

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

6701 Old Pimlico Road
Baltimore, MD 21209

www.chabadshul.org



February 4, 2023

Beshalach — Shabbat Shira

13 Shevat, 5783

Tree People

Tu B'Shevat is just around the corner. As kids, many of us saved our pennies and bought trees to be planted in Israel in honor of Tu B'Shevat. We knew that it was the "New Year for Trees," whatever that meant, and that was about it. But why the big emphasis on trees? So much so that there is a special mitzva in the Torah not to destroy fruit-bearing trees when conquering enemy lands, and that we are told that if one is planting a tree and is informed that Moshiach has arrived he should finish planting the tree before going to greet Moshiach.

The Torah itself tells us that a person is similar to a tree. This likeness is particularly noticeable in a spiritual sense.

A tree has roots, a trunk and branches, and fruit or seed.

The root is the means of obtaining the nourishing substances from the earth necessary to the tree's life. It also provides a firm entrenchment for the plant against the wind. It is by far the most important life-giving agent of the plant, though the leaves also contribute toward the nourishment of the tree.

The trunk and branches provide the main body of the tree, and clearly mark the growth and development of the tree.

But the tree reaches perfection only upon producing a nut, or seed, or seed-bearing fruit, for in it lies the potential for the procreation of its kind, generation after generation.

How are these three components similar to a person's spiritual life?

The root is his faith which links the Jew with his origin, and which constantly obtains for him his spiritual nourishment.

The trunk and branches are the Torah and mitzvot. These must grow even as the age of a tree increases its stem and branches.

But the fruit, which more than anything else justifies the existence of the tree, is the good deeds of man, those mitzvot which benefit others as well as self, and which have within them the seed that produces similar good deeds.

The roots of the Jew and his very link with the origin of this life lie in his true faith in G-d and in all the fundamental principles of our religion. Unless the roots are firm, and firmly embodied in the soil, the tree, despite its trunk and branches and leaves, will not withstand the strong wind. The development and advancement - and, in fact, the entire stature - of the Jew can be seen through his good deeds, in the practice of the Torah and the performance of mitzvot. Finally, his perfection comes through the fruit, by benefitting others, and helping to perpetuate our great heritage.

(from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

Tu B'Shvat – An Investment In Our Future

In Vayikra (19:23) we find the following commandment: "And when you will come into the land and (you will) plant any tree for food...(for) three years it (the fruit) shall be restricted to you, it shall not be eaten. This verse describes the commandment known as "Orla," which forbids the consumption of a tree's fruits during its first three years.

The Yalkut Shimoni explains that this verse is teaching us a lesson about responsibility. The Yalkut explains that if each individual knew when his or her life was going to end, the world would fall into a state of disarray. People would not build. They would not plant. They would say "I am going to die tomorrow. Why should I bother exerting any effort that is only for the benefit of others!" For this reason, mankind was not given the knowledge of their date of demise. Now, people will be willing to prepare for the future. Being they might very well be part of that future, people will be ready to exert effort on something which they assume they will be around to benefit from.

It was because of the dangers of a similar attitude that the commandment of Orla was phrased in its particular fashion. G-d was telling the nation of Israel "You will arrive at the land of Israel. You will find it filled with beautiful fruits and abundant crops – all of the best. You should not be satisfied with this. You can not just sit back and enjoy what others have done in the past. Just as others have toiled in the past so that you can presently enjoy the fruits of their labor, you must in turn plant for the future, for your children and generations to come."

(continued on the other side)

For this reason, the verse says “And when you will come into the land and _you will_ plant any tree for food...” The part of the verse concerning the planting of trees is not merely a preface to what should be done after planting; it is a commandment itself – you will plant trees! G-d was concerned that the nation might be swayed by a sense of egotism: “I have what I need, so why should I work on that which only others will benefit from?” The planting of trees is a perfect demonstration that egotism has not set in. Fruits do not appear instantly, and effort is needed to assure that any tree bears good fruit. Planting trees is an investment for the future.

On Tu B'Shvat, many have the custom to plant trees. The planting of trees indeed beautifies our land. As we mentioned in the last post, our trees are a valued gift from G-d. However, trees also provide us with an important lesson: it is our responsibility to prepare for the future, and to assure that generations to come can do the same. Whether we do or do not plant trees on Tu B'Shvat, we should remember that we are responsible for the future of the next generation. We must not allow ourselves to become blinded by our own self-worth. We should merit to see our actions bear beautiful fruits for years to come!

(by Rabbi Yehudah Prero from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

Dedication of plaques on the Shul board which is prominently located in the hall at the entrance to the Shul is an appropriate means of Tzedakah and supports the Shul as well. Below is the list of items available. Please contact Howard Kaplon at hkaplon@towson.edu for more information.

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| 1. Top (large) Plaques \$5,400 | 2. Medium Plaques \$3,600 |
| 3. Small Plaques \$1,000 | 4. Simcha Leaf \$250 |

Yahrzeit Plaques on the Shul's Memorial board are available. Each yahrzeit plaque is \$360.

Kol Hanaarim– Father and Son Learning – every Friday evening during the winter at 8:00 to 8:45 p.m. in The Shul. Cholent and other refreshments are served. Each session is ‘topped off’ at the end with a fascinating story. For any questions, please see Rabbi Itzkowitz.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to **Mindy Pazornick** on the loss of her brother, **Harry Kessler, Yezkiel ben Yekutiel**.

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

Shiva will be at 7 Emerald Ridge Court, Baltimore, MD 21209 through Tuesday (Feb. 7) morning.

Yahrzeits This Week:

Ethel Fischer 15 Shevat - Sunday night / Monday for husband Yaakov Mordechai Ben HaRav Zev Yehudah

DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday, 2/3 – 12 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Shabbat Candles — 5:11 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:15 p.m.

Shabbat, 2/4 – 13 Shevat

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:46 a.m.
Minchah — 5:00 p.m.
Shiur: *Overcoming Folly* — after Minchah
Ma'ariv — 6:12 p.m.

Sunday, 2/5 – 14 Shevat

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:20 p.m.

Monday – Tu B'Shevat, 2/6 – 15 Shevat

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:20 p.m.

Tuesday, 2/7 – 16 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:20 p.m.

Wednesday, 2/8 – 17 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:20 p.m.

Thursday, 2/9 – 18 Shevat

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:20 p.m.

Friday, 2/10 – 19 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Shabbat Candles — 5:19 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:20 p.m.