



Jewish Community Center of Paramus
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A Shabbat Message from Rabbi Arthur Weiner

Thursday January 25, 2024 ~ Parshat: Beshallah

Dear JCCP/CBT family,

Do Something Special For Israel Today

Today is *Tu B'Shevat*, a special day of the Jewish year. *Tu B'Shevat* literally means the 15th of the Hebrew month of Shevat, and is understood to be the new year for trees. *Tu B'Shevat* connects us to the growing season in the land of Israel.

Why does there need to be a new year for trees? The Torah tells us that when a tree was planted in Israel, its fruit was not to be consumed for three years ([Leviticus 19:23-25](#)). The question that needed to be answered was whether the years were counted from the actual planting of the tree, or by some other measure. Trees planted before *Tu B'Shevat* became a year old after that date. If this is confusing to you, consider this: if you bought a brand new 2023 model car on Dec. 31st 2023, the car – at least according to the auto industry and your insurance company – became one year old on January 1, 2024.

In honor of *Tu' B'Shevat*, I want to challenge everyone reading this Shabbat message to consider doing something special for Israel today. Right now, over 150,000 Israelis have been displaced from their homes as a result of the fighting along the Gaza border as well as the north. I had the opportunity to meet with several dozen displaced Israelis while in Jerusalem in the beginning of January. I learned more about their lives, their communities, and their desire to return to their homes.

There is something we can do to help them right now.

I want to encourage you to purchase a tree in Israel today. Since 1901, the Jewish National Fund - *Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael*, has sponsored a variety of important projects in Israel, among them their well-known campaign to plant trees in Israel. By following the link below, you can purchase a tree or several trees. A portion of the

donation will go to helping displaced families as well as restoring destroyed communities in the western Negev area in Israel.

It's always a good time to purchase trees in Israel. But what is particularly interesting and noteworthy about this opportunity is that you will be able to witness the actual planting of your tree in Israel over Zoom.

By planting a tree in Israel on *Tu B'Shevat* through this special program, you are literally planting a real path to a better future.

To participate in this unique program, please click on this [link](#).

To learn more about the Jewish National Fund and to support their other important projects and campaigns in Israel, please click on this [link](#).

Chag Sameach! Happy *Tu B'Shevat* to all.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Arthur D. Weiner