

## 15 MINUTE TU B'SHEVAT SEDER

- This should be set up in advance, with the various fruits on plates, and wine/grape juice open and, if possible, in carafes or pitchers.
- The leader can divide up the speaking parts ahead of time, or ask for readers as the seder progresses.

### For the seder:

- small cups
- red and white wine
- red and white grape juice

### Fruits from each of the following groups:

- orange, tangerine, grapefruit, kiwi, coconut, peanut, walnut, almond, pomegranate
- peach, plum, date, olive, cherry, apricot
- grapes, raisins, fig, cranberry, strawberry, carob
- avocado, watermelon, mango

**Leader:** Today, in this Tu b'Shevat seder, as in the Passover seder, we will drink four cups of wine, read from the Bible and from the rabbis, and sample special foods related to the festival.

### Reading 1

*Then God said: 'See, I give you every seed-bearing plant that is upon all the earth, and every tree that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has seed bearing fruit...they shall be yours for food.'*

**Leader:** The Jewish mystical tradition regards Tu B'Shevat as the turning of the seasons from dark (winter-Chanukkah) to light (spring-Pesach), from the time of exile (darkness) to the era of redemption (light). As we drink four cups of wine or juice here, they reflect the change of color from season to season.

Today we will also eat fruits from four different categories. The types of fruits correspond to different human traits and personality types.

### First Cup

Jewish ritual is sanctified with the drinking of wine or juice. The first cup we drink is white, symbolizing winter. The earth is often white, snow-covered – sometimes barren.

[Pour a glass of white juice or wine.]

We will begin with the recitation of the *berakhab* for the first cup.

*Barukh Atah Adonai  
Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam*

We praise you, Adonai  
our God, Ruler of the universe

*Borei p'ri hagafen.*

Who creates fruit of the vine.

When celebrating a holiday for the first time, perhaps eating fruits for the first time in the season, we recite *Shebecheyanu*.

*Barukh Ata Adonai  
Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam  
shebecheyanu, ve'kiyemanu  
ve'higianu laz'man hazeh.*

We praise you, Adonai  
our God, Ruler of the universe  
for giving us life, for sustaining us  
and for enabling us to reach this day.

**Leader:** We will select from fruits and nuts that are edible inside, but inedible outside. They are like individuals who are difficult to get to know, but you are rewarded when you peel away the top layer.

As we eat the first selection of fruits, those with a hard or inedible shell, we recite the berakhah for fruits. [Choose from: orange, tangerine, grapefruit, kiwi, coconut, peanut, walnut, almond, or pomegranate.]

*Barukh Atah Adonai  
Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam  
Borei p'ri ha'etz.*

We praise you, Adonai  
our God, Ruler of the universe  
Who creates fruit of the tree.

## Second Cup

**Leader:** The second cup is still white, but with a tinge of red. This symbolizes the earth as it awakens from its winter slumber, the beginning of spring. In Israel, pink and white flowers dot the hills and mountains. The white juice with a splash of color is like nature as it reawakens to color.

[Pour a second cup of white wine/juice with a splash of red.]

**Leader:** As we drink the second cup and recite the berakhah, may we, too, blossom like flowers.

*Barukh Atah Adonai  
Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam  
Borei p'ri hagafen.*

We praise you, Adonai  
our God, Ruler of the universe  
Who creates fruit of the vine.

**Leader:** We now eat fruits that are edible on the outside but with inedible pits or seeds. These are like individuals you meet quickly or casually, but never get to know completely. [Choose from: peach, plum, date, olive, cherry, apricot, mango.]

*Barukh Atah Adonai  
Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam  
Borei p'ri ha'etz.*

We praise you, Adonai  
our God, Ruler of the universe  
Who creates fruit of the tree.

## Reading 2

*My beloved called and said to me: "Rise, my love, my beauty, come away. For, lo, the winter is over, the rain is past and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, the time of song has come; and the call of the turtle-dove is heard in our land; the fig tree is ripening its early figs, and the vines in blossom give forth their fragrance. Rise, my love, my beauty, come away."*

*(Song of Songs 2:11-13)*

### **Third Cup**

**Leader:** For the third cup we drink a cup of red wine/juice with a splash of white. It symbolizes the land as it warms, and the colors continue to deepen as the ripen. As we drink this, may we celebrate the warmth of the season and its abundant harvest.

*Barukh Atah Adonai  
Eloheinu melekh ha-olam  
Borei p'ri hagafen.*

We praise you, Adonai  
our God, Ruler of the universe  
Who creates fruit of the vine.

**Leader:** With this cup of wine we eat fruits that are entirely edible, both inside and out. These are like people with whom we form quick and lasting friendships. [Choose from: grape, raisin, fig, cranberry, strawberry, or carob.]

*Barukh Atah Adonai  
Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam  
Borei p'ri ha'etz.*

We praise you, Adonai  
our God, Ruler of the universe  
Who creates fruit of the tree.

### **Reading 3**

*Why is Torah compared to a fig? Because every fruit has in it something inedible: dates have pits, grapes have seeds, and pomegranates have skin. But every part of the fig is good to eat. (Yalkut Shemoni: Joshua 1)*

### **Fourth Cup**

**Leader:** In summer the flowers are in full bloom, with every field and tree yielding fruit. We drink the darkest cup of wine/juice in thanks of the richness of the land. The cycle is now complete.

[Pour a cup of red wine or juice]

*Barukh Atah Adonai  
Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam  
Borei p'ri hagafen.*

We praise you, Adonai  
our God, Ruler of the universe  
Who creates fruit of the vine.

**Leader:** With the fourth cup we have fruits with both an inner pit and a hard outer skin that cannot be eaten. We do not discard fruits because of an inedible part; likewise, all kinds of people are worth knowing. [Choose from: avocado, watermelon, or mango]

*Barukh Atah Adonai  
Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam  
Borei p'ri ha'etz.*

We praise you, Adonai  
our God, Ruler of the universe  
Who creates fruit of the tree

**Leader:** As we conclude this Tu B'Shevat seder in which we celebrate trees and all that they give us, we are reminded of the words of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, one of our greatest rabbinic sages:

**Reading 4**

*Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai once said: "If you are in the act of planting a tree and you are told, 'Behold the Messiah is coming!' plant your tree first and only then go and greet the Messiah."*