



**T**u BiShvat is Rosh Hashana for the trees. On this day, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* gives the trees the precious liquid or sap (*seraf*) that nourishes the trees and makes them grow. But Tu BiShvat is also a significant date for people as well; *Chazal* liken a person to a tree — *Ki ha'adam eitz hasadeh*. The common expression, “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree,” reflects this idea — the offspring (the fruit) will be similar to the parent (the tree) for better, or *chas veshalom*, for worse. There was once an expression, “Tzaddikim are good ground,” meaning that in times of old, when we had many tzaddikim among us, the trees were good and their fruits were good.

*Segulos* are *minhagim* of Klal Yisrael that have been accepted and handed down throughout the generations. Special *segulos* just for Tu BiShvat that have been known to help singles and childless couples have their sources recorded in many *sefarim*, such as *Sefer Segulos* (the *sefer* on Tu BiShvat by the Ben Ish Chai) and *Roni Akara*. There are many other *sefarim* that also discuss the matters and customs associated with Tu BiShvat, including the *Bnei Yissachar*, which says that on Tu

one should daven for a beautiful *esrog* for the following Sukkos, and the contemporary Nitei Gavriel.

On Tu BiShvat in Eretz Yisrael, you can usually already see the almond tree beginning to blossom. Almond trees are mentioned in *parashas Korach*. Hashem wanted to prove that Aharon rightfully deserved the *kehuna* instead of Korach, and so He told Moshe Rabbeinu to put Aharon’s staff in the *Kodesh Kodashim*. It states that Aharon’s staff “began to blossom” with almonds. Rashi says that the almond tree blossoms very quickly; therefore the almond tree is seen as the proper tree to be used for the *segula* of finding one’s *zivug*.

I heard a beautiful approach from Harav Moshe Saks, *shlita*, regarding the *shkeidia*, the almond tree. He said that he always chooses the almond nuts first at the table, because you must have *shekida*, perseverance, to learn Torah steadily — and you must always learn Torah. Similarly, when a man finds his *zivug*, she becomes his steady partner in life and is always with him.

In order to fulfill the *segula* for helping a single find his or her *zivug*, write the single person’s davening (Hebrew or Yiddish) name with his or her mother’s and father’s davening name on a slip of paper and hang it on an almond tree the day before Tu BiShvat and leave it on the tree until *motzaei Tu BiShvat*. Make sure that the names be absolutely correct. Place the paper inside a plastic bag for protection from the winter weather and tie it securely.

On *motzaei Tu BiShvat*, remove the slips of paper from the tree and give them (or mail them) to the respective single persons as soon as possible. The single person should either sleep with the

slip of paper under his/her pillow or wear it pinned inside his/her clothing or pocket for the rest of that year or until he or she marries.

It is not uncommon for people in Eretz Yisrael to receive phone calls from all over the country and even from across the ocean asking for their help in performing this *segula*.

Another *segula* often practiced in Eretz Yisrael involves the pomegranate tree. It is written in the *sefarim* that the taste and special purpose of each fruit and vegetable are related to their respective colors. For example, onions are referred to as the golden fruit. They glisten in the sunlight, go with most foods and make everything taste better. Fruits and vegetables that are green purify the liver. The pomegranate and its juice are red. Red purifies the blood and is instrumental in healing.

It is said that a pomegranate contains 613 seeds, reminiscent of the *taryag*, 613 mitzvos. The pomegranate tree is therefore a fitting *shaliach* for childless couples, since a married woman who longs for a child essentially wants to multiply her mitzvos by becoming a mother and raising children.

This *segula* requires that the woman place one of her head coverings on a pomegranate tree before the start of Tu BiShvat and that it remain there until *motzaei Tu BiShvat*. The head covering is then returned to its owner to be worn as usual. Again, one places the head covering in a plastic bag for protection from the winter weather.

So, if when walking through Geula, Meah Shearim and other neighborhoods in Eretz Yisrael this year on the day before Tu BiShvat, you see many slips of paper, all different shapes, sizes and colors, dangling from almond trees, or a pomegranate tree sprouting *tichels*, you’ll understand what they are doing there.

While some people embrace every *segula* they hear of, just as many are skeptical of *segulos*, even when they can trace their *mekor* precisely, which is often difficult. Obviously, nothing can replace sincere *tefillos* and *mitzvos* as the ultimate source for all brachos. ❧

*I would like to thank Rav Moshe Saks, shlita, for his guidance and assistance that made the writing of this article possible. (Those who would like to use these segulos are advised to check sources for details)*

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