



# Hadracha Choveret

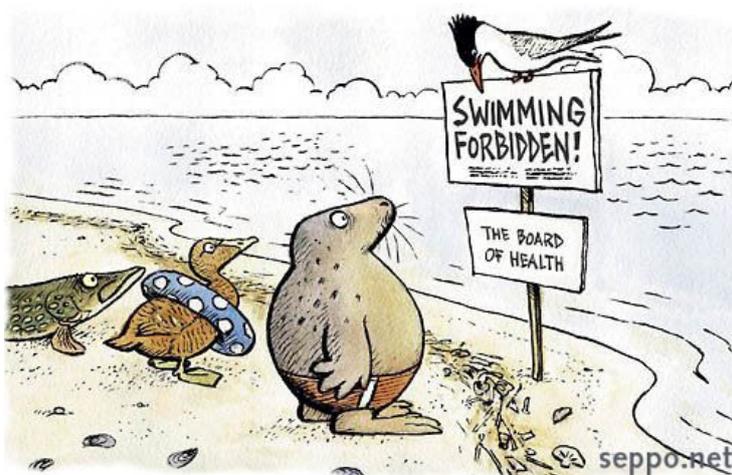


תנועת בני עקיבא  
BNEI AKIVA UK

BNEI AKIVA'S WEEKLY EDUCATIONAL HANDBOOK FOR MADRICHIM

## Includes:

1. **Roshim Guide** – this covers the theme and concepts in detail. Roshim/Sganim should read this before their meetings and understand what they will be teaching and discussing in their meetings.
2. **A Prezi** – this covers the key points in more detail and should be used as a tool to teach and discuss the Choveret in meetings.
  - a. **A PDF** of the slides for those without access to a computer/tablet/phones or in large groups.
3. **Suggested activities** – a series of activities linked to each section of the Choveret. Use these as a springboard to develop your own activities for each Sviva and to fall back on if you're struggling for ideas.





## What is Tu Bishvat?

Literally it means the 15<sup>th</sup> of Shevat. But why is the date of any relevance and where does it come from?

### 1: Mishna Rosh Hashana 1:1

The four new years are: On the first of Shevat, the new year for the trees according to the words of the House of Shammai; The House of Hillel says, on the fifteenth thereof.	אַרְבַּעָה רֵאשִׁי שָׁנִים הֵם... בְּאֶחָד בְּשֶׁבֶט, רֵאשִׁי הַשָּׁנָה לְאֵילָן, כְּדַבְרֵי בֵּית שְׁמַאי. בֵּית הַלֵּל אֹמְרִים, בְּחִמְשָׁה עָשָׂר בּוּ:
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So what does that mean?

Rabbi Pinchas Kehati comments on this Mishna: "The Talmud explains that the New Year for the trees was established in Shevat, 'Because most of the rains have already fallen, and the resin [read as nutrients] has come up in the trees, and as a result the fruits begin to form now.'"

To understand the Halachic significance of this 'new year of the trees' it helps to think of it as a 'Birthday for the trees' and a way to calculate how old the tree is. The age of the tree is relevant for things like:

- **Orlah** (A prohibition against eating the fruit of trees produced during the first three years after they are planted. (Vay. 19:23)
- **Neta Reva'i** (A commandment to bring fourth-year fruit crops to Jerusalem as a tithe (tax). (Vay. 19:24).
- **Maaser Sheni** was a tithe which was eaten in Jerusalem and **Maaser Ani** was a tithe given to the poor (Dev. 14:22-29) that were also calculated by whether the fruit ripened before or after Tu BiShvat.

So there is a technical reason for Tu Bishvat: Ancient Israel was an agricultural society, there was (and still is) laws that govern how the people should relate to their produce/crops. Tu Bishvat played a role in implementing those laws. These laws, like most of Halacha, have the overarching message that we are not at liberty to do what we want with what we have. As a people of God we work in partnership with God in the world and as such acknowledge that we have a special responsibility towards the earth, it being God's creation and all.

So what exactly is that responsibility towards the earth? Read through the following 3 texts and discuss the questions at the end.

### 2: Kohelet Raba (Vilna edition) 7:28

When G-d created the first man God took him and showed him all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him 'See My works, how beautiful and praiseworthy they are. And everything that I created, I created it for you. Be careful not to spoil or destroy My world - for if you do, there will be nobody after you to repair it.	בשעה שברא הקב"ה את אדם הראשון נטלו והחזירו על כל אילני גן עדן ואמר לו ראה מעשי כמה נאים ומשובחין הן וכל מה שבראתי בשבילך בראתי, תן דעתך שלא תקלקל ותחריב את עולמי, שאם קלקלת אין מי שיתקן אחריך
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**3: Vayikra Rabbah 25:3**

Rabbi Yochanan ben Shimon began, "After the Lord your God shall you walk" [*This means to mimic/imitate*] (Deuteronomy 12:5). But is it possible for a person of flesh and blood to walk after the Holy One?...But rather, the Holy One, blessed be He, from the very beginning of the creation of the world, only occupied Himself with plantation first. Hence it is written (Genesis 2:8), 'And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden.' You also, when you enter into the land, only occupy yourselves with plantation first. Hence it is written, 'When you shall come to the land.'

רבי יהודה בן רבי סימון פתח (דברים יג, ה): אַחֲרֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם תֵּלְכוּ, וְכִי אֶפְשֶׁר לְבָשָׂר וְדָם לְהֵלֵךְ אַחֲרֵי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא... אֶלָּא מִתְחִלַּת בְּרִיתוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם לֹא נִתְעַסַּק הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶלָּא בְּמַטֵּעַ תְּחִלָּה, הֲדָא הוּא דְכָתִיב (בראשית ב, ח): וַיִּטֵּעַ ה' אֱלֹהִים גֶּן בְּעֵדֶן, אֶף אַתֶּם כְּשֶׁנִּכְנָסִין לְאֶרֶץ לֹא תִתְעַסְקוּ אֶלָּא בְּמַטֵּעַ תְּחִלָּה, הֲדָא הוּא דְכָתִיב: כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל הָאָרֶץ וְנִטְעַתֶּם.

**4: Gemara Taanit 23a**

One day as [a man named] Honi was walking along he saw a man planting a carob tree. Honi asked him "how many years will it take until it will bear fruit?" The man replied "not for seventy years". Honi asked him, "do you really believe you'll live another seventy years?" The man answered, "I found this world provided with carob trees, and as my ancestors planted them for me, so I too plant them for my descendants."

יומא חד הוה אזל באורחא, חזייה לההוא גברא דהוה נטע חרובא, אמר ליה: האי, עד כמה שנין טעין? - אמר ליה: עד שבעין שנין. - אמר ליה: פשיטא לך דחייט שבעין שנין? - אמר ליה: האי [גברא] עלמא בחרובא אשכחתי, כי היכי דשתלי לי אבהתי - שתלי נמי לבראי.

- What do trees symbolize in these verses?
- How do they teach us about what is a good environment for people?
- What can they teach us about planting for the long-term and preparation for the future?
- What do they teach us about our responsibility towards preserving and nourishing the environment?

**Environmental Sustainability**

Today it is generally acknowledged that the top 4 environmental problems are:

1. Pollution
  - a. Oceanic Dead Zones
  - b. Industrial and Household Waste
2. Human-Made Climate Change (Global Warming)
3. Deforestation
4. Loss of Biodiversity

You can read more about these issues here:

- <https://climate.nasa.gov/>
- <https://www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution/effects>
- <https://www.conserve-energy-future.com/current-environmental-issues.php>
- <https://inhabitat.com/7-biggest-threats-to-the-environment-why-we-still-need-earth-day/>



## Bnei Akiva Beshalach/Tu Bishvat:

### Roshim's Guide to the Theme and Concepts

We're going to focus a little bit on one particular sub-issue but feel free to pick another issue to focus on.

## The Last Straw! Plastic Straws

Across the UK in the past month or so a campaign has been starting up to drastically cut down on the amount of plastic waste produced.

*"Plastic straws should be banned across the UK and replaced with biodegradable paper ones to cut levels of pollution, an SNP MSP has said as she launched a campaign on the issue.*

*Kate Forbes, whose Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch constituency covers both the east and west coasts of Scotland, said plastic pollution was doing severe damage to wildlife.*

*"The majority of seabirds are ingesting plastics and other sea creatures are being injured and suffocated by our plastic pollution" Kate Forbes MSP*

*The politician said she wanted both the Scottish and UK Governments to ban plastic straws as a step towards a wider crackdown on single-use items such as plastic cutlery and cotton buds"*

<https://inews.co.uk/news/environment/ban-plastic-straws-across-uk-says-snp-msp/>

*Pubs are calling time on "wasteful" plastic drinking straws, which campaigners say are used only once yet take centuries to decompose. So is it time to refuse the straw and get used to sipping our drinks instead?*

*JD Wetherspoon is the latest pub to stop automatically putting straws in drinks, effective this week, saying eco-friendly paper straws will be offered in its 900 pubs by the end of the year.*

*"It's a waste," says Su Cacioppo, Wetherspoon's personnel and legal director. "Personally I like a straw but a lot of people don't even want them."*

*Designer Vivienne Westwood recently backed an online campaign for people to refuse straws and start drinking from the glass - known as Refuse the Straw - which began in the US and is encouraging pubs and restaurants to follow suit.*

Read more: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-41397345>



**Watch the following video about the effect of plastic pollution on animals:**

<https://vimeo.com/25563376>



### What Do You Think and What Can You Do?

1. What do you think you can do about reducing plastic waste in your life?
2. What do you think the Tnua could be doing about plastic waste?
3. Do you agree with the campaign?
4. What small thing do you think you could do to reduce plastic waste at home, in your schools, with your friends?