabbos Shirah – but it is *incorrect* to do so, since we are not responsible to provide the birds with sustenance [and it is therefore not permitted to feed them on Shabbos].”

This is certainly the case nowadays, when it is highly uncommon for the feeding of chicken and other fowl to be our direct responsibility – as was common in the tiny villages of former generations. (Parshas Beshalach 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.270, footnote 118)

10. **Study the practice**

... Anyhow, even if, for whatever reason, we do not actually observe this custom (of feeding birds) on Shabbos Shirah, we should nevertheless recall and discuss it. One of the reasons for the Previous Rebbe publicly discussing this custom, and then instructing that his discussion be published and publicized, was in order that we should study his address from time to time – particularly on a relevant occasion, i.e., [on Shabbos Shirah] when it is a “timely topic.” And as with all of his Torah teachings, this address is considered part of the Oral Torah. (Parshas Beshalach 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.275)

honey.” Our basic, regular divine service is compared to grains, which (when made into bread) form the basic staple that is essential to life. In the same way, the rudiment obligations of Judaism provide our soul with its staple, indispensable diet. More specifically, Chassidus explains that “wheat” represents exercising our G-dly soul in spiritual service, while “barley” involves harnessing our animalistic soul to serve Hashem. Both are equally indispensable to our divine service.

#### From wine to honey

The concept of “fruit,” conversely, represents the extras, pleasures, compliments; going beyond our essential obligations, and serving Hashem with delight: “grapes” or “wine” alludes to joy and eagerness, “figs” to depth and involvement, “pomegranates” to reaching beyond the present standing, “olives” to utilizing challenge to reveal our G-dly essence, and ultimately – “date honey” to the essential tranquility in the depth of our souls.

#### Ingraining Kabbalas Ol

On Rosh Hashanah, we re-accept Hashem’s Kingship and refresh our regular service – our “wheat and barley.” To accomplish that, the Jews (who are compared to a land – “You will be a desirable land for Me”) must first work hard at ploughing and softening our “soil.”

#### Adding color and flavor

Tu BiShevat, on the other hand, is not a time for “grain”-based undertakings; rather, we now focus on producing “fruit” – our abovementioned “extras” that bring beauty and pleasure to our service.

#### The Yud Shevat factor

Tu BiShevat closely follows and brings completion to our spiritual service that began on the Previous Rebbe’s Yahrtzeit. Noticeably, the themes of Tu BiShevat (“fruit” and “trees”) are also indicated by the Previous Rebbe’s “themes”: His second name, Yitzchak (meaning pleasure), represents “fruit,” as we have just discussed. His first name, Yosef (meaning multiplication) represents the theme of “trees” (as opposed to “grain”) and is described below:]

#### Not seeds, but trees

The sprouting and growth of a tree contains an incomparably superiority over the growth of a seed of grain. For when seeds are sown, the produce that subsequently sprouts is the *exact same* stuff as the seed that was sown [for example, we plant kernels of actual wheat, in order to produce a wheat-yield]. It is only that it has multiplied *quantitatively*; by sowing a small quantity of seed, a much larger quantity of grain is produced. [The individual wheat kernels produce wheat stalks with many more kernels on them. Yet what was sown and what was grown is the very same substance.]

... Concerning the planting of a tree, however, that which grows is an immeasurably better substance than that which was planted: By planting a bulb or grafting a twig, an entire tree will grow – accompanied by quality fruits and the like. In other words, in addition to the quantitative multiplication that occurs when a tree is planted, an altogether *innovative* product is achieved.

A similar concept applies to the “tree” within each person... (Tu BiShevat 5750; Hisva’aduyos p.253. See p.262.)



innovative increase and are bolstered – with each of us acting according to the best of our individual abilities.<sup>16</sup>

### LESSONS FROM TREES AND FRUITS

- Beginning with Tu BiShevat, each of us should add afresh in all aspects of divine service relating to “Man, the tree of the field.”

### TAKE PLEASURE IN SERVING HASHEM

- 1) [Fruit are not an essential staple, but rather add enjoyment to our diet. The message of “fruit,” therefore, is that] we should serve Hashem with *pleasure*. In other words, we should not restrict our divine service to the basic requisites of Judaism – rather, we should step beyond the rudiment requirements of law and serve Hashem with delight.<sup>17</sup>

### KEEP GROWING

- 2) When a tree is planted, it not only greatly multiplies in quantity, but also in quality – even to an incomparable extent. Further, a tree doesn’t stop growing.<sup>18</sup>

---

#### 16. “Man” means Jews

The New Year for Trees is relevant to, and connected with, man; as expressed in the verse, “Man is a tree of the field.”

Now, the term “Man” is to be understood as a reference to all Jews. For our Sages tell us that it is specifically the Jewish nation who are given the term “Adam”; the connotation of which is meant in the spirit as in the verse (Yeshayah 14:14), “Edameh LeElyon,” “compared to the Supernal.”

#### We are the Holy Land

Further, the Jews are compared to the trees with which the Torah praises the Land of Israel. After all, the Land of Israel is connected with, and is indeed named after, the “Children of Israel.” Hashem also refers to the Jewish people as His “land,” and He tells them “You will be a desirable land to Me.” (Parshas Beshalach 5752; Hisva’aduyos p.181)

17. Tu BiShevat 5750; Hisva’aduyos p.262 and 253.

18. [The verse praising the produce of Israel also alludes to various aspects of the service of the Jewish people:

#### Wheat and barley

The Torah first mentions two *grains* – “A land of wheat, barley, etc.” – and then lists five *fruits*: “Grapes, figs and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and date

splitting of the sea – including the detail concerning the Jewish children who picked fruit from trees that miraculously sprouted from the sea-bed and fed them to the birds that joined the Jews in song.<sup>9</sup>

### INGRAIN COMPASSION FOR ALL

- We should particularly strive to imbue our children with the positive trait of compassion for all living creatures, in the spirit of the verse, “His mercy is upon all His creatures.” This is effectively impressed upon them by recounting the feeding of the birds on Shabbos Shirah.<sup>9</sup>

## TU BISHEVAT

15th of Shevat – New Year for Trees

### INTRODUCTION

The Mishnah<sup>11</sup> designates Tu BiShevat as “Rosh Hashanah LeIlanos,” “the New Year for Trees.”

In the Land of Israel, most of the year’s rain has already fallen and the first trees begin to bloom. For that reason, Tu BiShevat marks a new year in the cycle of separating tithes (“Terumah” and “Ma’aser”) from fruit grown in the Land of Israel, as well as for reckoning a tree’s first three years (during which time its fruit is prohibited as “Orlah”), and the redemption of its fourth year’s yield (“Neta Revai”).

It is customary to eat fruits on Tu BiShevat, and particularly the species with which the Torah praises the Land of Israel: Grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. We reflect on the lessons to be learned from trees and fruit – in the spirit of the verse, “Man is a tree of the field” (Devarim 20:19).

On the 15<sup>th</sup> day of every month, the moon is at its fullest. Spiritually, this represents the climax and perfection of

---

11. Rosh Hashanah 1:1.

divine service unique to that month. Tu BiShevat therefore represents the complete state in our Shevat-related service.

Tu BiShevat occurs just five days after the Yahrtzait of the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak. “Yosef” signifies “multiplication” and “growth” in divine service; “Yitzchak” connotes “pleasure” in serving Hashem. It is not surprising, then, that the mid-month immediately following his Yahrtzait is celebrated as the renewal and growth of trees and their pleasurable fruit – as well as their counterpart in man’s spiritual service.

### PREPARE FROM YUD SHEVAT

- We should begin our main preparations for Tu BiShevat four full days in advance, i.e., on Yud (10<sup>th</sup>) Shevat.<sup>12</sup>

---

#### 12. Just like Rosh Hashanah

At least four days prior to Rosh Hashanah, we begin reciting morning Selichos (penitently prayers). This same concept (of preparing four days in advance) applies to “Rosh Hashanah Lellanos,” the New Year for Trees. (Yud Shevat 5749; Hisva’aduyos p.254)

#### In the month of growth

Rosh Hashanah L’ilanos marks the start of growth for the entire coming year. For that reason, it specifically occurs during the month of Shevat, for Shevat corresponds to the tribe of Yosef. [Each of the twelve months corresponds to another of the twelve tribes, with the eleventh month (Shevat) corresponding to the eleventh tribe, Yosef.] Now, the “Yosef” [means “multiplication” and therefore] represents “addition” and “growth.”

#### After the Yahrtzait representing growth

... In this generation, an additional aspect has been introduced to the month of Shevat, namely, the 10<sup>th</sup> of Shevat, the Yom Hilulah (Yahrtzait) of the Leader of our generation, whose first name is Yosef.

#### Complete state of sanctity

On the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month, when the moon of Shevat is at its fullest, “completion” is brought to all aspects of divine service pertaining to Shevat – and specifically in its most significant aspect [the day of sanctity, Yud Shevat], that is alluded to in the verse “The tenth shall be *holy*.” [The full verse concerns animal tithes, and reads (Vayikra 27:32), “All that pass under the staff (Shavet), the *tenth one will be holy unto Hashem*.” The very next verse (v.33) includes the particular initial of Hashem’s Name that corresponds to the month of Shevat. It is on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Shevat, then, that] completion and perfection is brought to all aspects of the Yom Hilulah of “The Yosef of Our Generation.”

### NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

- We should utilize the extremely opportune time of the New Year for Trees to make positive resolutions for the entire coming year – and to begin their immediate implementation.<sup>13</sup>

### TIME TO ADD

- We should also use this time to add and put far greater energy into all aspects of our divine service – both our personal performance as well as our outreach to others.<sup>14</sup>

### A FULL AND FRUITFUL DIVINE SERVICE

- The Torah praises the Land of Israel for its seven species of produce: “A land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates; and land of olive oil and date honey.” The various forms of spiritual service alluded to by these kinds are contained within each member of the Children of Israel.<sup>15</sup> On Tu BiShevat, we should ensure that all of these modes of service receive an

---

#### Tu BiShevat now assumes greater significance

Coming shortly after Yud Shevat, the New Year for Trees is now greatly enhanced. For Tu BiShevat is the start of growth – the theme of “Yosef” (meaning “multiplication”) – the power for which is drawn into every Jew in our generation via the Leader of our generation. (See also Tu BiShevat 574; Hisva’aduyos p.261-262. See there at length.)

#### 13. Head of the year

Our Sages specifically call Tu BiShevat a “*Rosh Hashanah*,” a “*Head of the Year*” – and not merely the “*Beginning of the Year*.” This teaches us that Tu BiShevat includes, and bestows vitality to, the entire year – much as a head includes the vitality for all the limbs of a body and continues to control them even after its vitality has spread forth and been installed within those limbs. (Tu BiShevat 5748; Hisva’aduyos p.321)

#### 14. Ibid.

#### Time to step up production

We should utilize the time of Tu BiShevat to bolster and add in all areas of divine service – alluded to in the verse, “A land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and date honey,” concerning both ourselves as well as others. (Tu BiShevat 5752; Hisva’aduyos p.201)

#### 15. The details of these concepts have already been explained many times.

See at length Tu BiShevat 5752 (Hisva’aduyos p.193 ff.) and Tu BiShevat 5750 (Hisva’aduyos p.256 ff.).