



YOM YAROK, GREEN DAY

A Tu B'Shevat Celebration

We are pleased to present this new program from Women's League for Conservative Judaism for use on or near Tu B'Shevat -- this year, 2010, on January 30. It contains a wide variety of activities for sisterhood members and their families, including:

- study materials: short Tu B'Shevat seder and "environmental beit din"
- stories and poetry for all ages
- crafts for all ages
- parsley planting project
- games

Newly created Tu B'Shevat Match Games for children, ages 3-10 can be ordered for \$5.00 each (two different sets: pre-school or early elementary). The matching card games are appropriate for Shabbat.

The entire package of Yom Yarok material can be ordered for \$20.00. To order, call or e-mail the WLCJ order department, orderdept@wlcj.org. Costs include shipping and handling.

Use of Material

After reading through the material, decide which activities you want to use – how many, how long, what ages? Most contain directions, materials and/or questions for discussion. Please note that the crafts are not appropriate for Shabbat, but included are other Shabbat-friendly activities, such as story-telling and poetry, games, and study texts.

INTRODUCTION TO TU B'SHEVAT

Tu b'Shevat, perhaps more than any other Jewish celebration, has evolved since it was first prescribed in Mishnah, Rosh HaShanah 1:1. *"...on the first of Shevat is the new year for trees according to the school of Shammai; the school of Hillel says on the fifteenth."*

Hillel's ruling prevailed, hence the name of the holiday Tu (the number 15 in Hebrew) b'Shevat (in the month of Shevat). Originally, this date marked the yearly reckoning of the age of trees for purposes of taxes and of *orlah*, the first three years during which a tree's fruit could not be eaten because it was considered consecrated to God.

With the emergence of Lurianic kabbalah in sixteenth-century Tzfat, the observance of Tu b'Shevat acquired new significance as Jewish mystics imposed theological symbolism on natural phenomena. Kabbalists and chasidim composed prayers and meditations to be read while contemplating nature, believing God to be manifest in all of its majesty. The new year of trees was endowed with particular mystical significance, generating new rituals, including the Tu b'Shevat seder.

Zionists, at the turn of the twentieth century again infused this date with new meaning with trees as a symbol of Jewish return and renewal in the land of Israel. Most recently, Tu b'Shevat has been embraced by Jewish environmentalists in Israel and North America as a kind of Jewish Earth Day because of its association with trees and, by extension, with nature.

Special thanks to members of the Women's League Program Advisory Committee: Paula Coplon (Creative Judaic Arts Chair) and Sandy Eliaser (Tikkun Olam Chair), and to Karen Laveson (Director of Education, Congregation Beth El, in Yardley, Pennsylvania).

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