

Journeys to Tu BiShevat

A calendar of readings and mitzvot in preparation for the New Year for Trees

“Nature is of the very essence of Deity”

- Israel Baal Shem Tov, *Shivkhei Ha-Besht*, 329



Introduction

Tu BiShevat has in the past been such a minor festival in Judaism that some contemporary books on festivals do not even mention it. Tu BiShevat gained much more prominence when the Kabbalists of Sfard created their own rituals to celebrate the day, most notably a Tu BiShevat seder. An exploration of Jewish texts immediately reveals an eternally contemporary theme to this festival, and in 2007 the Assembly of Rabbis decided that it was time to turn Tu BiShevat into a major festival. “Journeys to Tu BiShevat” is one means by which we might achieve this.

According to the Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 2a), there were two opinions for the date of the New Year for Trees – the school of Shammai said the 1st of Shevat, the school of Hillel said the 15th. Hillel’s opinion was accepted and Tu BiShevat (which literally means “the fifteenth of [the month of] Shevat”) became the New Year for Trees. “Journeys to Tu BiShevat” celebrates their discussion by presenting a calendar of readings and positive actions that start on the day suggested by Shammai, and end on the day suggested by Hillel.

The increased relevance of Tu BiShevat can be found not just in text, but in action, so “Journeys to Tu BiShevat” helps us prepare ourselves spiritually and physically for two whole weeks, in anticipation of this wondrous festival. Every day you will find a large selection of mitzvot to choose from, depending on time, resources, spirituality and weather conditions! When you use this calendar again next year, you may want to repeat the same mitzvah, or you may want to explore others...the choice is yours!

Our selection and arrangement of texts is deliberate. Just as trees grow, so too our Judaism grows. From the initial seed, a thing of beauty slowly develops. To mirror this, our primary readings start at the very foundation of Jewish existence and blossom into some of the many delights of Jewish thought in our time. Many of the texts quoted here may, of course, be found in their original Hebrew, although they are all presented here in translation to give greater access to all readers.

“Journeys to Tu BiShevat” is being emailed to members of the Movement for Reform Judaism as opposed to being printed, for obvious environmental reasons. Of course, some copies may well be available from your synagogue for those who do not have access to email, but our preference is to save paper. *If you are printing this off, please consider printing it double-sided on renewably-sourced paper.* This document is available in Microsoft Word format for greatest access, and we ask that you do not alter the content or reproduce it for any purpose other than how it was originally intended.

Rabbi Neil Amswych, Principal Rabbi of Bournemouth Reform Synagogue and Founder of IDEA: Interfaith Dorset Education and Action

SHABBAT SHIRAH

In the context of our journey of reconnection with nature, there is an exceptionally worthwhile custom which deserves to be revived. Shabbat Shirah is the Shabbat in which the Song of the Sea is chanted, celebrating the splitting of the Sea of Reeds. Your Rabbi or synagogue calendar will be able to tell you when Shabbat Shirah falls this year.

The custom that deserves attention on this Shabbat is to scatter remnants of food from the Shabbat meal outside your home to feed the birds. There are two possible reasons for this custom.

In the sidrah of Shabbat Shirah, known as Beshallah, we read, ‘And it was on the seventh day, some of the people went forth to gather [manna], but they found none (Ex. 16:27).’ “On which the Rabbis comment that those who went forth to gather the manna on Shabbat day were iniquitous. Since they knew that the manna would not fall on the Shabbat, as Moses had said, they went forth during the night and scattered some of their leftover manna on the fields. Their intentions were to gather it in the morning and to bring it into the camp before the eyes of the people, so that the people might say that Moses was deceitful and that he fabricated mitzvot himself. When morning came and they went for the manna they found none. The birds had preceded them and had gathered it up during the night, thereby vindicating Moses’ words and causing the Sabbath to be sanctified among the people. The birds therefore receive their justified reward when their righteousness is recalled in the reading of this sidra. Others say that the reward they receive is accorded them for the song which they utter to God as they chirp daily. And when we read the Torah portion which contains our song, we also recall the song of the birds.”¹

While people often feed birds with bread, strictly this is not ideal food for them. Although they will eat bread, it is worth knowing that they prefer to eat certain grains, or birdseed. Your local pet shop should be able to advise you.



1 Eliyahu Kitov, The Book of Our Heritage, Vol I, p. 345-6

FIRST DAY OF SHEVAT

God said, "Let the water below the sky be gathered into one area, that the dry land may appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering of waters God called Seas. And God saw that this was good. And God said, "Let the earth sprout forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants, fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that this was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

- Genesis 1: 9 - 13

The organisms that matter perhaps most of all ... are the plants. Many of them are unglamorous, hard-working, abundant species but, of course, without them there would be no way in which the energy of the sun was translated into available energy for all other organisms.

Plants are the primary life on the planet. Everything else depends on them. If one thinks of ecosystems as pyramids, plants are at the very bottom and yet are the most profoundly important. And if they were pulled away, obviously there would be nothing for anything to live on.

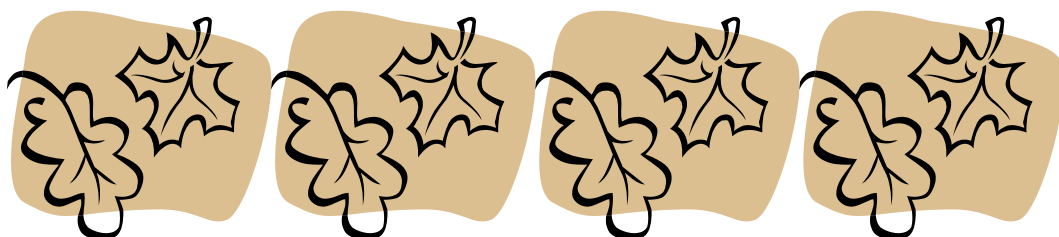
- Richard Mabey

Drought weakens the ability of trees to fight off aggressive bugs because the dryness means a weaker sap flow that's easier for beetles to push through. Across parts of New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and Utah, where a record-setting drought took hold in 2002, pine beetles and other drought-related stresses have killed up to 90% of the native piñon trees, turning the needles a sickly red before they fall off.... Even assuming that climate supports piñon regrowth, it will take decades to re-establish the landscape... Climate-driven landscape change could be far more rapid and widespread than even the experts expect.

- Robert Henson

MITZVOT FOR TODAY

- Research a species of tree that you know is likely to be found near your home. Learn as much as you can about the tree, and then go out to find it. When you find it, carefully study it to see how it is growing and what life it supports.
- Learn about an endangered species of plant. Try to discover ways to protect it.
- Ensure that your house and garden conserve as much water as possible.
- Learn which areas of the world are particularly susceptible to drought today.
- Donate some money to a project that helps relieve drought.
- Form a local neighbourhood intervention group to keep an eye on vulnerable neighbours during times of intense weather.
- Learn about the effects of invasive species.
- Learn about the climate-related spread of fire ants in America and Australia, or spruce budworms in Alaska.
- Add a variety of plants to your garden to support local wildlife.
- Find a tree in your local area that is protected by the local government.
- Learn about the causes and responses to the droughts that have occurred in Israel in recent years.
- Grow a roof-garden (or at least ensure that your loft and walls are insulated properly).
- Look at images of the Dead Sea over the last 20 years.



SECOND DAY OF SHEVAT

God blessed them and God said to them, "Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and subdue it; and rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth."

- Genesis 1: 28

The Eternal One took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to till it and to preserve it.

- Genesis 2: 15

The biblical concept of dominion is quite different from the concept of domination, and the difference is crucial. Specifically, followers of this tradition are charged with the duty of stewardship, because the same biblical passage that grants them "dominion" also requires them to "care for" the earth even as they "work" it. The requirement of stewardship and its grant of dominion are not in conflict; in recognizing the sacredness of creation, believers are called upon to remember that even as they "till" the earth they must also "keep" it.

- Al Gore

The notion of religion becoming involved in the environment, I think, is nothing but a good thing, provided that they cure themselves - and most religions have it - of a strange concept called stewardship of the Earth. We are not stewards of the Earth - we never could be. It's sheer foolish pride to imagine that we're clever enough yet to regulate the Earth. It is an unbelievably complex system, and we couldn't possibly take on the job. But if, on the other hand, the religions... would look at the Earth as God's creation and sacred and not something to be desecrated, then I can't see anything but good coming from it.

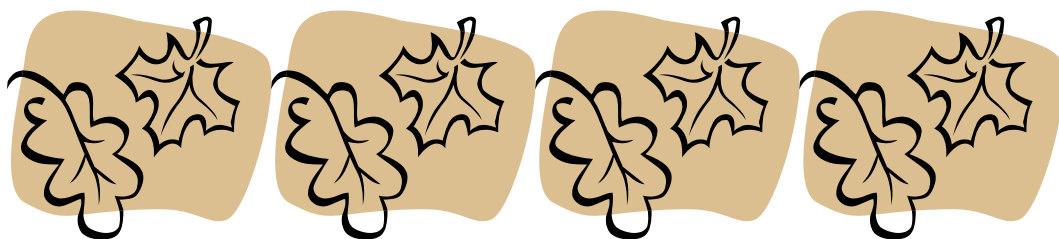
- James Lovelock

I'm very challenged by the trilobyte. The trilobyte was probably the most successful species on Planet Earth. As a species it lasted for something like 250 million years, and then it died out. It's gone. Now what is the relevance of the trilobyte to God or to humanity? It's a bit difficult to grapple with. But I think it raises fundamental questions. We assume that the worth of creation lies in our seeing it. But of course what the faiths say is, 'No. The worth of creation lies in the fact that God loves it.'

- Martin Palmer

MITZVOT FOR TODAY

- Visit a zoo and or animal refuge and try to discover why the animals need protection.
- Offer help at a local zoo or animal refuge.
- Go to a wood or forest and close your eyes. Listen to the trees.
- Pick an animal that you find to be unattractive, or that you have in the past disliked for whatever reason. If every animal is sacred, try to find the sanctity in that animal too.
- Spend some time simply watching grass grow.
- Draw a spider-diagram of species (animal and plant) that affect your life and which are affecting by you in order to start to find your place in the web of life. Ask others to add species you may have missed.
- Name three animals over which human beings have no control. Learn about them. Support any causes which protect them.
- Learn about animals living in the deep seas.
- Learn about some of the new species discovered this year.
- Learn about some of the species whose very existence is threatened simply by the presence of human beings.
- Arrange a carpooling scheme for your community.
- Read Rabbi Charles Middleburgh's article "Why our Grandchildren May Curse us" in the Winter 2007 edition of MANNA magazine.



THIRD DAY OF SHEVAT

When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the axe against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city? Only trees that you know do not yield food may be destroyed; you may cut them down for constructing siegeworks against the city that is waging war on you, until it has been reduced.

- Deuteronomy 20:19-20

Fruit trees growing in the countryside are not to be cut down, nor are they to be deprived of water so that they dry up and wither. Whoever cuts down [such trees] is liable to the penalty of flogging, and this not only during times of siege, but whenever they are wantonly destroyed. They may, however, be cut down if they damage other trees or a neighbour's land."

- Moses Maimonides, Laws of Kings, 6:18

Estimates vary, but it appears that a million or more hectares of Amazon rainforest are slashed and burned each year, mainly to create new pastures and cropland. The lost rainforest would cover a third of Belgium per year. In addition to the CO₂ emitted from fires, bacteria in the newly exposed soil may release more than twice the usual amount of another greenhouse gas, nitrous oxide, for at least two years. Brazil's National Institute for Amazon Research estimates that deforestation puts four times more carbon into the atmosphere than the nation's fossil-fuel burning does.

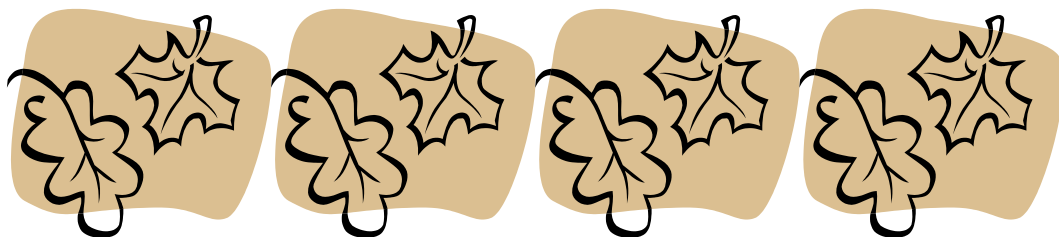
- Robert Henson

We're losing habitat very quickly at the moment, and we have done for quite a long time. So, for example, we've lost about half of the world's forest systems over the last 300 years, but the pattern of loss through that time has been very different. Much of the earlier period of loss was of temperate forests, especially in Europe and North America. More recently, we're losing tropical forests at rates never seen before in the history of humankind.

- Neville Ash

MITZVOT FOR TODAY

- Commit yourself to buying only FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) approved products in the future, be they tables, tissues or toilet paper.
- Work towards your community only using sustainable products.
- Give money to a charity that plants trees.
- Visit www.therainforestsite.com and every day help protect some rainforest for free.
- Encourage your community to actively support an environmental charity.
- Plant a tree.
- Campaign against any local destruction of trees.
- Learn about the causes of extensive rainforest losses around the world.
- Research the environmental effects of a recent war.
- Learn about the rapid loss of topsoil worldwide.
- Learn about the problems of illegal logging around the world.
- Learn about the Living Planet Index, and what you can do to reduce your footprint of global resources.
- Organise a local litter-pick.
- Go to a local wood, pick up only natural things found on the floor, and create a piece of artwork from them.



FOURTH DAY OF SHEVAT

Rabbi Tarfon used to say: It is not your duty to finish the work but neither are you free to neglect it.

- Mishnah: Pirke Avot 2:21

Rabbi Ya'akov says: If someone is studying as he walks along the road and interrupts his study and exclaims: 'How lovely is that tree! How lovely is this furrow!' Scripture considers that he has harmed his own soul.

- Mishnah: Pirke Avot 3:9²

Being prophets of doom is not terribly popular, and so the environmental movement, I think, walks a very delicate and sometimes dangerous line between giving to the faiths and to the general population a clarion call to wake up and see what's happening. But at the same time, there is a tendency in the environmental movement to say, 'It's all absolutely hopeless. There's nothing we can do. You know, we're all going down the pan.' What I think the faiths bring to this, to help the conservationists, is to remember to celebrate. Now in the environmental movement, to have a party is almost heresy. There is no environmental songbook, is there? There's not this tradition of, you know, at the back of the bus with the beers after you've been to the environmental demo, you have a sing-along. It's just a bit puritanical. And what the faiths bring in is a remembrance of celebration - that if you don't party, if you don't say, 'Isn't this fantastic' and if you don't, to some extent, allow nature itself to hold you and celebrate that, then you've lost the point... The environmental movement has awoken the faiths to the fact that there is a crisis. I think the faiths can contribute to the environmental movement a sense that you cannot tell people it's all bad all the time.

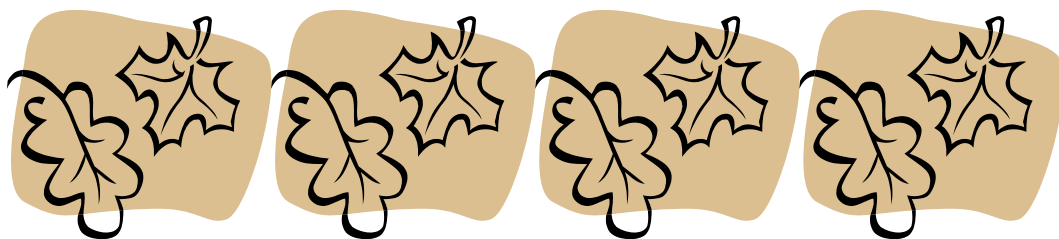
- Martin Palmer

² While the plain meaning of this text seems to be very challenging, a more nuanced reading questions the motives of the student's observation of the furrow. The insights of Abraham Joshua Heschel on Day 14 (p.30) might be helpful in distinguishing between observing a tree and observing a furrow and might show how this passage may be read with a very positive environmental message.

MITZVOT FOR TODAY

- Create your own individual or family plan of environmental action.
- Create, or contribute to, an environmental plan of action for your synagogue, school, local government or other organisation.
- Organise a local interfaith event on the environment.
- Learn from the IPCC³ about the irrefutable, negative effects of developing and developed nations on the world's climate.
- Try to find a place where you can easily admire nature. Direct your thoughts away from how nature can serve us to pure appreciation and awe of the natural world for its own sake.
- Write something about how wonderful the natural world is. See if you can get it published.
- Read through the Psalms to find expressions of pure praise and wonder.
- Hold an outdoor party that has as little negative impact on the outdoors as possible.
- Pray.
- Include an aspect of the natural world in your prayers that changes every day.
- Include the following in your prayers:
Creator of the Universe, grant me the ability to be alone; may it be my custom to go outdoors each day among the trees and grass and all growing things, and there may I be alone, and enter into prayer.

- Nachman of Bratzlav, *Maggid Sichot*, 48



³ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

FIFTH DAY OF SHEVAT

Our Rabbis taught: Six things King Hezekiah did; in three they [the Sages] agreed with him, and in three they did not agree with him ...[including that] he closed up the waters of Upper Gihon...⁴

- *Talmud Bavli: Pesachim 56a*

It's important to think about how much we have dammed the world's wild rivers. Just 50 years ago, around 1950, we had 5000 large dams around the world. Today we have 45,000, which means we've been building, on average, two large dams every day for half a century. This is a very, very large change in the hydrologic environment in a very short period of time. So ... all the creatures that are living in rivers are now dealing with a flow regime... that's very different from the one they've become adapted to.

There are big reservoirs on these rivers, and the releases from those reservoirs have a lot more to do with when farmers need to irrigate, when hydroelectric power needs to be produced, when water supplies need to be delivered, than with when fish need to migrate or spawn. So there have been serious habitat losses as a consequence of dams and reservoirs on these major rivers.

- *Sandra Postel*

Climate change is ... going to make management of water much, much more difficult. The thing that we can be pretty certain is going to happen is that the rivers that depend on mountain snow-packs for their flow are going to see that pattern of flow change significantly. More precipitation is going to fall as rain rather than snow. So the snow-pack will be less to begin with. Secondly, more of that snow-pack is going to melt earlier in the year and faster. So you're likely to get more flooding in the spring and lower flows during the drier part of the year when demands for water tend to be greater....

We're talking about some of the biggest river systems in the world...which... supply millions of hectares of irrigated land, hundreds of millions of people and some very important aquatic habitats. So the competition for water between people and the natural world is going to intensify from climate change.

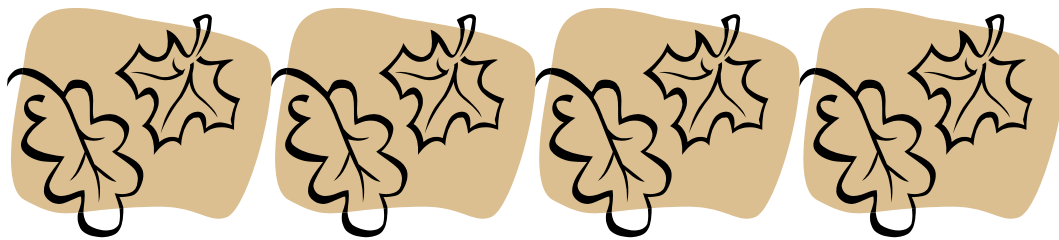
- *Sandra Postel*

⁴ "After these faithful deeds, King Sennacherib of Assyria invaded Judah and encamped against its fortified towns with the aim of taking them over. When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, intent on making war against Jerusalem, he consulted with his officers and warriors about stopping the flow of the springs outside the city, and they supported him. A large force was assembled to stop up all the springs and the wadi that flowed through the land, for otherwise, they thought, the king of Assyria would come and find water in abundance."

- *II Chronicles 32: 1 - 4*

MITZVOT FOR TODAY

- Go to a nearby natural stream or river and enjoy it safely. Avoid any body of water that has been directed by human hands.
- If you buy bottled water, commit yourself to only buying ethical brands.⁵
- Turn an area of your garden into a place hospitable to marine or amphibious life.
- Research suggested tidal power schemes. What are the advantages and disadvantages?
- Fit a water-butt in your garden.
- Learn about the effect of the Glen Canyon Dam on the Gulf of California.
- Pressurise the World Bank to not give money to dams which displace indigenous peoples or threaten biodiversity.
- Organise a local river clean-up.
- Ask your MP how your local government can use water more effectively.
- Have a water meter fitted to your home.
- Take a short shower instead of a bath.⁶
- Avoid over-boiling the kettle.
- Fix any leaking taps in your home.



⁵ See, for example, One Water at www.we-are-one.org.uk

⁶ This water-saving mitzvah only applies if it would save water! Some modern power-showers use even more water than a bath. You can perform a simple experiment to find out which is best for your home.

SIXTH DAY OF SHEVAT

Rav Judah said in the name of Rav: Of all that the Holy Blessed One created in God's world, God did not create a single thing without purpose.

- *Talmud Bavli: Shabbat 77a*

Even those things that we think of as superfluous in the world, such as fleas, gnats and flies, even they are part of the creation of the world. God carries out the Divine purposes through everything, even through a snake, through a scorpion, through a gnat, even through a frog.

- *Midrash: Genesis Rabbah 10:7*

When you start decreasing the number of species, especially in an environment which is adapted to a high level of diversity, you start reducing the stability of the area. The living environment becomes less able to take environmental shocks. It becomes less productive. That is the conclusion of a lot of work in ecology in the last 20 years, in theory and also in field experimentation.

- *E. O. Wilson*

30 per cent of amphibians, 23 per cent of mammals are 12 per cent of birds are under threat of extinction, while one in ten of the world's major rivers runs dry every year before it reaches the sea.

About 60 per cent of ecosystems were described as degraded or used unsustainably, with land-use change, habitat loss, over-exploitation and pollution all factors.

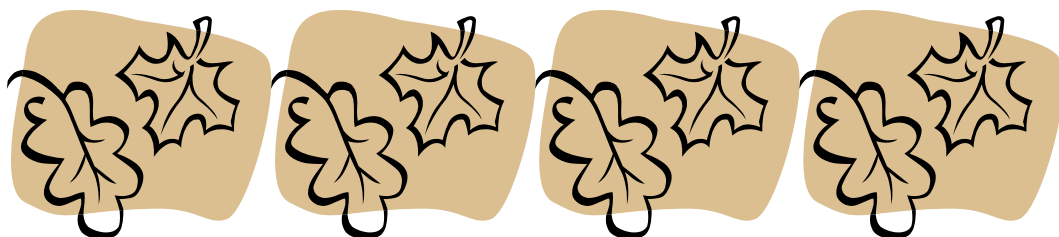
Almost one in three species of primates are facing extinction. "You could fit all the surviving members of these 25 [most endangered primate] species in a single football stadium. That's how few of them remain on Earth today," said Russell Mittermeier, president of Conservation International.

Overall, 114 of the world's 394 primate species appeared on the IUCN Red List which highlights the animals and plants around the world that are threatened with extinction.

- *The Times Newspaper, 26th October 2007*

MITZVOT FOR TODAY

- Learn about endangered species by consulting the IUCN “Red List.” Campaign on behalf of one of these endangered species.
- Learn about the plight of Lonesome George.
- Pick an animal about which you know nothing. Learn about its lifestyle, what it eats, what eats it, its abilities and so on.
- Pick a plant about which you know nothing. Learn about how it contributes to its ecosystem.
- Once an hour, pick something you have seen from the natural world today and think about what purposes it serves.
- Act on each of the five causes of extinction of species and ecosystems, summarised by the acronym HIPPO:
Habitat destruction
Invasive species
Pollution
Population (Over-)
Overexploitation
- Look into a non-human primate’s eyes.
- Learn about the causes of the 2007 extinction of the Baiji (also known as the Yangtze River Dolphin).
- Learn about the causes of the sudden extinction of the Golden Toad of Costa Rica in 1989.
- Study Rabbi Yochanan’s observations about animals in the Talmud: Eruvin 100b. Each day, learn a character trait from an animal.



SEVENTH DAY OF SHEVAT

Samuel's field labourer brought him some dates. As he partook of them he tasted wine in them. When he asked the labourer how that came about, he told him that the date trees were placed between vines. He said to him: Since they are weakening the vines so much, bring me their roots tomorrow. When R. Hisda saw certain palms among the vines he said to his field labourers: 'Remove them with their roots. Vines can easily buy palms but palms cannot buy vines.'

- Talmud Bavli: Bava Kama 92a

Oil palm is a plantation crop that's being grown across many tropical countries right now, and it produces large quantities of very cheap vegetable oil. This is then traded in global commodity markets and finishes up in a wide range of products: bread, soup, crisps, lipstick. A wide range of everyday goods that you'll buy contain palm oil. Now, the problem is that this particular crop grows where the tropical rainforests grow, and in countries that are expanding the acreage of palm oil, the rainforests are being cut down. In particular, right now, across Borneo and Sumatra, very large areas of rainforest are being hacked away, the timber sold and the land planted up with palm-oil plantations. This of course is having devastating impacts on biodiversity and is also leading to the abuse of some local people and human-rights violations as well. It's a very destructive trade, and yet there appears to be very little being done to control it.

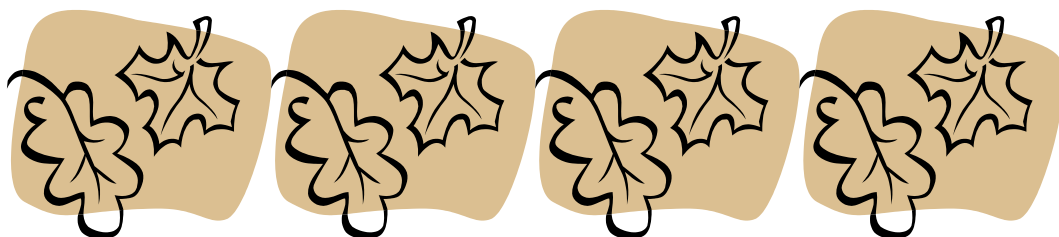
- Tony Juniper

For heaven's sake, don't propagate the idea of bio-fuels. Don't you realize that we've done enough damage to the Earth trying to feed ourselves and to take timber from the natural forests to build our homes and make furniture with? If we try as well to take down the natural ecosystems for fuel plantations, we will destroy things even faster.

- James Lovelock

MITZVOT FOR TODAY

- Work out your personal order of priorities for protection of species. Which species do you believe need more resources than others?
- Commit to not buying any product that contains palm oil, unless it is specifically marked as sustainable.
- Learn about the carbon-emission loopholes exploited by importing biofuels.
- Urge your local MP to call for a halt on the production of biofuels until the full impact of biofuels has been assessed.
- Pick a household item that contains palm oil. Run a campaign to pressurise the manufacturer to stop using palm oil unless it is sustainable.
- Ensure that food used in your community does not contain any palm oil.
- Learn about the sourcing of petrol from local companies. Learn not only about human-rights and environmental abuses associated with each company, but also which companies use biofuels.
- Learn about the current and predicted food shortages due to the replacement of food crops with biofuel crops.
- Find out from your car manufacturer whether or not it is possible to modify your car to run on home-brewed oil, or left-over oil donated from restaurants. If it is, learn about how others have done this, what difficulties they have faced and, ultimately, what successes they have had.
- Commit yourself to only using organic cotton.
- Ensure that your coffee and chocolate are certified ethically-sourced.



EIGHTH DAY OF SHEVAT

Our Rabbis have taught: It is forbidden to a person to enjoy anything of this world without a blessing, and one who enjoys anything of this world without a blessing commits sacrilege.... R. Hanina b. Papa said: To enjoy this world without a blessing is like robbing the Holy Blessed One...

- *Talmud Bavli: Berachot 35a-35b*

It was taught: R. Meir used to say, A person is bound to say one hundred blessings daily, as it is written, "And now, Israel, what does the Eternal One your God require of you (Deut. 10:12)?" On Sabbaths and on Festivals, R. Hiyya the son of R. Avia endeavoured to make up this number by the use of spices and delicacies.

- *Talmud Bavli: Menachot 43b*

By experiencing nature in its fullest - our own and that of all creation - with our senses and with our spiritual imagination, we can glimpse, "bright shining as the sun," an infinite image of God.

- *Al Gore*

Blessings keep our awareness of life's holy potential ever present. They awaken us to our own lives. Every blessing says, "I am grateful to be a creature and to remind myself and God that life is good." With each blessing uttered we extend the boundaries of the sacred and ritualize our love of life. One hundred times a day. Everywhere we turn, everyone we see. The blessing can be whispered. No one even needs to hear. No one but the Holy One. "Holy One of Blessing, Your Presence fills the universe. Your Presence fills me."

- *Lawrence Kushner*

One of the greatest needs this planet has for healing is blessing. It is underblessed. Underblessed reality is like empty calories. A blessing enhances the possibilities for good.

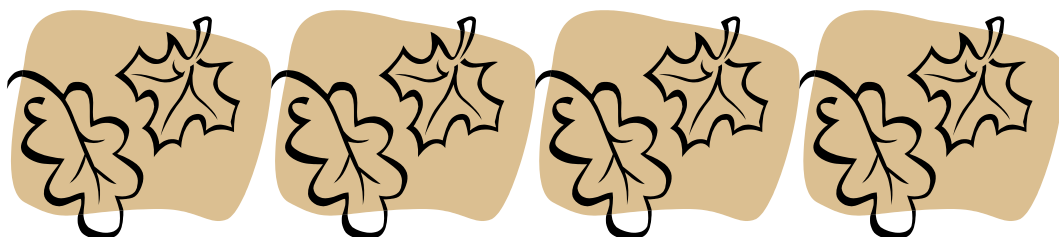
- *Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi*

MITZVOT FOR TODAY

- Create a religious ritual based around something in the natural world. For guidance, ask your Rabbi.
- Every ten minutes today, say out loud something that you are thankful for.
- Learn the blessings before and after eating food.
- Grow your own spices for use in Havdalah.
- Before eating your dinner, say out loud the things you are thankful for.
- Look in the siddur for blessings on various occasions. Learn a blessing that you have never previously recited.
- Ask your Rabbi to teach you about a ritual you didn't previously know.
- Investigate eco-kashrut, a concept started by Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi.
- Learn about the impact of meat production and consumption on the planet.
- Learn about the impact of over-fishing on the planet.
- Write and decorate a prayer for your home.
- Study the following:

If we were to walk in the woods and a spring appeared just when we became thirsty, we would call it a miracle. And if on a second walk, if we became thirsty at just that point again, and again the spring appeared, we would remark on the coincidence. But if that spring were there always, we would take it for granted and cease to notice it. Yet is that not more miraculous still?

- Israel Ba'al Shem Tov



NINTH DAY OF SHEVAT

One day Choni was journeying on the road and he saw a man planting a carob tree; he asked him, How long does it take [for this tree] to bear fruit? The man replied: Seventy years. He then further asked him: Are you certain that you will live another seventy years? The man replied: I found [ready-grown] carob trees in the world; as my ancestors planted these for me so I too plant these for my children.

- Talmud Bavli: Taanit 23a

[There were some] men on a ship, one of whom took a borer and began boring beneath his own place. His fellow travellers said to him: 'What are you doing?' Said he to them: 'What does that matter to you, am I not boring under my own place?' Said they: 'Because the water will come up and flood the ship for us all.'

- Midrash: Leviticus Rabbah 4:6

At the time when the Holy Blessed One created the first human being, God took him and let him pass before all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him, "See My works, how fine and excellent they are! Now all that I have created, for you have I created it. Think upon this and do not destroy and desolate My world, for if you corrupt it, there is no-one to set it right after you."

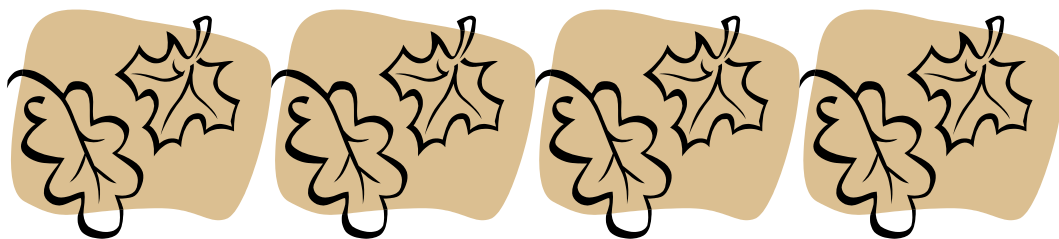
- Midrash: Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:28

We should think of our present problems as being the most singular opportunity for greatness that has ever been offered to any generation in any civilization in all of human history. If we fail to receive that opportunity, to act on it, then my feeling is we will become the most vilified generation that has ever lived in human history. However, if we act, we'll become heroes of whom our descendants will boast until the end of all history.

- Roger Payne

MITZVOT FOR TODAY

- Only pay for items today by cash. Do not allow the cost to be spread to tomorrow.
- Do something that you have been putting off for some unspecified time in the future.
- Ask someone much younger than yourself what they would like you to do to help the planet.
- Teach someone much younger than yourself about the importance of protecting the planet.
- Plant a tree.
- Assess the long-term consequences of your lifestyle choices. Minimise the negative consequences.
- Pick a company whose products you buy. Research whether buying their products has a negative long-term effect on other people or the world.
- Recycle.
- Turn down your thermostat and wear another layer at home.
- Find out what your local Council's long-term environmental goals are.
- Research greening misconceptions so that by trying to do good you can be sure that you are not accidentally doing bad.⁷



⁷ For example, some people buy only locally grown produce to reduce their carbon footprint. However, food grown out of season often needs more energy than having it shipped from across the world. Therefore, if you are buying local produce, make sure it is also seasonal.

TENTH DAY OF SHEVAT

Two men were fighting over a piece of land. Each claimed ownership and bolstered his claim with apparent proof. To resolve their differences, they agreed to put the case before the rabbi. The rabbi listened but could not come to a decision because both seemed to be right. Finally, he said, "Since I cannot decide to whom this land belongs, let us ask the land." He put his ear to the ground, and after a moment straightened up. "Gentlemen, the land says that it belongs to neither of you - but that you belong to it."

- *Story based on Talmud: Bava Batra 41a*

How can you buy or sell the sky? The land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every meadow, every humming insect. All are holy in the memory and experience of my people...

If we sell you our land, remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also received his last sigh. The wind also gives our children the spirit of life. So if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, a place where man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow flowers.

Will you teach your children what we have taught our children? That the earth is our mother? What befalls the earth befalls all the sons of the earth.

This we know: the earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

One thing we know: Our God is also your God. The earth is precious to Him and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its Creator.

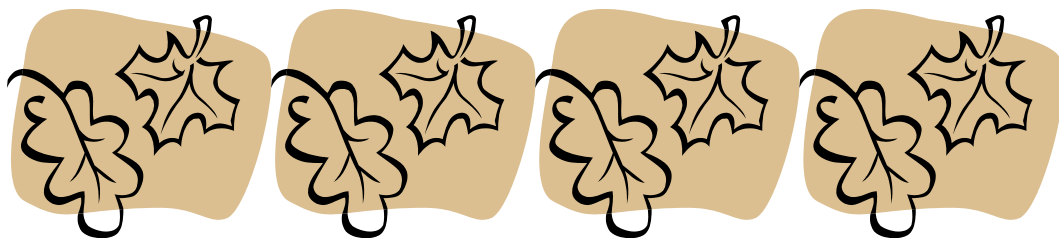
- *Chief Seattle*

This false belief that we own the Earth, or are its stewards, allows us to pay lip service to environmental policies and programmes but to continue with business as usual. A glance at any financial newspaper confirms that our aim is still growth and development. We cheer at any new discovery of gas or oil deposits and regard the current rise in petroleum prices as a potential disaster, not a welcome curb on pollution.

- *James Lovelock*

MITZVOT FOR TODAY

- Give up something that you own.
- Join the Freecycle network (www.freecycle.com) by inviting someone to come and pick up something you no longer need.
- Commit to a lifestyle of frugality - getting rid of something every time you buy something else.
- If you have a garden, open it up to visitors.
- Re-arrange your shopping so that none of your food is wasted.
- Compost your leftovers, but only as a last resort.
- Establish a local interfaith garden.
- If your synagogue has a garden, offer to help with it. If it doesn't, offer to grow one!
- Give up a little of your garden for growing crops for a local charity.
- Say a prayer on behalf of the parts of the world that are yours.
- Make your garden a home for other animals, such as hedgehogs or bats.
- Study a recent conflict between two nations. How much of it was based on land, and on resources?
- Learn about air pollutants.
- Go for a day without using any oil.



ELEVENTH DAY OF SHEVAT

On account of four things are the luminaries (i.e. Sun and Moon) in eclipse: On account of those who perpetrate forgeries, on account of those who give false witness; on account of those who rear small animals in the land of Israel; and on account of those who cut down good trees.

- Talmud Bavli: Shabbat 29a

When a fruit-bearing tree is chopped down a voice is heard from one end of the world to the other, but it is not audible (to the human ear).

- Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, 34

Today, we enthusiastically participate in what is in essence a massive and unprecedented experiment with the natural systems of the global environment, with little regard for the moral consequences. But for the separation of science and religion, we might not be pumping so much gaseous chemical waste into the atmosphere and threatening the destruction of the earth's climate balance. But for the separation of useful technological know-how and the moral judgments to guide its use, we might not be slashing and burning one football field's worth of rainforest every second. But for the assumed separation of humankind from nature, we might not be destroying half the living species on earth in the space of a single lifetime. But for the separation of living and feeling, we might not tolerate the deaths every day of 37,000 children under the age of five from starvation and preventable diseases made worse by failures of crops and politics.

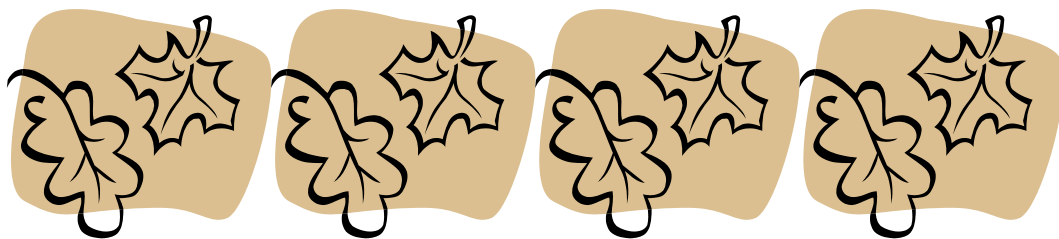
But we do tolerate - and collectively perpetuate - all these things. They are going on right now. When future generations wonder how we could go along with our daily routines in silent complicity with the collective destruction of the earth, will we... claim that we did not notice these things because we were morally asleep? Or will we try to explain that we were not so much asleep as living in a waking trance....under whose influence we felt no connection between our routine, banal acts and the moral consequences of what we did, as long as they were far away at the other end of the massive machine of civilization?

...Modern philosophy has gone so far in its absurd pretensions about the separateness of human beings from nature as to ask the famous question: "If a tree falls in the forest and no person is there to hear it, does it make a sound?" If robotic chain saws finally destroy all the rainforests on earth, and if the people who set them in motion are far enough away so that they don't hear the crash of the trees on the naked forest floor, does it matter? This rational, detached, scientific intellect, observing a world of which it is no longer a part, is too often arrogant, unfeeling, uncaring. And its consequences can be monstrous.

- Al Gore

MITZVOT FOR TODAY

- Noting that small animals cannot be prevented from ravaging the fields of others (see Talmud: Bava Kama 79b), study the Shabbat 29a passage and determine the connection between the four negative acts mentioned.
- Specifically help a cause that in no direct way seems to affect your lifestyle.
- Learn as much as possible about the human-related consequences of climate change.
- Go away for a day. Take nothing with you but food and clothing. When you return, ask yourself what you missed, and what was irrelevant to you.
- Establish a personal connection with someone in the Developing World.
- Undergo an environmental audit (see Appendix).
- Learn about the different effects of flying by day and by night.
- Learn about the effects of global shipping.
- Commit yourself to bringing your own mug or plate to a place that you know will offer plastic or polystyrene.
- Plant a fruit-bearing tree.
- Perform an ethical audit of your weekly shopping by researching the brands you buy. What individuals, creatures and areas of the world are affected by your choices?
- Encourage your community, workplace or Borough Council to adopt The Earth Charter.⁸



⁸ www.earthcharter.org

TWELFTH DAY OF SHEVAT

The quality of urban air compared to the air in the deserts and forests is like thick and turbulent water compared to pure and light water. And this is because in the cities with their tall buildings and narrow roads, the pollution that comes from their residents, their waste, their corpses, and offal from their cattle, and the stench of their adulterated food, make their entire air malodorous, turbulent, reeking and thick, and the winds become accordingly so, although no one is aware of it.

And since there is no way out, because we grow up in cities and become used to them, we can at least choose a city with an open horizon...And if you have no choice, and you cannot move out of the city, try at least to live in a suburb created in the northeast. Let the house be tall and the court wide enough to permit the northern wind and the sun to come through, because the sun thins out the pollution of the air, and makes it light and pure.

- *Moses Maimonides, q. Forms of Prayer
(Days of Awe), p.525*

Many of the victims of 2003's European heat may have lost their lives not because the air was so warm but because it was so dirty. The sunny, stagnant conditions prevalent during heat waves make an ideal platform for the sunlight-driven chemical processes that create ozone - which is a godsend in the stratosphere but a dangerous pollutant at ground level... Moreover, the relative calm of a heat wave allows tiny bits of heavy metals as well as sulphates, nitrates and other liquids and solids to accumulate in the air.... The smallest of these particulates easily sneak past the body's natural respiratory filters, causing a variety of lung problems and even raising the risk of heart attacks.

- *Robert Henson*

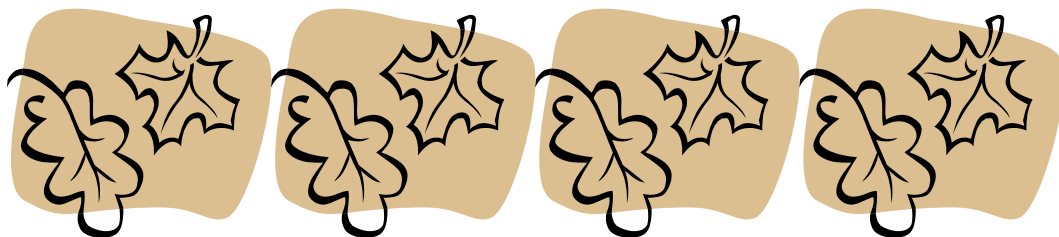
The ocean is the thinnest imaginable film stretched taut, so to speak, across the surface of the Earth. It is not capable of continuing to receive everything we dump into it. But unfortunately, because the ocean is downhill from everything on Earth, everything that can be moved by water or wind or by any means at all eventually ends up in the ocean...

I believe that humanity is about to lose access to fish from the sea because the sea is becoming too polluted for the fish to be clean enough to eat safely. Nearly two billion people depend as their principal source of animal protein on seafood. If we lose access to seafood in this way, you could say that would probably be the biggest public-health threat humanity has ever faced.

- *Roger Payne*

MITZVOT FOR TODAY

- Commit to using public transport more often than you do currently - set yourself a realistic but challenging target.
- Learn to drive your car in the most fuel-efficient way possible.
- Campaign against local businesses which pollute the environment.
- Urge an important local individual to set a personal example in terms of sustainable transport.
- Oppose road-building schemes.
- See if your house can be modified to make the most of the local climate.
- See for how long you can last without touching plastic.
- Learn about the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.
- Commit yourself to a reduction in plastic usage.
- Commit to household energy that comes from 100% renewable sources.
- Try to get your synagogue and workplace to use only 100% renewable energy.
- Only buy products with recyclable or compostable packaging.
- Campaign against non-recyclable packaging.
- If you eat fish, only eat fish approved by the MSC (Marine Stewardship Council).



THIRTEENTH DAY OF SHEVAT

Rabbi Yehudah said, "Why is it written, 'even this God made corresponding to that (Eccl. 7:14)?' God made the earth to correspond to the firmament. Everything [below] alludes to what is above... As R. Yose said... All those [trees] that bear fruit, except the apple tree, allude to one supernal mystery....And all the small ones, except for the hyssop, are the offspring of one mother. In heaven, powerful intermediaries are placed over each of the earth's plants, and each has its own mystery, just as above."

- Zohar: Shemot 15b

The Torah, we are told, is both concealed and revealed, and so is the nature of all reality. All things are both known and unknown, plain and enigmatic, transparent and impenetrable. "Hidden are the things that we see; we do not know what we see (Midrash Tehillim 46:1)." The world is both open and concealed, a matter of fact and a mystery. We know and do not know - this is our condition.

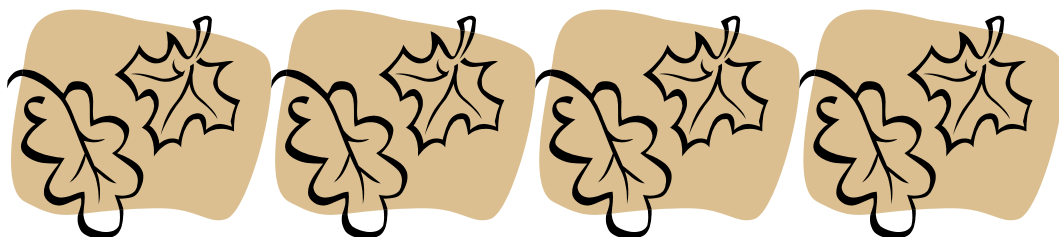
- Abraham Joshua Heschel

There is a very wide range of practical reasons why we need to conserve this planet's biodiversity. For a start, all of our food ultimately derives from biological systems. So do a lot of our medicines. A lot of our industrial products are based upon chemicals that we've taken from nature. Biodiversity is very much part, therefore, of the global economy, very much part of our well-being. We also need to face the reality that this is the only planet we know which supports life, and to understand it better surely is the priority that we must have as the species that thinks and which does science on this planet. Surely it's our responsibility to document carefully, to understand and husband this incredible unique planetary resource. But for me, in the end, the reason why we shouldn't lose any more species is moral. We didn't create life. We've got no means to put it back. Therefore we don't have the right to destroy it.

- Tony Juniper

MITZVOT FOR TODAY

- Try to say “I don’t know” as often as possible today.
- Pick a plant or piece of fruit. Explore Jewish texts on it and ask yourself what Divine secret it may be alluding to.
- Learn about the importance of peat bogs, and what we expect to happen to them.
- Learn about the importance of boreal forests, and what we expect to happen to them.
- Learn something new about Judaism.
- Study something natural from far away and then study it up close.
- Pray for understanding.
- Buy a wide variety of fruits to be eaten on Tu BiShevat, including a fruit you have not yet eaten this year.
- Buy environmentally-friendly cleaning products.
- Discuss with someone whether the Earth is a “resource for use,” an “entity for admiration,” or something else.
- Eat a vegetarian diet for today.
- Research the environmental and human-rights record of a chemical company from whom you have bought medicines.
- Go to a natural place and focus your sight on one area. Just sit and study the scene, how it unfolds, what arrives and leaves.



FOURTEENTH DAY OF SHEVAT

Small is the world that most of us pay attention to, and limited is our concern. What do we see when we see the world? There are three aspects of nature that command our attention: its *power*, its *beauty*, and its *grandeur*. Accordingly, there are three ways in which we may relate ourselves to the world - we may exploit it, we may enjoy it, we may accept it in awe. In the history of civilization different aspects of nature have drawn forth the talent of humanity; sometimes its power, sometimes its beauty and occasionally its grandeur have attracted our mind. Our age is one in which usefulness is thought to be the chief merit of nature; in which the attainment of power, the utilization of its resources is taken to be the chief purpose of humanity in God's creation. We have indeed become primarily a tool-making animal, and the world is now a gigantic tool box for the satisfaction of our needs.

The Greeks learned in order to comprehend. The Hebrews learned in order to revere. The modern man learns in order to use. To Bacon we owe the formulation, "*Knowledge is power.*" This is how people are urged to study: knowledge means success. We do not know any more how to justify any value except in terms of expediency. We are willing to define ourselves as "a seeker after the maximum degree of comfort for the minimum expenditure of energy." We equate value with that which avails. We feel, act and think as if the sole purpose of the universe were to satisfy our needs. To the modern person everything seems calculable; everything reducible to a figure. We have supreme faith in statistics and abhor the idea of a mystery. Obstinate we ignore the fact that we are all surrounded by things which we apprehend but cannot comprehend; that even reason is a mystery to itself. We are sure of our ability to explain all mystery away.

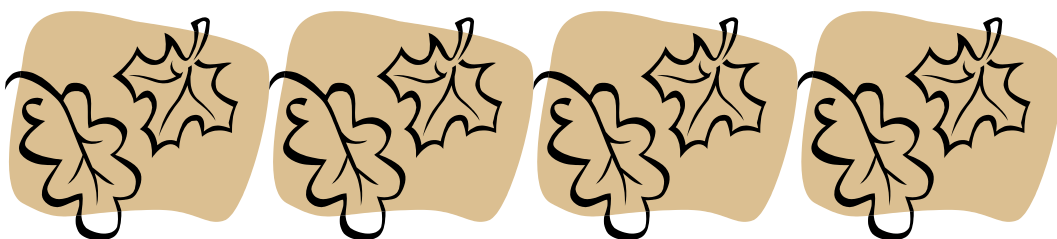
...Dazzled by the brilliant achievements of the intellect in science and technique, we have not only become convinced that we are the masters of the earth; we have become convinced that our needs and interests are the ultimate standard of what is right and wrong.

Comfort, luxuries, success continually bait our appetites, impairing our vision of that which is required but not always desired. They make it easy for us to grow blind to values.

- *Abraham Joshua Heschel*

MITZVOT FOR TODAY

- Learn something solely “in order to revere.”
- Try to find three different things in the world that instil either a feeling of power, of beauty or of grandeur.
- Go around your home and work out what you want and what you need. See if anyone else needs the things that you only want.
- Randomly select items in your home that you want but do not need and put them in a box in storage. Open the box as you clean out your *chametz* for Pesach and ask yourself whether or not you still want those items.
- Every time you do something that exploits nature, balance it by a true expression of awe of nature.
- Explore the siddur for prayers which describe the earth in terms of power, beauty and grandeur. Pick one of these prayers and help it form your central thoughts for the day.
- Write down as many things as possible that you value. Next to each one, right the reason – is it financial, because it serves a purpose or something else?
- Have a discussion with someone about the mystery of God.
- Work out what you value most, and whether the things that surround you in your daily life reinforce this, or blind you to it.
- Commit some of your time on a regular basis to a good cause.
- Organise a community time-bank.⁹



⁹ A time-bank is where people pledge personal time, not money.

FIFTEENTH DAY OF SHEVAT - TU BISHEVAT

How does one seek God? How does one find in this world, within one's own human existence and response to this world, ways that lead to the certainty of God's presence?

...There are three starting points of contemplation about God; three trails that lead to God. The first is the way of sensing the presence of God in the world, in things; the second is the way of sensing God's presence in the Bible; the third is the way of sensing God's presence in sacred deeds. These three ways are intimated in three Biblical passages:

Lift up your eyes on high and see, Who created these? Isaiah 40:26

I am the Eternal One your God. Exodus 20:2

We shall do and we shall hear. Exodus 24:7

These three ways correspond in our tradition to the main aspects of religious existence: worship, learning, and action. The three are one, and we must go all three ways to reach the one destination. For this is what Israel discovered: the God of nature is the God of history, and the way to know God is to do God's will.

- Abraham Joshua Heschel

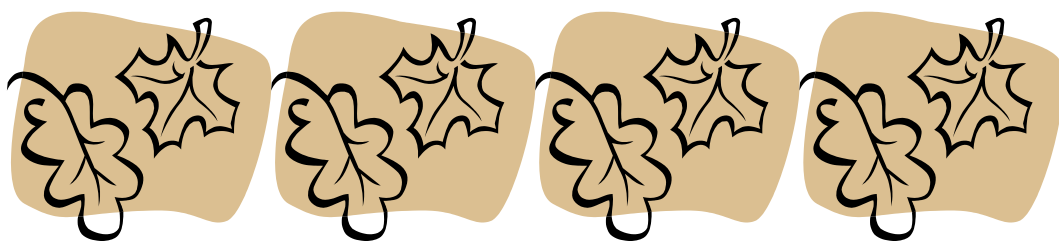
We've just done a project where we've looked at the importance of sacred sites in wilderness preservation, because many of the most important wilderness areas are also sacred mountains, sacred deserts, sacred valleys, sacred rivers, and there is a very direct relationship in the religious world between the sacred and the wilderness. We asked Oxford and Harvard universities, with their palaeobotany sections, 'Can you find out for us whether these sites were biodiverse before they became sacred or whether they became more biodiverse because they are sacred?' And the evidence seems to show that, in many parts of the world, by making something sacred - a mountain, a river, a plain - it actually protects it, gives it a sense of sanctuary, and creatures can live there undisturbed because you don't tend to go and hunt or log on a sacred site.

...What we've done with many of the world's religions is to say, 'Let's identify, with the environmentalists, the most endangered areas and let's go and make them sacred. Let's stick a temple in there, or a church or a cross or a shrine or a statue,' and the effect is astonishing..... Now, we're setting out to make many more sacred places and, God willing, they'll also remain beautiful.

- Martin Palmer

MITZVOT FOR TODAY

- In consultation with local environmentalists and your synagogue, find a local endangered area or species and sanctify it. Ensure good press coverage so that more people can share in the spiritual experience in time to come.
- Enjoy a Tu BiShevat seder.
- Eat a seasonal fruit that you have not yet eaten this year.
- Plant a tree.
- Plant some parsley for use on the Seder plate later in the year.
- Say a blessing for a good etrog:
It is written in the book of Benei Isaschar:
‘We have it on tradition from our ancestors to pray on the 15th of Shevat that God might provide us with a beautiful *etrog kasher*, when we shall need one for the fulfilment of the *mitzvah* for the *etrog* which we obtain, is in accord with the merit of the individual. Therefore, how good and how pleasant it is for a person to pray on that day – the beginning of the sprouting of new fruit – that God might provide – at the required time – a beautiful *etrog*. And in this instance, one’s prayer yields fruit.’¹⁰
- Actively hold fast to the “Tree of Life,” by studying some Torah. Pick a passage from Torah, write down any questions you may have, and then bring them to your Rabbi.
- Go on a nature walk with others from your community and share your learning from over the past two weeks.
- Start an environmental experience diary by describing your own journey to Tu BiShevat over the last two weeks. Reflect on what moved you, what you have experienced and what you have committed to.



¹⁰ Kitov, Vol. 1, p.348-349

CLOSING THOUGHTS

How can a person of flesh and blood follow God? ... God, from the very beginning of creation, was occupied before all else with planting. Therefore ... occupy yourselves first and foremost with planting.

- Midrash: Leviticus Rabbah 25:3

We have been so seduced by industrial civilization's promise to make our lives comfortable that we allow the synthetic routines of modern life to soothe us in an inauthentic world of our own making. Life can be easy, we assure ourselves. We need not suffer the heat or the cold; we need not sow or reap or hunt and gather. We can heal the sick, fly through the air, light up the darkness, and be entertained in our living rooms by orchestras and clowns whenever we like. And as our needs and whims are sated, we watch electronic images of nature's destruction, distant famine, and apocalyptic warnings, all the bone-weariness of the damned. "What can we do?" we ask ourselves, already convinced that the realistic answer is nothing. ...We are monumentally distracted by a pervasive technological culture that appears to have a life of its own, one that insists on our full attention, continually seducing us and pulling us away from the opportunity to experience directly the true meaning of our own lives.

- Al Gore

In two weeks, we have only touched upon some of the many ways to appreciate the world, to live more in harmony with it, and to access it through differing Jewish lenses. We have much to consider – we have in the past participated in much damage, we have allowed ourselves to get caught up in a society which uses the world instead of praising it. Tu BiShevat is a chance for us to return to our roots, as it were. There is much more to explore in Judaism, in our society, our world, and in ourselves.

Judaism is a forward-looking religion. We look forward to a Messianic time when the world is set right. And we now know that such a time can only come about through concerted action on the part of every single one of us.

May we all be able to overcome the obstacles – personal and social - that stand in our way of living in harmony with God's Earth.



APPENDIX - An Example Environmental Audit

I use low energy light bulbs in	All of my sockets 50 points	¾ of my sockets 40 points	½ of my sockets 25 points	¼ or less of my sockets 0 points	Replacing one regular light bulb to low energy can save 150 lbs of CO ₂ per year.	Score
This week I chose to cycle/ walk instead of driving	12 times or more 50 points	6 times or more 40 points	3 times or more 25 points	Less than 3 times 0 points	Save up to 11lb of CO ₂ with every mile we don't drive.	
This week I used public transport instead of my car	12 times or more 50 points	6 times or more 40 points	3 times or more 25 points	Less than 3 times 0 points	Since it is already running, why add our emissions?	
Drive a less polluting vehicle. My car usually gets	50 miles or more to the gallon 50 points	40 to 50 miles to the gallon 40 points	30 to 40 miles to the gallon 25 points	Less than 30 miles to the gallon, or I don't know 0 points	Check your tyres, and save 20 lbs of CO ₂ for every gallon saved.	
I reduce my waste	I have reduced my recyclable, non-recyclable and compostable waste significantly. 50 points	I have reduced my recyclable and non-recyclable waste. 40 points	I have reduced my recyclable waste. 25 points	I have not reduced my waste. 0 points	Carbon and methane emissions from recycling and composting mean that, while important, it should be a last option.	
I recycle my waste	Obsessively 50 points	Pretty well 40 points	Could do better 25 points	I don't really bother 0 points	Recycle more; save 2.400 lbs of CO ₂ by recycling half of your waste.	
Use less energy for central heating.	I have turned my thermostat down to 18°C or less 50 points	I will turn my thermostat down to 18°C 40 points	I will turn my thermostat down by 2°C 25 points	My thermostat will stay at 20°C or more. 0 points	Turning our thermostats down by 2°C could save 2000 lbs of CO ₂ a year	

Using less hot water to wash	I wash clothes at 30°C and use my shower on lower pressure 50 points	I wash clothes at 40°C and use my shower on lower pressure 40 points	I do one of these things 25 points	I do neither of these things 0 points	Washing at a lower temperature and low-flow shower settings could save up to 850 lbs of CO ₂ each year.	
Go for Green energy.	I am on green gas and electricity 50 points	I am on green gas or electricity 40 points	I will switch to green energy soon 25 points	I won't change to green energy 0 points	The more green energy we use the cheaper it is, and the less of the world's finite resources are wasted.	
Avoid products with a lot of packaging.	I refuse to buy heavily packaged goods 50 points	I try not to buy heavily packaged goods 40 points	I will try not to buy heavily packaged goods 25 points	I don't bother about packaging 0 points	We can each save 1200 lbs of CO ₂ by reducing our rubbish by 10%.	
Eat with minimal carbon footprint	I only eat local, seasonal, organic produce. 50 points	I only eat organic produce. 40 points	I only eat seasonal produce. 25 points	I am not concerned about the carbon footprint of my food. 0 points	By reducing shipping and flying, we reduce the footprint of our food, but only if the goods are seasonal.	
Turn off electronic devices.	I always turn off all standby settings. 50 points	I turn off my TV standby every night 40 points	I turn off my computer 25 points	I leave them all on standby 0 points	Turning off the TV, DVD and computer can save 1000s of lbs of CO ₂	
Plant a tree.	I have already had more than 1 tree planted. 50 points	I have had 1 tree planted 40 points	I intend to have trees planted 25 points	I have no intention of planting trees 0 points	A tree will absorb one ton of CO ₂ in its lifetime.	

Cut down flying.	I will not fly this year unless absolutely required 50 points	For my holiday I will travel by train/coach. 40 points	I will carbon-offset my travel emissions. 25 points	I will continue to fly wherever I choose. 0 points	Air travel contributes nearly 20% of UK emissions, most of which is not accounted for in government targets.	
Go veggie!¹¹	I do not eat meat or fish 50 points	I eat fish only 40 points	I am working towards becoming vegetarian 25 points	I cannot give up meat or fish 0 points	Emissions from cows far outweigh those of heavily polluting vehicles.	
Learn more	I have read the IPCC reports on climate change and its causes. 50 points	I have seen 'An Inconvenient Truth' or similar film or researched it online. 40 points	I will research climate change shortly. 25 points	I am not interested in learning about climate change. 0 points	Information is strength - especially when it changes our habits!	
Activate	I campaign against climate change 50 points	I will campaign against climate change 40 points	I will question local/ national policies 25 points	I am not interested in changing policies. 0 points	Politicians will do what we want; if we show them that we really want it.	Total Score

How do you rate yourself?

650 + An eco-superhero; be proud spread the habits!

550 - 650 You deserve a medal.

400 to 550 You're on the way - keep at it!

250 to 400 You've made a start, so where next?

Less than 250? There's a lot here for you to consider.

¹¹ A number of Jews will not give up meat because of a belief that this might contravene, or not fulfil, the laws of *kashrut* (the Jewish dietary laws). There are a number of groups and famous Jewish authors who have shown why this is not the case, and why a vegetarian diet can even be seen as the most originally authentic Jewish diet. The Jewish Vegetarian and Ecological Society (www.ivu.org/jvs) is an obvious first port of call.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1) Mabey, Planet Earth - the Future, 2006, p.37
Henson, The Rough Guide to Climate Change, 2006, p.150-1
 - 2) Gore, Earth in the Balance, 2006, p.243
Lovelock, Planet Earth - the Future, 2006, p.219-220
Palmer, *ibid.*, p.233
 - 3) Henson, The Rough Guide to Climate Change, 2006, p.149
Ash, Planet Earth – The Future, 2006, p.83
 - 4) Palmer, Planet Earth - The Future, 2006, p.224-5
 - 5) Postel, Planet Earth - The Future, 2006, p.85, 128-129
 - 6) E. O. Wilson, Planet Earth - The Future, 2006, p.33
 - 7) Juniper, Planet Earth - The Future, 2006, p.196
Lovelock, *ibid.*, p.199-200
 - 8) Gore, Earth in the Balance - Ecology and the Human Spirit, 2006, p.265
Kushner, The Book of Words, p.20
Schachter-Shalomi, Jewish with Feeling, 2005, p.253
 - 9) Payne, Planet Earth – The Future, 2006, p.234
 - 10) Chief Seattle, q. Gore, Earth in the Balance, 2006, p.259
Lovelock, The Revenge of Gaia, 2006, p.135
 - 11) Gore, Earth in the Balance, 2006, p.257-8
 - 12) Henson, The Rough Guide to Climate Change, 2006, p.47
Payne, Planet Earth – The Future, 2006, p.87
 - 13) Heschel, God in Search of Man, 1959, p.59
Juniper, Planet Earth - The Future, 2006, p.40
 - 14) Heschel, God in Search of Man, 1959, p.33-35
 - 15) Heschel, God in Search of Man, 1959, p.30-31
Palmer, Planet Earth - The Future, 2006, p.67-8
- Appendix) Environmental Audit based on work by Revd. Bob Vernon
Closing) Gore, Earth in the Balance, 2006, p.240-1

OTHER SOURCES

- Trees, Earth and Torah, A Tu B'Shvat Anthology, ed. Elon, Hyman and Waskow, 2000
- The Weather Makers, Tim Flannery, 2005
- The Environment in Jewish Law - Essays and Responsa, Ed. Jacob and Zemer, 2003
- http://www.capetownskies.com/1132/13_tree_field_snowd.jpg
- <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/schools/sciences/environment/GOM/biodiversity.jpg>
- The Noah Project (www.biggreenjewish.org) and COEJL (www.coejl.org)

Please note that some of the translations have been slightly modified to render appropriate English or consistency with other quotations.

With thanks to Rabbi Paul Freedman (Radlett & Bushey Reform Synagogue) and Rabbi Jenny Goldfried Amswych (Bournemouth Reform Synagogue; South Hants Reform Jewish Community).