



CHOVERET CHINUCH #7 5784

Tu BiShvat -
Working the Land



The Choveret Chinuch is a project of Bnei Akiva of the US and Canada's Chinuch department. For comments or questions, please reach out to Rav Avishai Berman at aberman@bneiakiva.org

Dear Madrichim,

This past week, on Thursday, January 25, we celebrated the chag Tu BiShvat.

In this Choveret, we will learn about the significance of Tu BiShvat, and its connection to the land of Israel. We will first touch upon Mitzvot that one can do only in Eretz Yisrael and then we will learn about different innovations and technologies used to develop the Land of Israel today.

Tu BiShvat Sameach,
Shani Becker



Week One

Happy Tu BiShvat!



In the Mishnah in Rosh Hashanah (1:1) we're told that we have four new years in the Jewish calendar:

- The 1st of Nissan, the new year for kings and holidays.
- The 1st of Elul, the new year for the offering of cattle.
- The 1st of Tishrei, Rosh HaShanah, the new year for the world.
- The 15th of Shvat, the new year for trees and for the gifts given to the Leviim.

Tu BiShvat was a day for land workers to pay taxes to the Leviim and was also a day that marked the beginning of the blooming of trees in Israel.

After the Jews were sent to Galut, Tu BiShvat became a day of celebrating and showing their longing for Eretz Yisrael. They celebrated Tu BiShvat by making a feast of fruit from Israel. Since



they were usually far from the land of Israel, they could not get fresh fruits but would use dried fruits from Israel which could remain edible when they were sent far distances.



With the return to Eretz Yisrael in the late 1800's, the first educators turned this day into a planting day, inviting the children of Israel to participate in the renewal of Jewish life in Israel. Today, people celebrate by engaging in planting, eating the fruits of the land, and expressing love for the land.

Now that we have returned to the land of Israel, something our great-grandparents could only dream about, we are able to perform the Mitzvot Hatluyot Baaretz which can only be fulfilled in the land of Israel.

Let's have a look at a few of these unique Mitzvot

1. Shmita:

Every 7 years we take a break from working the land, to remind us that

everything that grows from the land is from the will of Hashem. All crops that grow from the land during Shmita are Kadosh and must be handled carefully.

2. Trumot and Maasrot:

Before any farmer in Israel can eat from or sell his crop, he must give a portion of it to the Kohen, the Levi and the poor. Only then is he able to enjoy his crop. This Mitzvah also comes to remind us to be humble and that all our efforts are due to Hashem helping us.

3. Leket: (literal meaning- collecting).

This is a Mitzvah that requires farmers who are working their land to allow poor people to collect accidentally discarded grains. (Today there is an organization called “Leket Israel”, named after the Torah mitzvah, where volunteers go to farms that have extra fruit and pick and package the items. The produce is then sent to special discounted stores for those who cannot afford to pay regular store prices for fruit).



To learn more about Leket Israel visit:
<https://www.leket.org/en/>



Discussion Points:

- Why do you think we have agriculture-related Mitzvot that we can only fulfill while in Israel?
- Do these Mitzvot have anything in common?
- What kind of sensitivity do these special Eretz Yisrael Mitzvot try to develop in the Jewish people?



Ideas For Activities:

1. Fruit Salad
2. Category Competition
3. Red Light Green Light Twist

1. Fruit Salad:

Have the Chanichim sit in a circle. Each Chanich will get a fruit name - banana, apple, or pear. The Madrich then calls out “banana” and all those who were assigned the name need to get up and switch places. The Madrich could then say the name of another fruit or he/she can say “fruit salad” making all the Chanichim get up and change places. As the fruit are called out faster it makes the game more challenging.

2. Category Competition

Split the Chanichim into two groups; Team A and B.

The Madrich is responsible for naming a category at the beginning of each round. The Madrich announces a category (names of fruit, names of trees, places in Israel that start with a Y). Team A starts and quickly says a word that fits the category. Team B then responds with another word from the same category. The teams take turns, with each team providing a new word in the category without repeating any previous words. The game continues until one team is unable to come up with a new word within a few seconds. If a team fails to respond with a word in time or repeats a word, the opposing team scores a point.

3. Red Light Green Light Twist:

Designate one Chanich as the “caller.” The rest of the Chanichim form a line at a distance. The caller stands facing away from the other players and starts the game by saying; “Red light, green light, one, two (fruit)!” and calls out the name of a specific fruit. The rest of the Chanichim start moving toward the caller during the statement. After the caller finishes the sentence they turn around. All Chanichim must freeze in a pose resembling the fruit that the caller called out. If the caller sees any participant moving after the turn, that participant goes back to the starting line. The first participant to reach and tag the caller is the winner and they switch places with the caller for the next round.

Week Two

Israel's rainy season is different from the U.S. While the U.S. can experience rainfall at any time of the year, Israel only gets rain during the winter. Many winters aren't very rainy, and Israelis are often concerned about how much water is available. That's why many Israelis are careful to conserve water by taking shorter showers, turning off the water when brushing teeth or washing dishes, and avoiding unnecessary water waste. This mindset has been a part of Israeli life for a long time.



When the first Jews returned to Eretz Yisrael in the late 1800s, they faced a major challenge. The land was mostly barren, with rocky soil that made farming difficult. Finding water was also tough, and large areas were covered in mosquito-infested swamps causing malaria. The pioneers worked hard, putting in long hours in the hot sun or cold rain, clearing rocks, and preparing the soil for crops.



To address the water scarcity issue, they came up with the 'Movil Artzi,' a system of pipes connecting different parts of Israel, allowing water to flow from the rainy north to the desert south – a distance of up to 130 kilometers!

Achieving this required a lot of hard work and determination, but the pioneers succeeded in turning the brown desert into a green, fruitful land. Despite the ongoing scarcity of rain, Israeli engineers today continue to develop ways to conserve water and support successful agriculture.

Let's have a look at some Israeli water innovations, helping not only Israelis but other countries all around the world!

- **Drip Irrigation** - Created by Simcha Blass, the drip irrigation system saves water by allowing the water to drip slowly onto the root of the plant. It uses a special AI system to make sure it's watering the plant and not weeds.
- **Water Desalination** - Invented by Alexander Zarchin, this system takes salty

sea water and processes it into drinking water. Today, more than 70% of Israel's water is used from this system.

- **Watergen** - This is a machine that can create water from the air. It uses a portable generator to collect particles of water from the air and makes it possible to drink this water. This device is used today providing an easy way to bring water to our soldiers without needing a connection to a water stream.
- **Autonomous Robots** - This is a drone that has special cameras that can assess the size of a fruit and the color, and it will pick only ripe fruit leaving the unripe fruit to have more time to get watered. It uses AI technology.

For more info: [Israeli Innovations That Changed YOUR Life](#)



Discussion Points:

- What is another Israeli innovation you've heard of?
- What is something you use every day that you wish worked differently? How would you improve it?
- What is a cool technological innovation you've come across recently, and how do you think it might impact our daily lives?



Ideas For Activities:

1. Paper Bag Challenge
2. Random Object
3. Open-ended Skit

Here you will find activities that work on the Chanichim's abilities to think in a creative and innovative way.

1. Paper Bag Challenge:

Split the Chanichim up into two or three groups.

Place random items in paper bags and distribute them to the groups. Challenge each group to create something innovative using only the items in their bag.

Ideas for items: box of tissues, keys, water bottle, hat.

2. Random Object:

Split the Chanichim into groups. Provide a random object to each group and challenge them to come up with as many alternative uses for that object as possible. Then show the rest of the group.

3. Open-ended Skit:

Split the Chinichim into four groups. Give each group a scenario with a problem and ask them to create a short skit that presents an innovative solution.

Ideas for scenarios:

- You and your friends have encountered a friendly but hungry monster. Instead of being scared, you must find a way to communicate with the monster and come up with a solution to feed it without getting eaten.
- In a world where all colors have disappeared, you must act as detectives to solve the mystery and bring color back to the world. (you can invent creative tools or methods to restore the missing colors.)
- You are in a forest where all the animals can talk, but they speak in riddles. You must work together to decipher the riddles and help the animals solve their problems.
- You are in a world where everything is made of bubbles. However, the bubbles are disappearing, and you must invent a solution to keep the bubble world intact.