

We are now in the month of שבט, which, as R' Oelbaum said stands for שמחה, טובה, and ברכה. Baruch Hashem we have a great שמחה from Bracha in our family. The גמרא in בבא מציעא, דף כ"ב, ר"ב, mentions that בית ראש השנה begins in ראש השנה by discussing the ראש השנה for אילן. The קושיה arises: why does it say אילן in the singular when it should say אילנות, in plural? All the other ראש השנה mentioned, such as ליובלות, לשמיטות, למלכים, are in plural?

A famous תירוץ brought by זכותו יגן עלינו, בני יששכר, explains that it refers to a specific אילן that we should daven for and think about on חמשה עשר בשבט, [or ראש חודש שבט according to בית שמאי, of course, we פסקין like הלל]. This specific אילן is the אתרוג. When a person davens on ט"ו בשבט for his אתרוג, he is assured of having a beautiful אתרוג for that year.

Now, let's discuss ט"ו בשבט. R' Elimelech Biderman offers an insightful perspective. He explains that ט"ו בשבט is a ראש השנה, symbolizing the renewal of trees and the new cycle of the year, making it a significant יום טוב. However, he raises an obvious קושיה: we don't see trees blooming on עשר בשבט. In the middle of winter, there is no visible difference in the trees. So, what are we celebrating on this particular day?

R' Biderman answers that the first buds are so tiny, almost microscopic, that we cannot see them. This hidden rebirth is what makes the day special. We celebrate not what we see but what we believe. הַזֵּיל established this day as ראש השנה to demonstrate our אמונה in הקדוש ברוך הוא. We rejoice in the unseen, knowing the trees will soon flourish. This is a powerful מוסר about our בטחון and אמונה. We believe that הקדוש ברוך הוא is the בורא העולם and מנהיג העולם, and we recognize His hand in the world, even when it's not visible. We see because we believe, not the other way around.

The Sanzer Rav points out another fascinating aspect, highlighted by R' Biderman: from חמשה עשר בשבט onwards, every two weeks marks another יום טוב. Starting with חמשה עשר בשבט, followed by ראש חודש אדר, ראש חודש ניסן, פסח, ראש חודש אייר, ראש חודש שני, פסח בעומר, ל"ג בעומר, ראש חודש סיון, ראש חודש שבועות. There's so much going on, that we're renewing our אמונה. Even though it's a cold winter day, we're starting with this. Now that's a fascinating concept. One can get very depressed when you think about the summer months. We think about עשרה בטבת, עשרה בטבת, which we just had. Why is עשרה בטבת the only תענית that can come out on a Friday? None of the others can come out on a Friday. They're always נדחה. But עשרה בטבת can come out on Friday, because that was a התחלה. That was that little microscopic bud that started the חרבן. So just to counteract that, just פארקערט, we have these ימים coming up, starting with ט"ו בשבט. This microscopic beginning, this little bud that we cannot see, renews our אמונה, and brings us to the ultimate גאולה and ישועה! אמן! במהרה בימינו.

