



Be Like a Tree

‘Ki HaAdam Eitz Hasadeh’

Chamisha Asar B’shevat is the Rosh Hashanah for trees. This day’s connection to our *avodah* is clear, as it says, “*Ki ha’adam eitz hasadeh*”—man is compared to a tree. One can therefore say that on *Chamisha Asar B’shevat*, in addition to what happens on Rosh Hashanah in Tishrei, a renewal that is relevant only to the tree-like aspects of a person takes place.

It is written, “He (Hashem) placed the world in their hearts”¹—meaning that everything that exists in the world

also exists within the hearts of the Jewish people. More specifically, we are referred to as “*eretz—land*”, as it is stated, “You shall be a desired land.”² Understandably, this shows that many characteristics associated with land are reflected within the Jewish people.

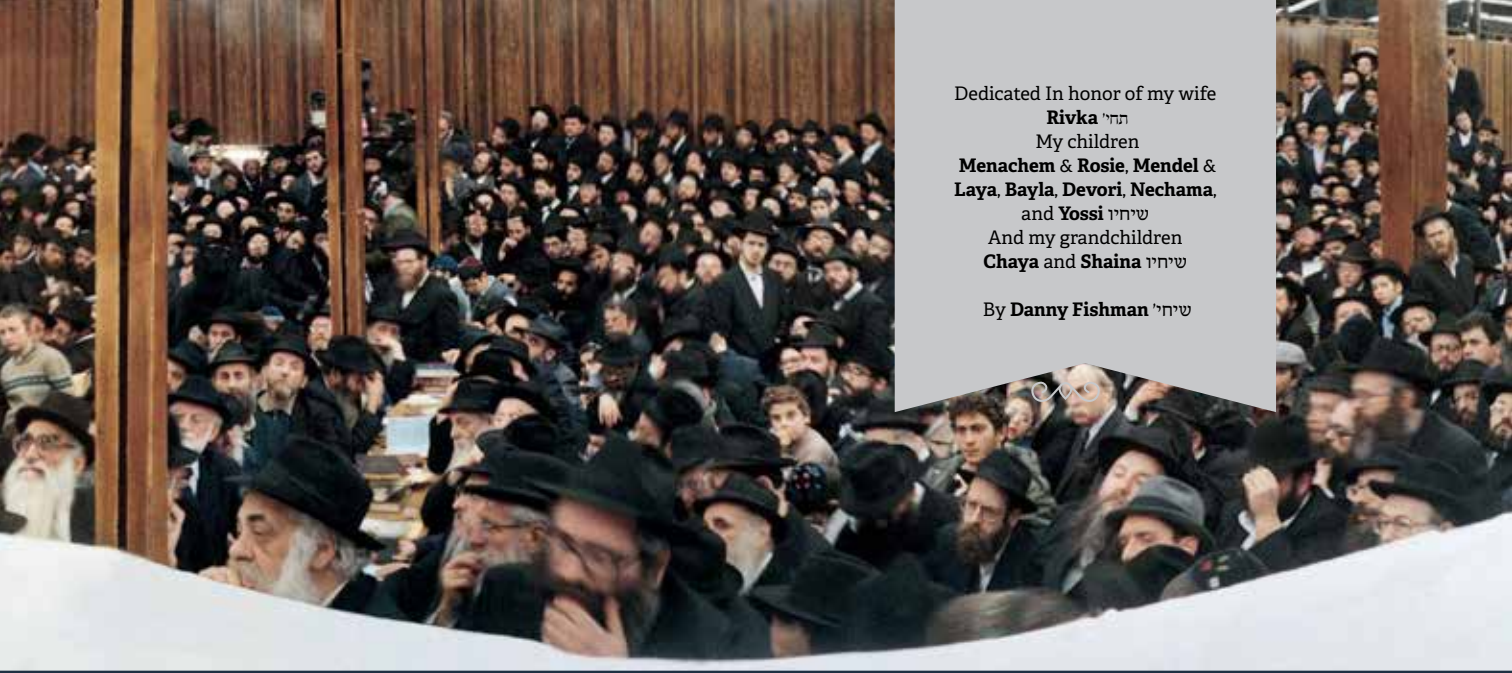
Fruit vs. Grain

As mentioned above, since *Chamisha Asar B’shevat* is the Rosh Hashanah for trees, it brings a special vitality into the tree-like aspects of the *avodah* of a Jew. This can be understood by looking at two basic differences between fruit and grain.

Firstly: Grain is something

necessary for human survival, a basic need. Fruit, however, is not a necessity, rather it is consumed for pleasure. Secondly: Grain, when planted, yields a crop that is identical to what was sown in the ground—kernels and the like. The only change is an increase in quantity. But when a seed from a fruit is planted, an immeasurable transformation takes place—a small seed becomes a full, fruit-bearing tree.

The above is a metaphor for how we can complete our *avodah* in a way of “pleasure,” not just doing what is necessary, but rather going beyond the letter of the law. In addition, it shouldn’t just bring about quantitative



Dedicated In honor of my wife
Rivka ריבקה
 My children
**Menachem & Rosie, Mendel &
 Laya, Bayla, Devori, Nechama,**
 and **Yossi** שיחי
 And my grandchildren
Chaya and Shaina שיחי

By **Danny Fishman** שיח

growth, but a complete change in quality as well.

On *Chamisha Asar B'shevat* we receive an added *chayus* in this method of *avodah*, which also influences the *avodah* represented by grain.

Planting a Dirah Bitachtonim

The Alter Rebbe explains³ that Hashem “sowed” the Jews in *galus Mitzrayim* so that there could be a greater revelation of His glory down on Earth. Just as when one plants, a few seeds can yield an abundance of crop, so too, Hashem sent the Jews to Egypt to bring about an increase in G-dliness.

On a deeper level, this process begins when the *neshamah* is sent down into the physical body in order to make a *dirah betachtonim*. That itself is caused by doing mitzvos, which is also compared to the act of planting.

A seed is a tasteless object, but when planted in fertile ground it can grow into a tree that bears delicious fruit. The same applies to mitzvos, many of which are done using physical objects. When a Yid puts on tefillin—made from leather, a mundane, unholy material—he introduces a spark of *Elokus* into this world.

'To Eat of its Fruit'

On *Chamisha Asar B'shevat* we must add in all aspects of our *avodah* that relate to the significance of trees, including the above-mentioned idea of “pleasure”—to go beyond what is necessary and expected and to produce a drastic increase in quality. This also means influencing others to do the same, just as a tree yields fruit with seeds that will grow into more and more trees. The reason it is called “*Rosh Hashanah l'Ilanos*”—using the plural form—is because one tree can be a source for many more.

May this all lead to the ultimate

fruit of all our labor in *galus*, the true and complete *geulah*. This will be accomplished through Moshiach, who is called “Tzemach⁴—growth.” Moshiach is also mentioned in the *possuk*, “*Vekam shevet m'Yisroel*⁵—and a staff shall arise in Yisroel.” The word “*shevet*” also means “branch.” And, as it says regarding Moshiach, “A shoot shall come forth from the stem of Yishai, and a branch shall grow forth out of his roots.”⁶ We should merit to be gathered together and journey to Eretz Yisrael where we will “eat of its fruit and be satiated with its goodness,”⁷ with the ultimate *geulah*, speedily in our days. ❶

*Adapted from the Sicha of Shabbos Parshas
 Beshalach, 15 Shevat 5750*

1. Koheles 13, 1.
2. Malachi 3, 12.
3. Torah Or Parshas Beshalach.
4. Yerushalmi Brachos Perek 2 Halacha 4.
5. Balak 24, 17.
6. Yeshaya 11, 1.
7. Erchin 44a.