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# Dates on the Seder Plate

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## We use Dates - T'marim to symbolize modern Israel



The date palm tree reminds us of the commandment **b'al Tashchit** — do not waste — because every part of it can be used. Its dates are for eating, its branches are for blessing on Sukkot, its fronds are for thatching, its fibers are for ropes, its webbing for sieves, its thick trunks for building.

We eat both the skin and soft flesh of these fruits. The hard pit, while inedible, is the source of life for a new tree. In fact, a handful of 2,000 year-old date seeds have been successfully germinated and grown in southern Israel. The first of these seeds was found at Masada, a fortified encampment on a plateau in the Judean desert. Masada is a symbol of the ancient kingdom of Israel, its violent destruction, and the last stand of Jewish patriots in the face of the Roman army in 73 CE. So dates represent both our historical presence on the land and our almost miraculous redemption of the arid, fallow desert into an agricultural powerhouse.

### A Story

*Dates are nourishing and easy to dry and store. They provide food for journeys in the desert. It is probably because of this that Avshalom Feinberg had some dates in his pocket when he disappeared on his way to Egypt in 1917. Feinberg, a spy for a group that opposed Turkish rule over Palestine, was on an important mission. It was assumed that he was captured and killed.*

*After the Israelis regained control of Gaza in 1967, an old Arab led some soldiers to Feinberg's grave. There stood a beautiful, tall date palm. Perhaps it sprouted from the dates in his pocket.*

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## Prayer for the State of Israel

Our Father in Heaven, Rock and Redeemer of the people Israel-

Bless the State of Israel, with its promise of redemption.

Shield it with Your love; spread over it the shelter of Your peace.

Guide its leaders and advisors with Your light and Your truth.

Help them with Your good counsel.

Strengthen the hands of those who defend our Holy Land.

Deliver them; crown their efforts with triumph.

Bless the land with peace, and its inhabitants with lasting joy.

And let us say - Amen.

### *A prayer for the State of Israel*

אֲבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים, צוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגוֹאֲלוֹ, בְּרַךְ אֶת־מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל,  
רֵאשִׁית צְמִיחַת גְּאֻלְתָּנוּ. הִגֵּן עֲלֶיךָ בְּאֲבֵרַת חֶסֶדְךָ, וּפְרַשׁ  
עֲלֶיךָ סֶכֶת שְׁלוֹמְךָ. וּשְׁלַח אוֹרְךָ וְאַמְתָּךְ לְרֵאשִׁיָּהּ, שְׂרֵיָּהּ  
וְיוֹעֲצֵיהָ, וְתִקְנֵם בְּעֶצֶה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ. חֲזַק אֶת־יְדֵי מְגִנֵי אֶרֶץ  
קְדְשֵׁנוּ, וְהִנְחִילֵם אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְשׁוּעָה, וְעִטְרַת נְצֻחוֹן תְּעִטְרֵם.  
וְנַתַּת שְׁלוֹם בְּאֶרֶץ וְשִׁמְחַת עוֹלָם לְיוֹשְׁבֵיהָ, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

