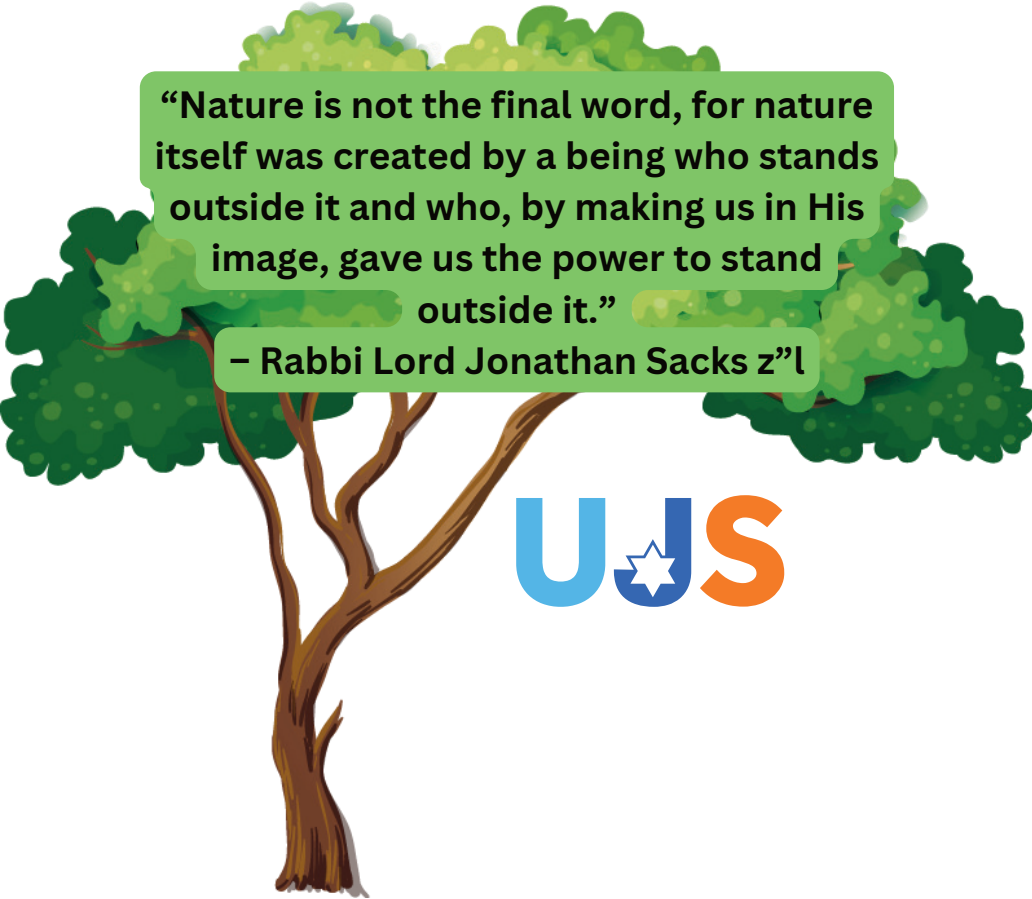


**“There are two ways to live. You can live as if nothing is a miracle. Or you can live as if everything is a miracle.”**


**– Albert Einstein**



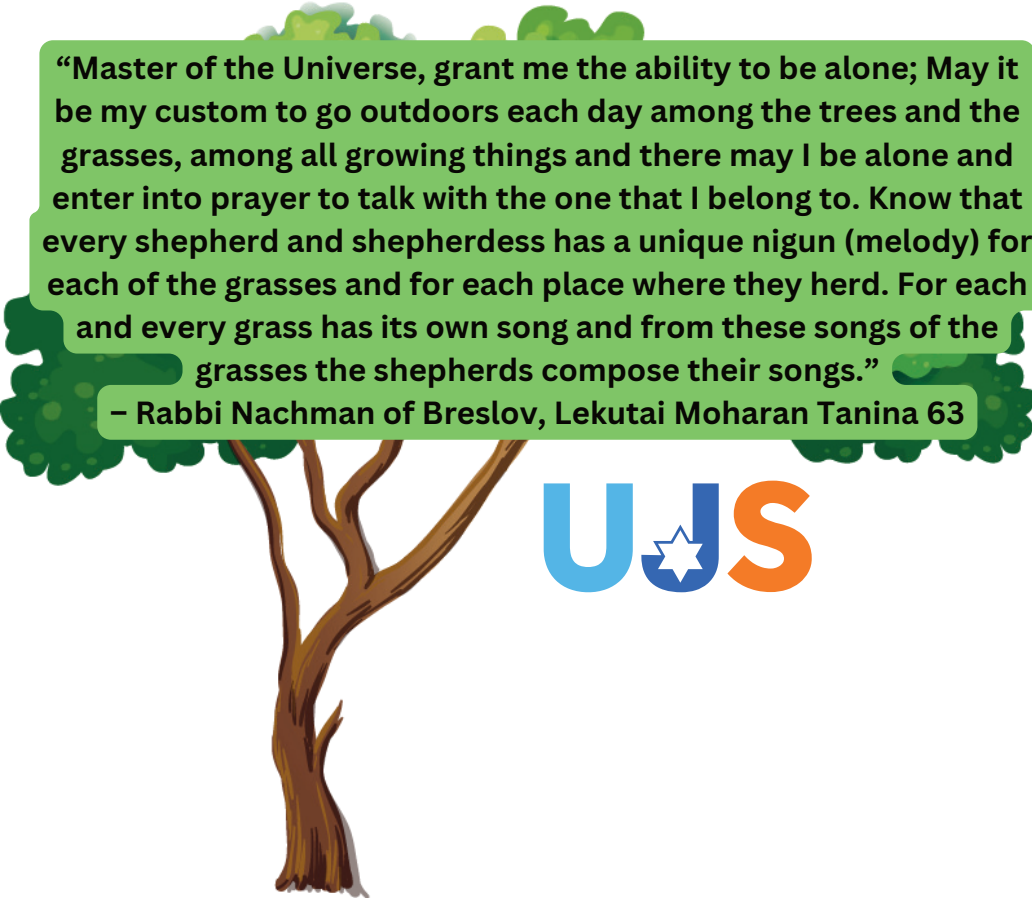
**“Nature is not the final word, for nature itself was created by a being who stands outside it and who, by making us in His image, gave us the power to stand outside it.”**

**– Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks z”l**





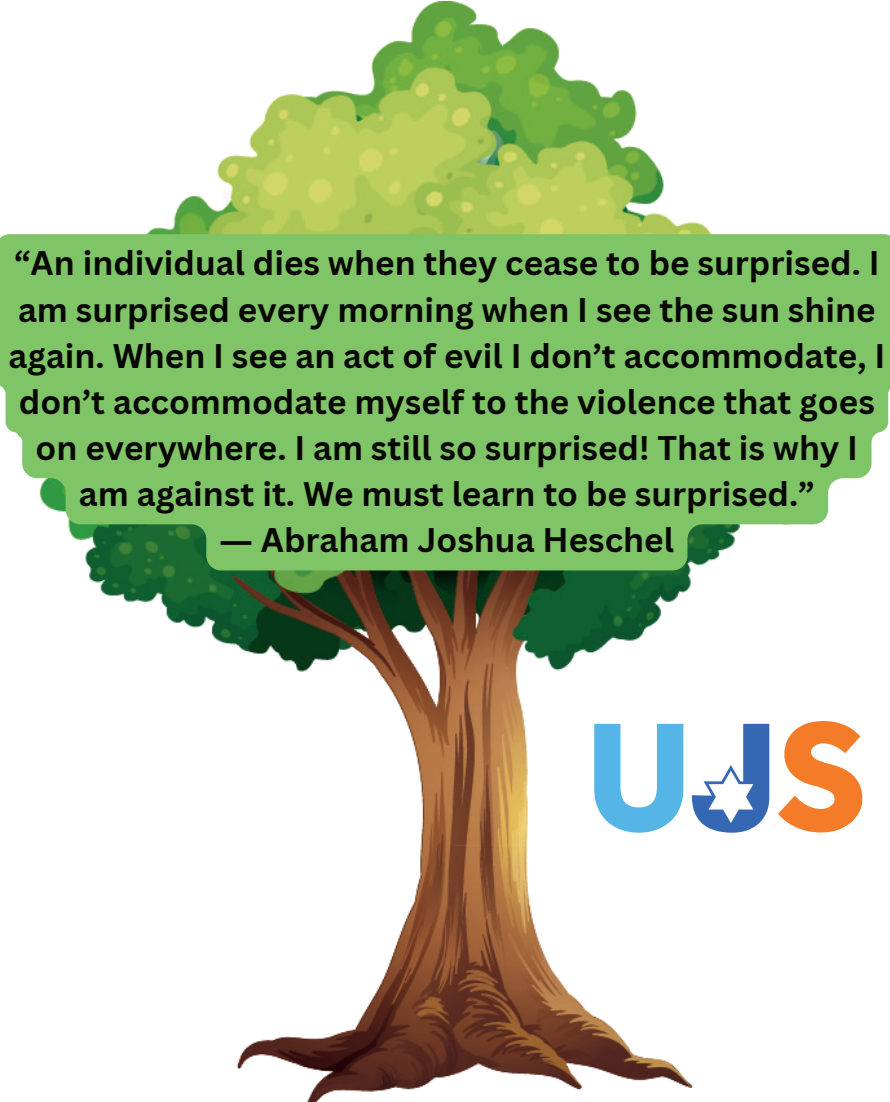
**“See to it that you do not spoil and  
destroy My world; for if you do, there  
will be no one else to repair it.”  
– Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13**



**“Master of the Universe, grant me the ability to be alone; May it  
be my custom to go outdoors each day among the trees and the  
grasses, among all growing things and there may I be alone and  
enter into prayer to talk with the one that I belong to. Know that  
every shepherd and shepherdess has a unique nigun (melody) for  
each of the grasses and for each place where they herd. For each  
and every grass has its own song and from these songs of the  
grasses the shepherds compose their songs.”**

**– Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Lekutai Moharan Tanina 63**





“An individual dies when they cease to be surprised. I am surprised every morning when I see the sun shine again. When I see an act of evil I don’t accommodate, I don’t accommodate myself to the violence that goes on everywhere. I am still so surprised! That is why I am against it. We must learn to be surprised.”

— Abraham Joshua Heschel



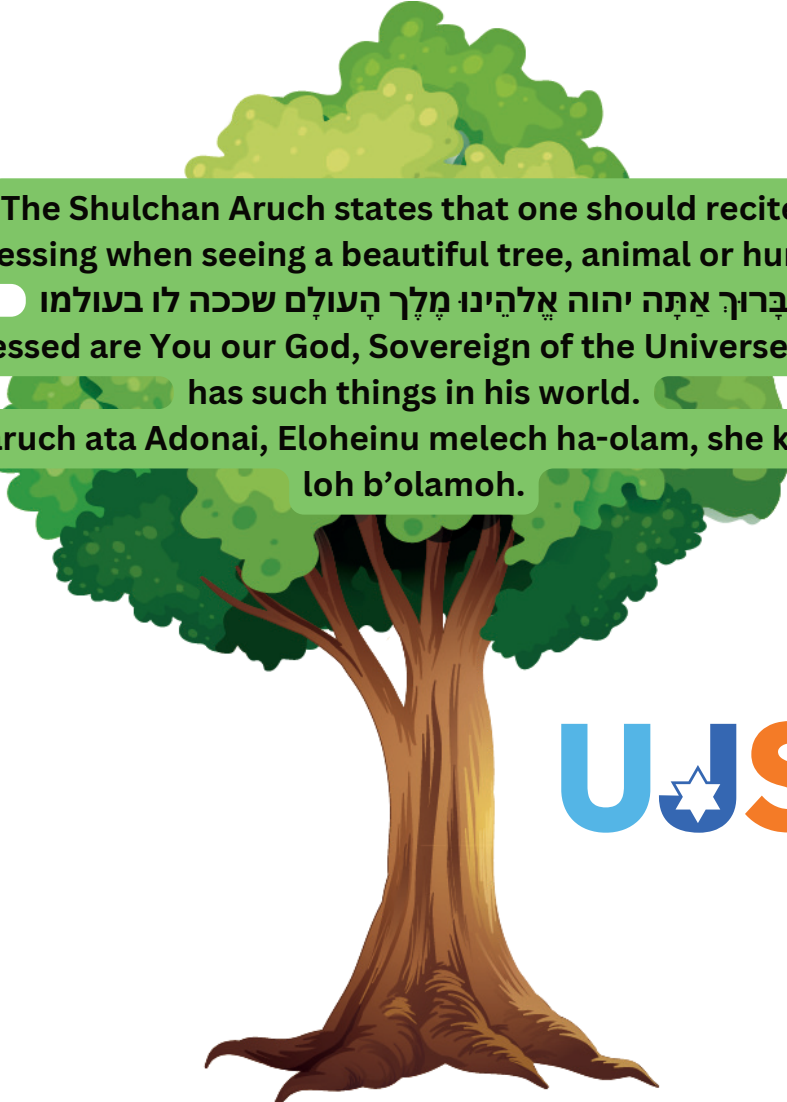
Blessing over the first blossoming fruit tree:

Blessed are you, our God, who left nothing out of this world, and created in it good creatures and good trees, so humankind could benefit from them.

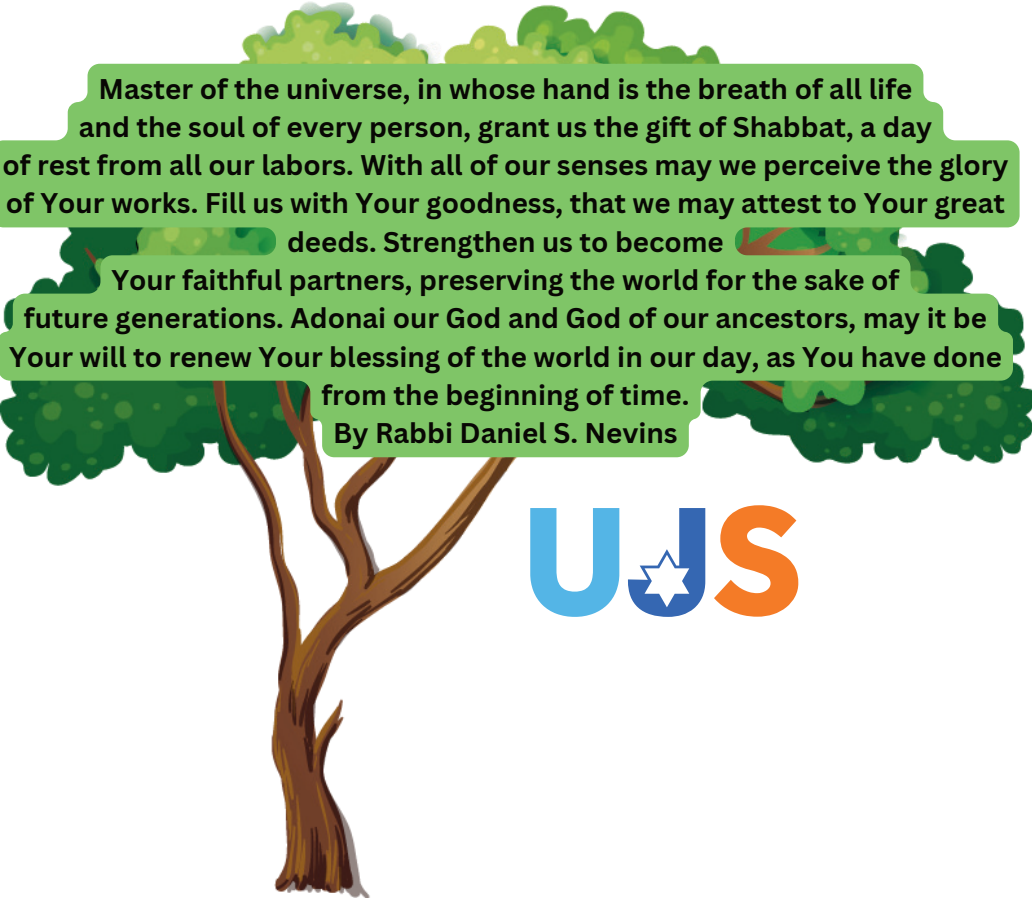
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁלֹא חָסַר בְּעוֹלָמוֹ כְּלוּם וּבְרָא בּוֹ  
בְּרִיּוֹת טוֹבוֹת וְאֵילָנוֹת טוֹבוֹת לְהַנּוֹת בָּהֶם בְּנֵי אָדָם.

Baruch atta Adonai Elohainu melech ha'olam, she'lo chisar ba'olamo davar, u'vara vo b'riyot tovt v'ilanot tovim, l'hanot bahem benei adam.



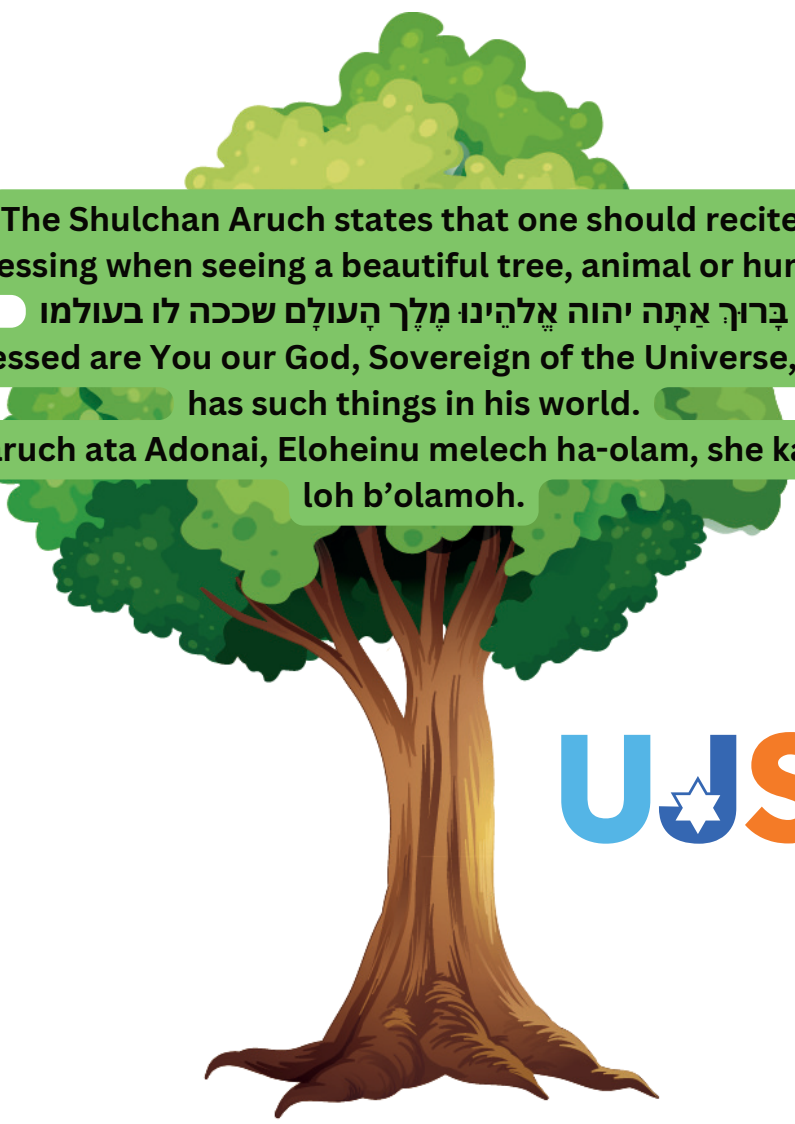


The Shulchan Aruch states that one should recite a blessing when seeing a beautiful tree, animal or human:  
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שְׂכַח לֹו בְּעוֹלָמוֹ  
Blessed are You our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who has such things in his world.  
Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, she kacha loh b'olamoh.

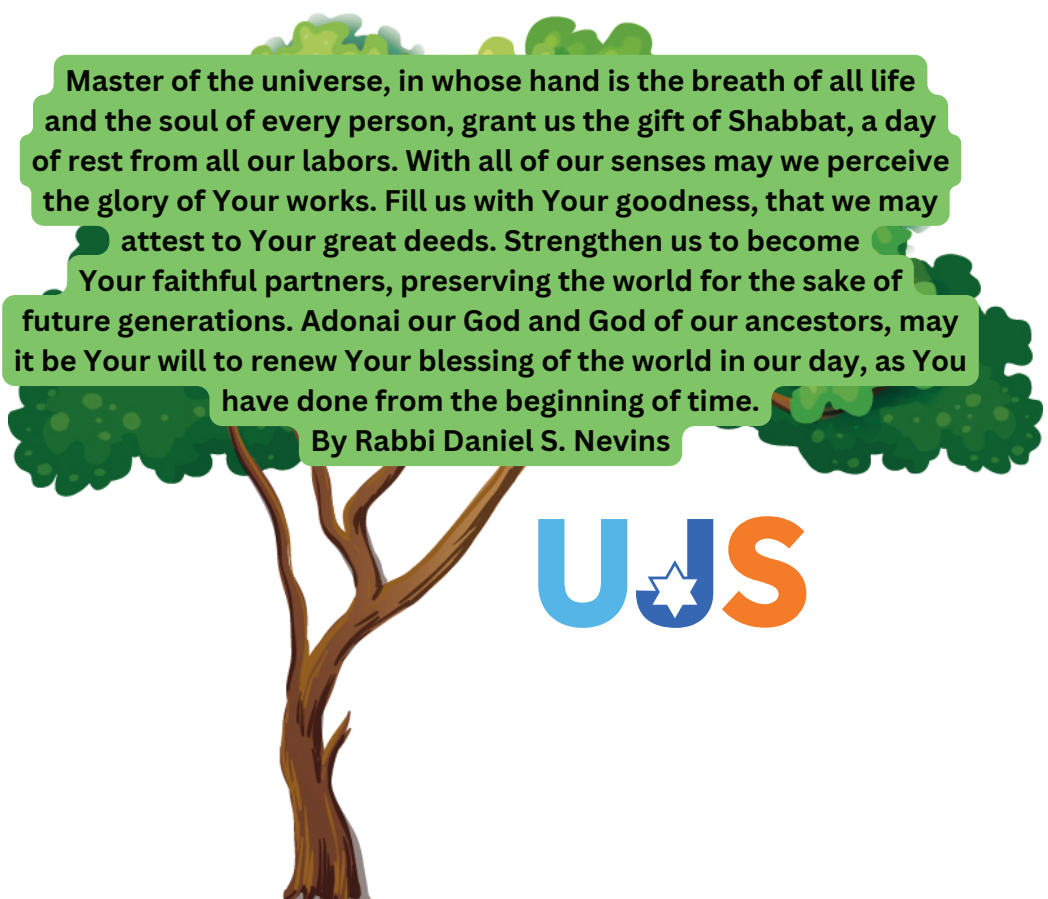


Master of the universe, in whose hand is the breath of all life and the soul of every person, grant us the gift of Shabbat, a day of rest from all our labors. With all of our senses may we perceive the glory of Your works. Fill us with Your goodness, that we may attest to Your great deeds. Strengthen us to become Your faithful partners, preserving the world for the sake of future generations. Adonai our God and God of our ancestors, may it be Your will to renew Your blessing of the world in our day, as You have done from the beginning of time.  
By Rabbi Daniel S. Nevins





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This is a story traditionally told on Tu B'Shevat.

Honi the Wise One was also known as Honi the Circle Maker. By drawing a circle and stepping inside of it, he would recite special prayers for rain, sometimes even argue with God during a drought, and the rains would come. He was, indeed, a miracle maker. As wise as he was, Honi sometimes saw something that puzzled him. Then he would ask questions so he could unravel the mystery.

One day, Honi the Circle Maker was walking on the road and saw a man planting a carob tree. Honi asked the man, "How long will it take for this tree to bear fruit?"

The man replied, "Seventy years."

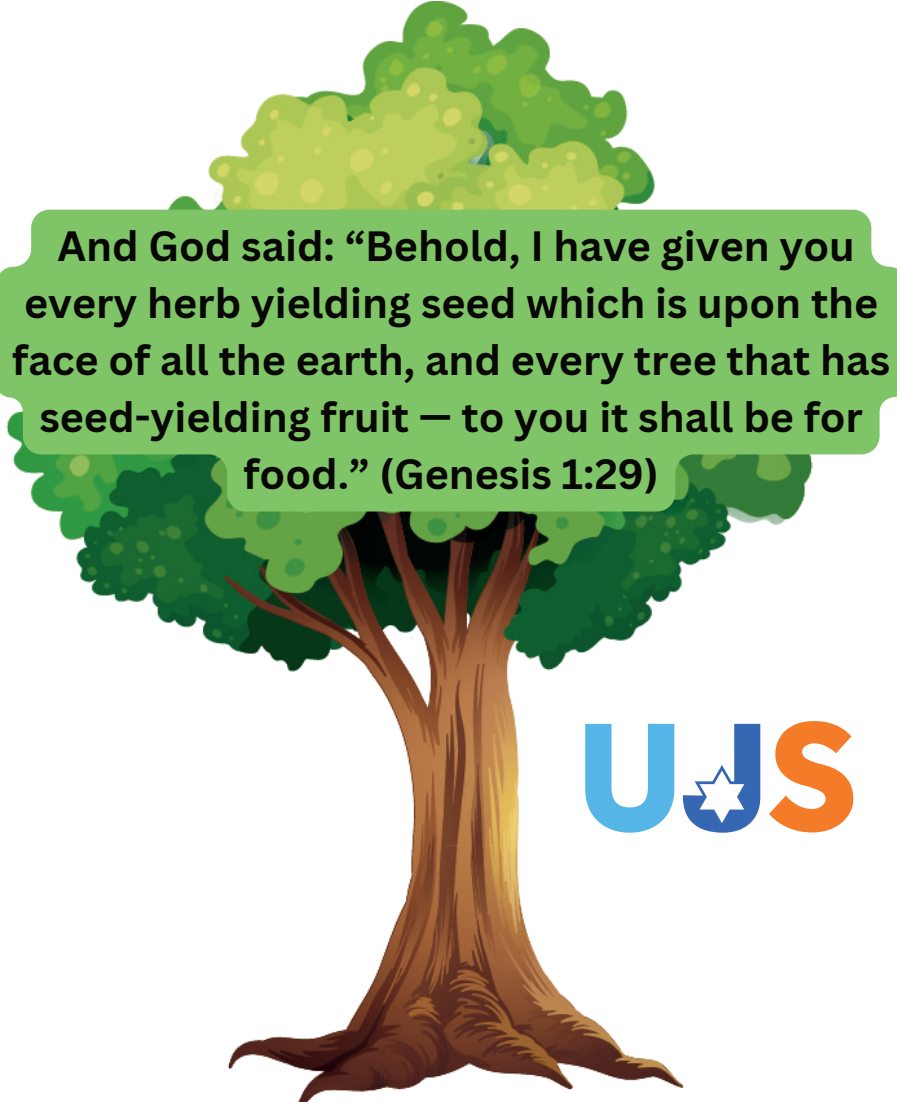
Honi then asked the man, "And do you think you will live another seventy years and eat the fruit of this tree?"

The man answered, "Perhaps not. However, when I was born into this world, I found many carob trees planted by my father and grandfather. Just as they planted trees for me, I am planting trees for my children and grandchildren so they will be able to eat the fruit of these trees."

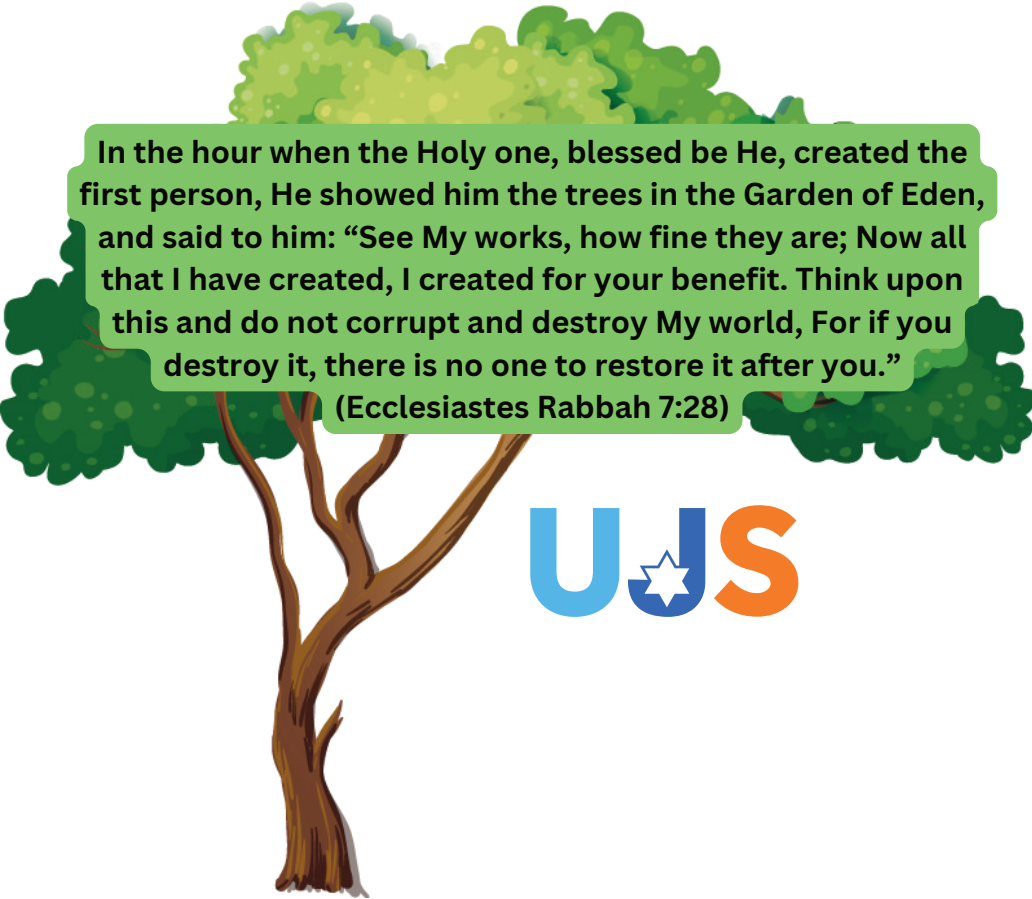
– Babylonian Talmud, Ta'anit 23a







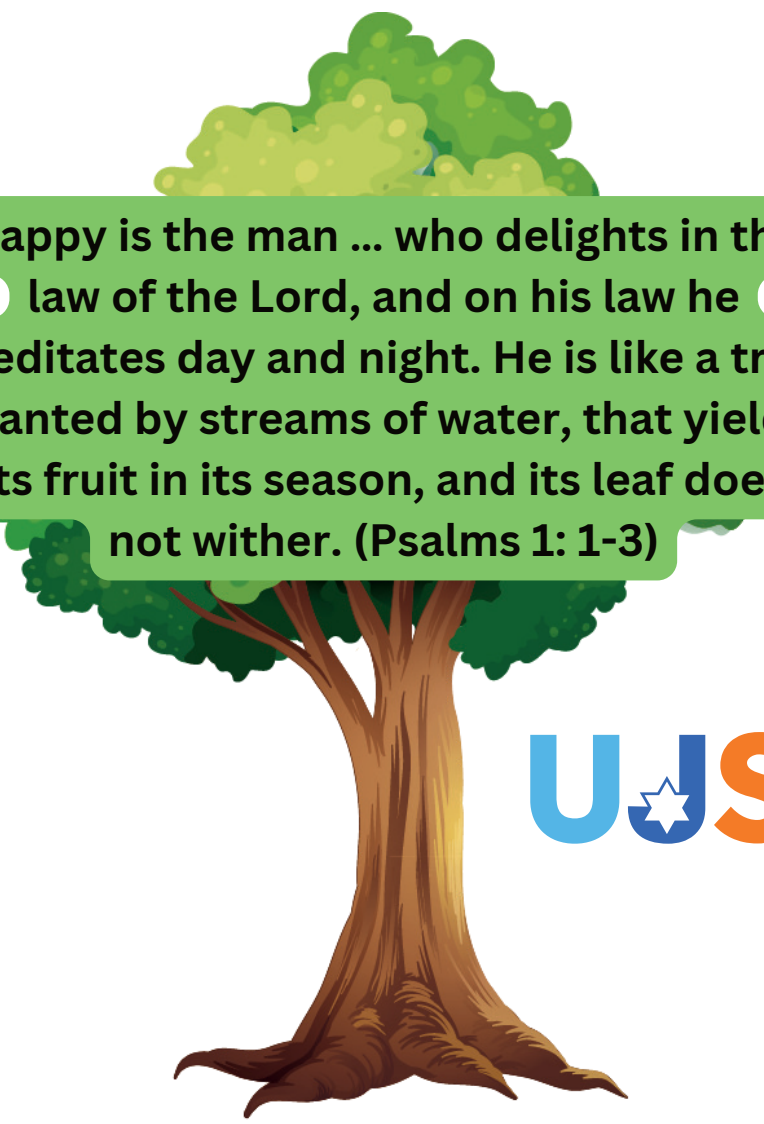
**And God said: “Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree that has seed-yielding fruit – to you it shall be for food.” (Genesis 1:29)**



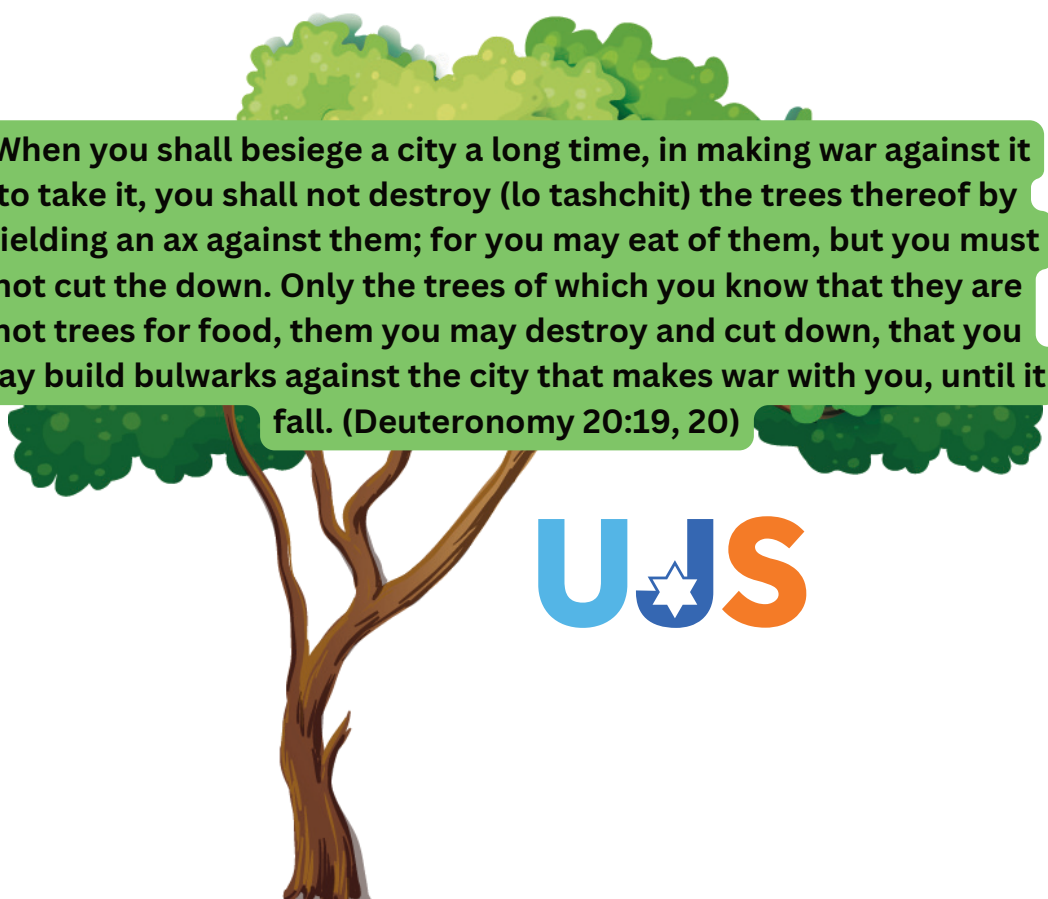
**In the hour when the Holy one, blessed be He, created the first person, He showed him the trees in the Garden of Eden, and said to him: “See My works, how fine they are; Now all that I have created, I created for your benefit. Think upon this and do not corrupt and destroy My world, For if you destroy it, there is no one to restore it after you.”**

**(Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:28)**





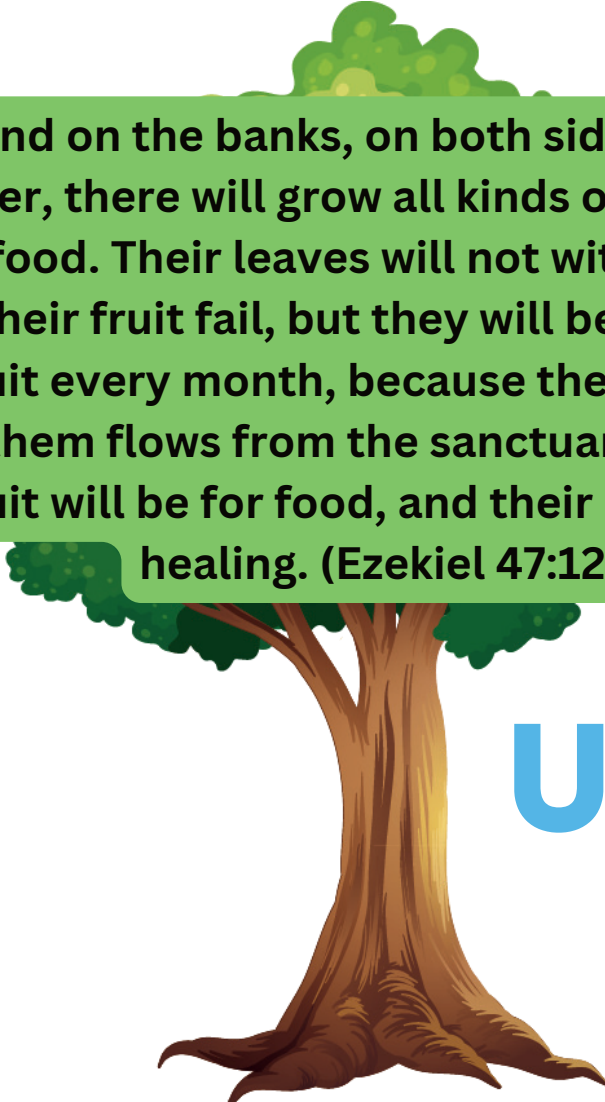
Happy is the man ... who delights in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. (Psalms 1: 1-3)



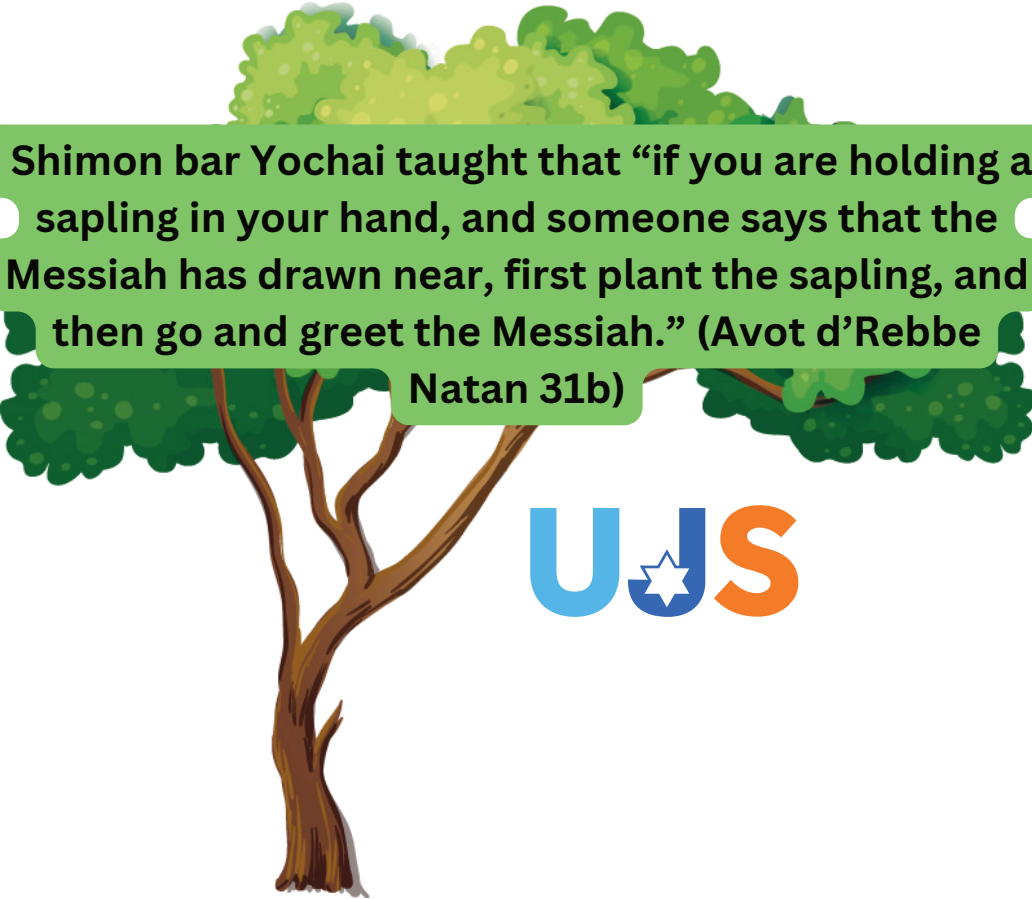
When you shall besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, you shall not destroy (lo tashchit) the trees thereof by wielding an ax against them; for you may eat of them, but you must not cut the down. Only the trees of which you know that they are not trees for food, them you may destroy and cut down, that you may build bulwarks against the city that makes war with you, until it fall. (Deuteronomy 20:19, 20)





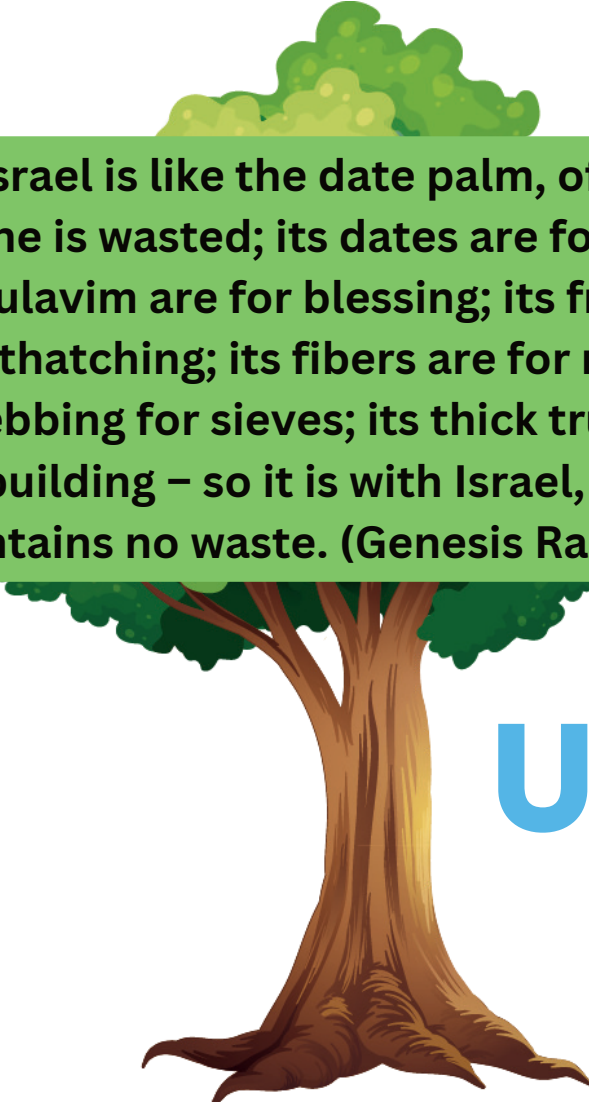


And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing. (Ezekiel 47:12)

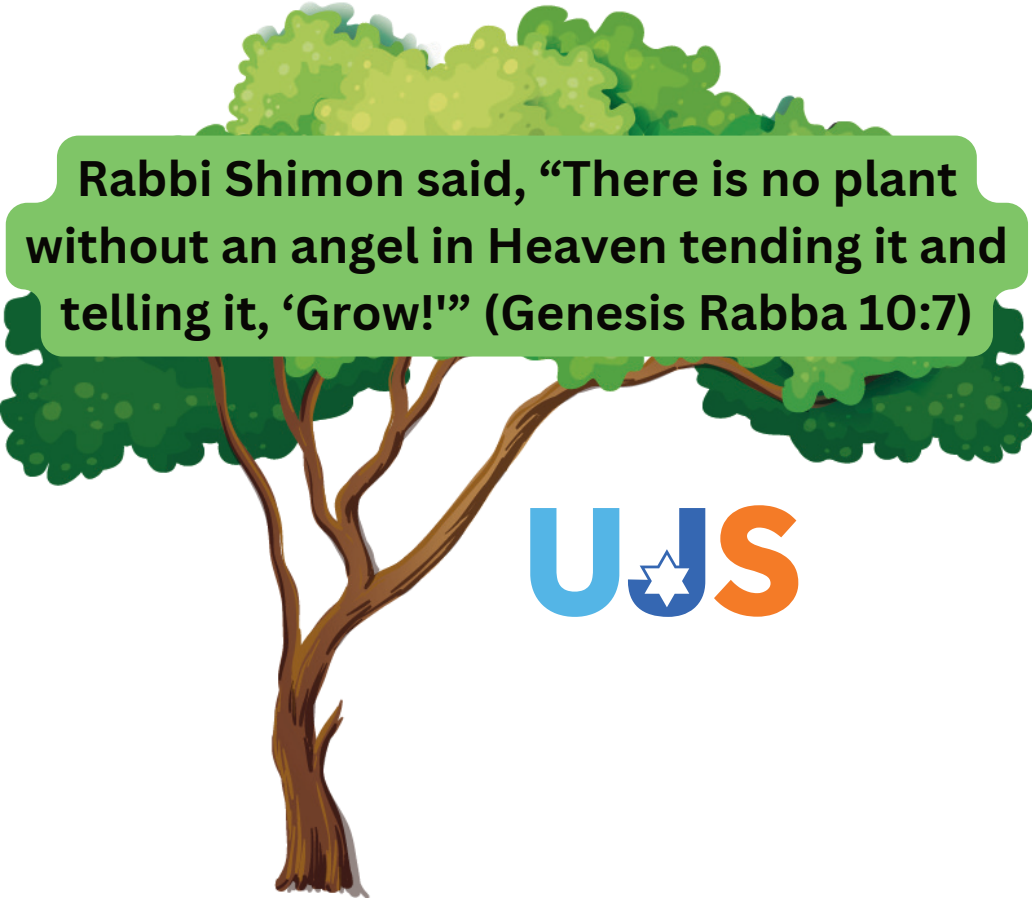


Shimon bar Yochai taught that “if you are holding a sapling in your hand, and someone says that the Messiah has drawn near, first plant the sapling, and then go and greet the Messiah.” (Avot d’Rebbe Natan 31b)



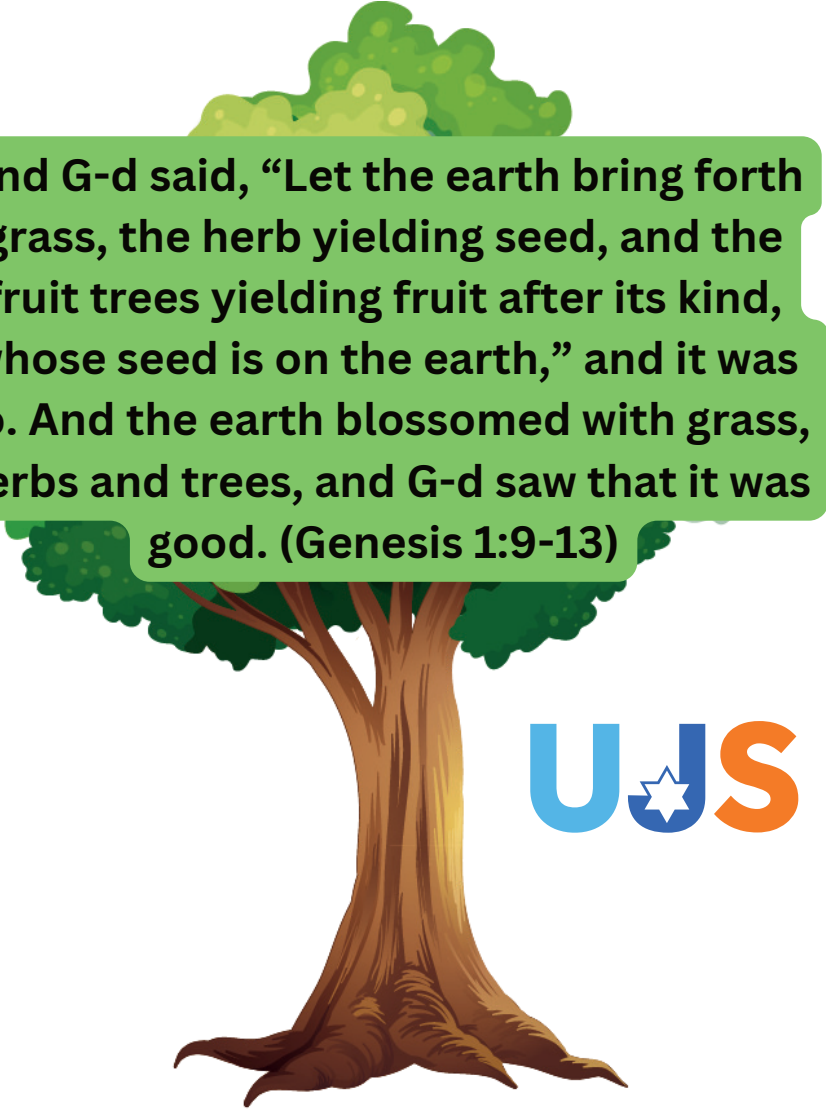


Israel is like the date palm, of which none is wasted; its dates are for eating, its lulavim are for blessing; its fronds are for thatching; its fibers are for ropes; its webbing for sieves; its thick trunks for building – so it is with Israel, which contains no waste. (Genesis Rabbah 41)




Rabbi Shimon said, “There is no plant without an angel in Heaven tending it and telling it, ‘Grow!’” (Genesis Rabba 10:7)



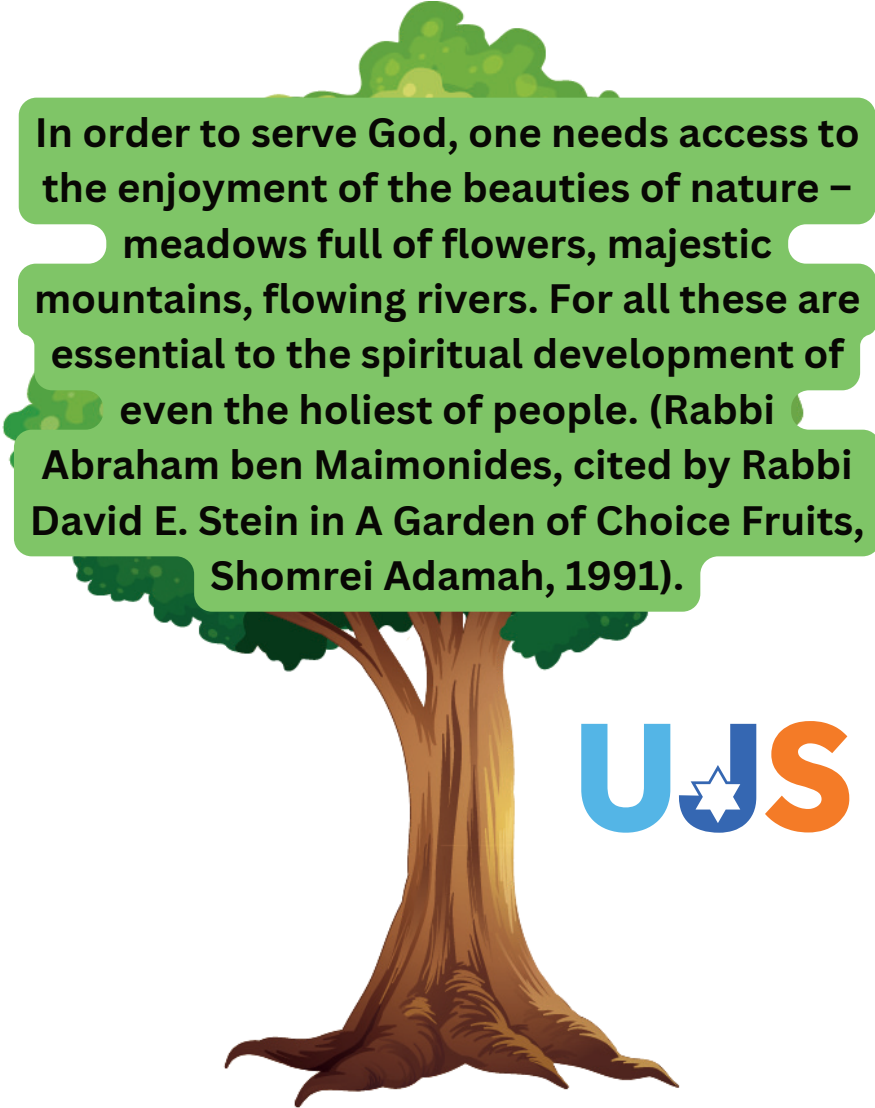


And G-d said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit trees yielding fruit after its kind, whose seed is on the earth," and it was so. And the earth blossomed with grass, herbs and trees, and G-d saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:9-13)

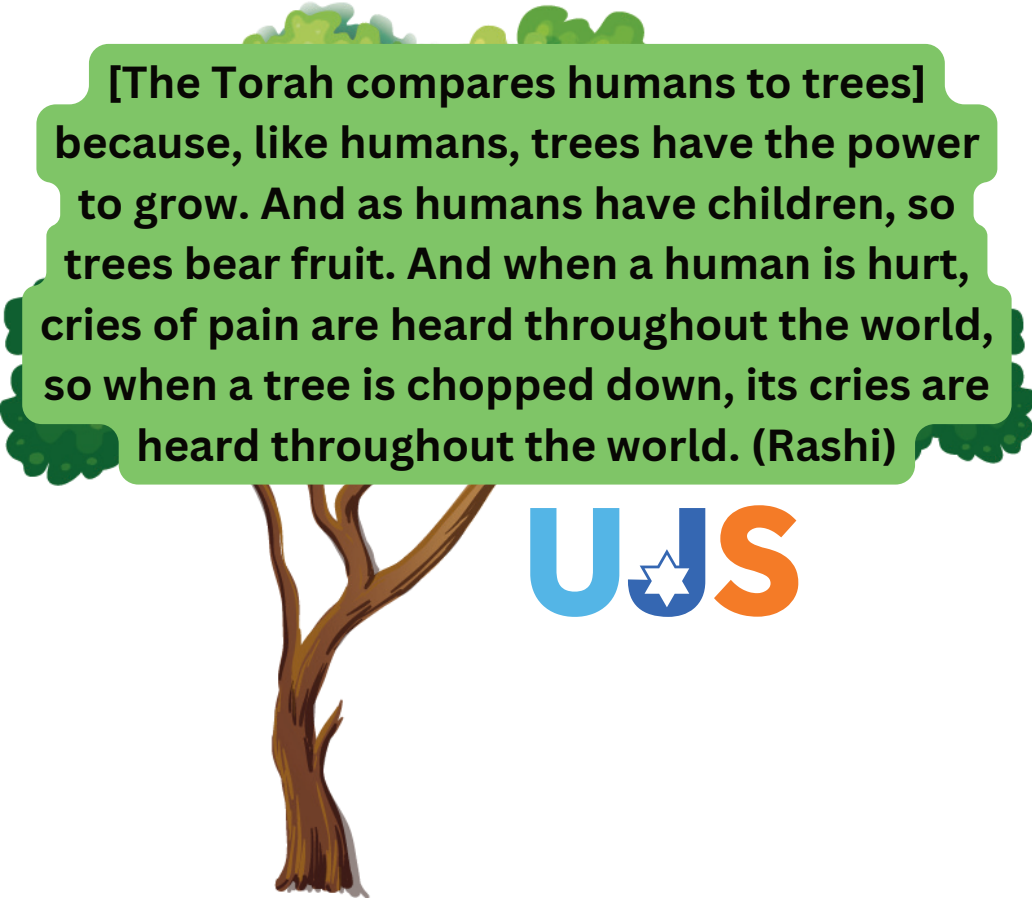


Everyone will sit under their vine and fig tree and none shall make them afraid; for the Lord of Hosts has spoken. (Micah 4:4)



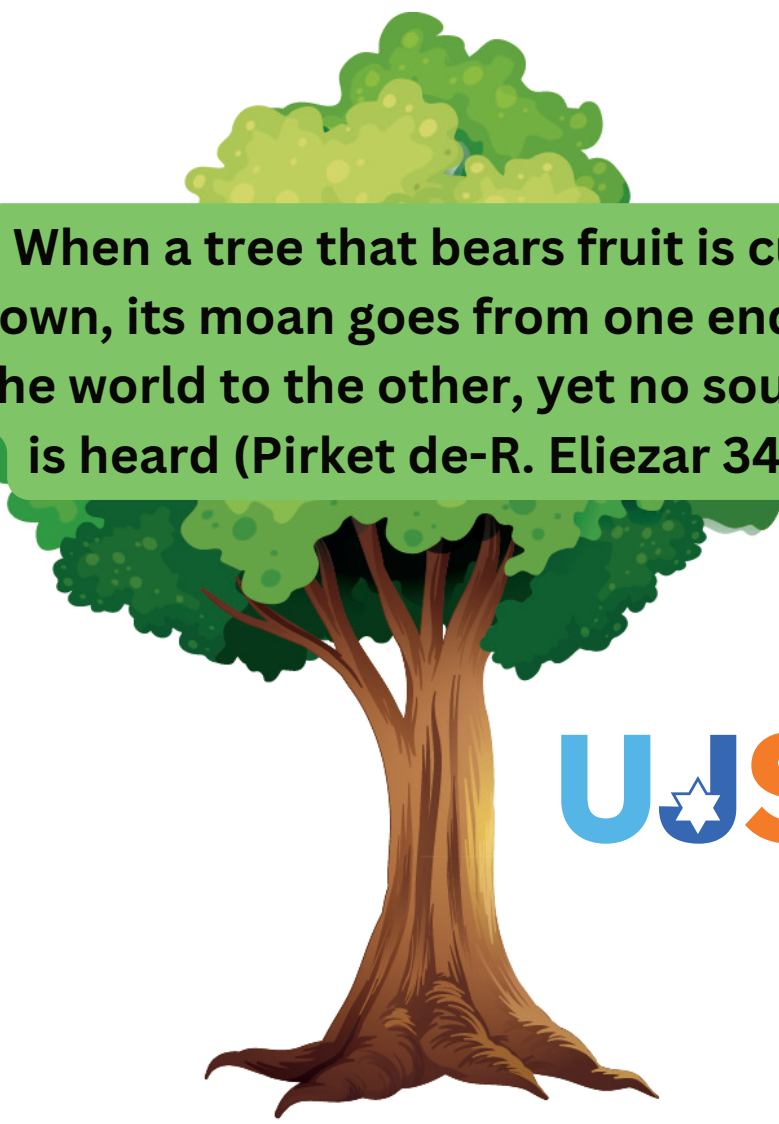


In order to serve God, one needs access to the enjoyment of the beauties of nature – meadows full of flowers, majestic mountains, flowing rivers. For all these are essential to the spiritual development of even the holiest of people. (Rabbi Abraham ben Maimonides, cited by Rabbi David E. Stein in A Garden of Choice Fruits, Shomrei Adamah, 1991).

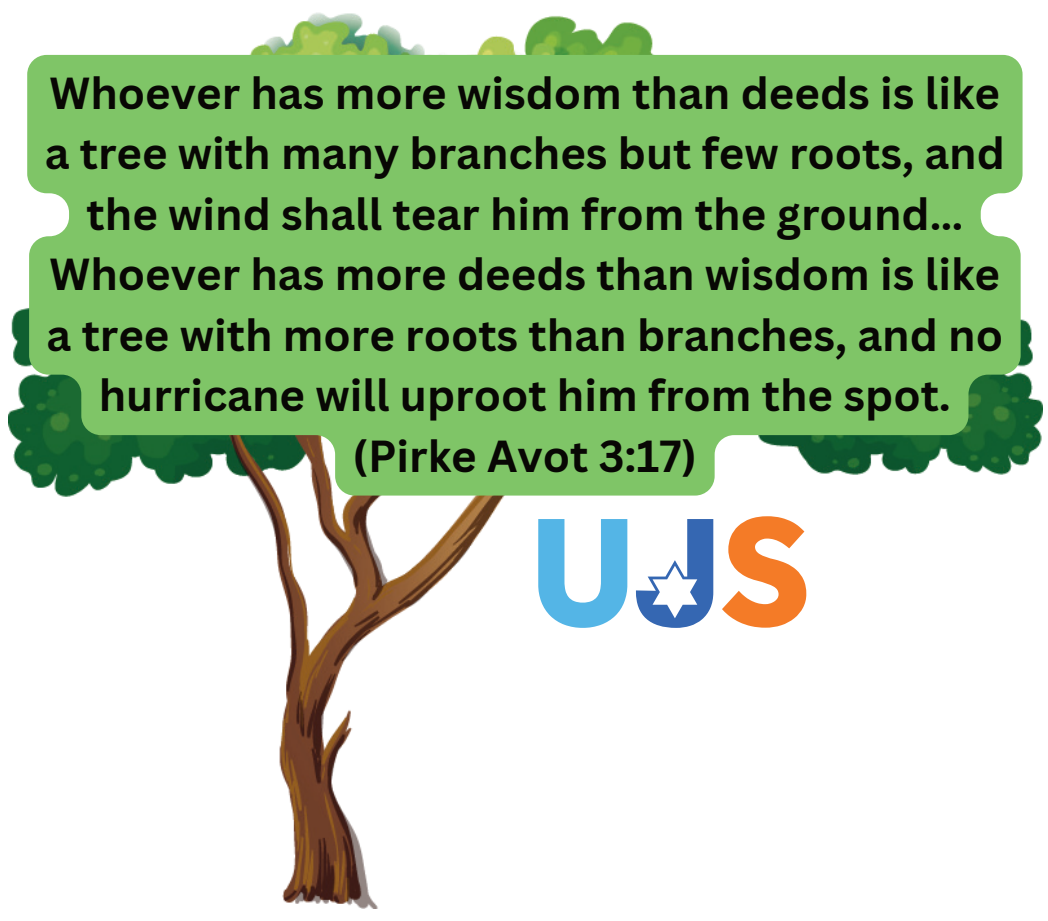


[The Torah compares humans to trees] because, like humans, trees have the power to grow. And as humans have children, so trees bear fruit. And when a human is hurt, cries of pain are heard throughout the world, so when a tree is chopped down, its cries are heard throughout the world. (Rashi)





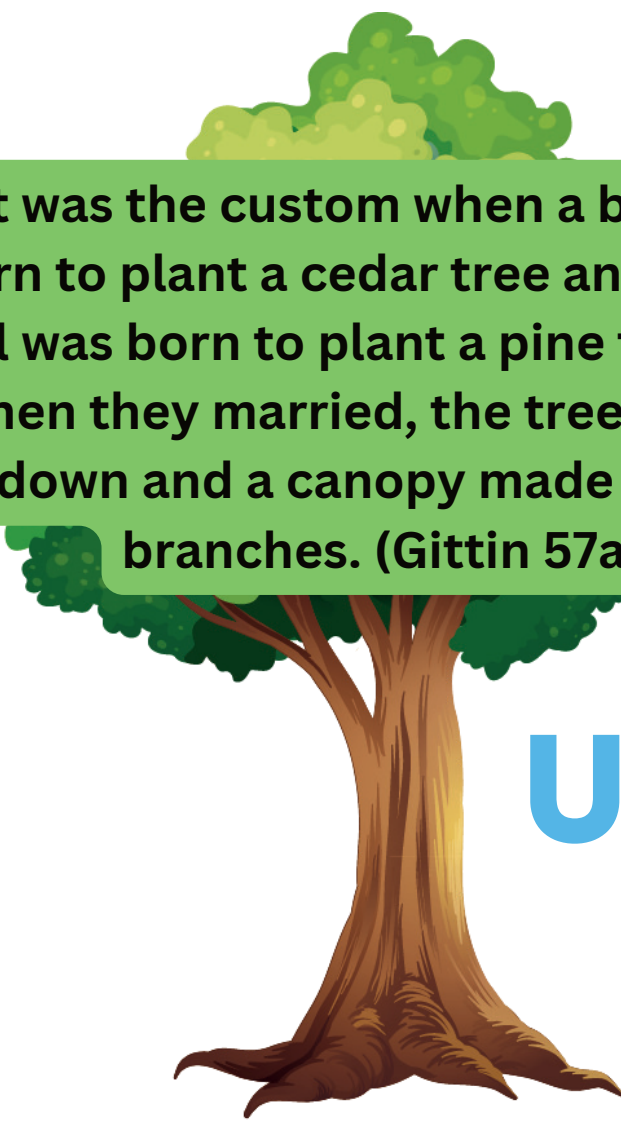
**When a tree that bears fruit is cut down, its moan goes from one end of the world to the other, yet no sound is heard (Pirket de-R. Eliezar 34)**



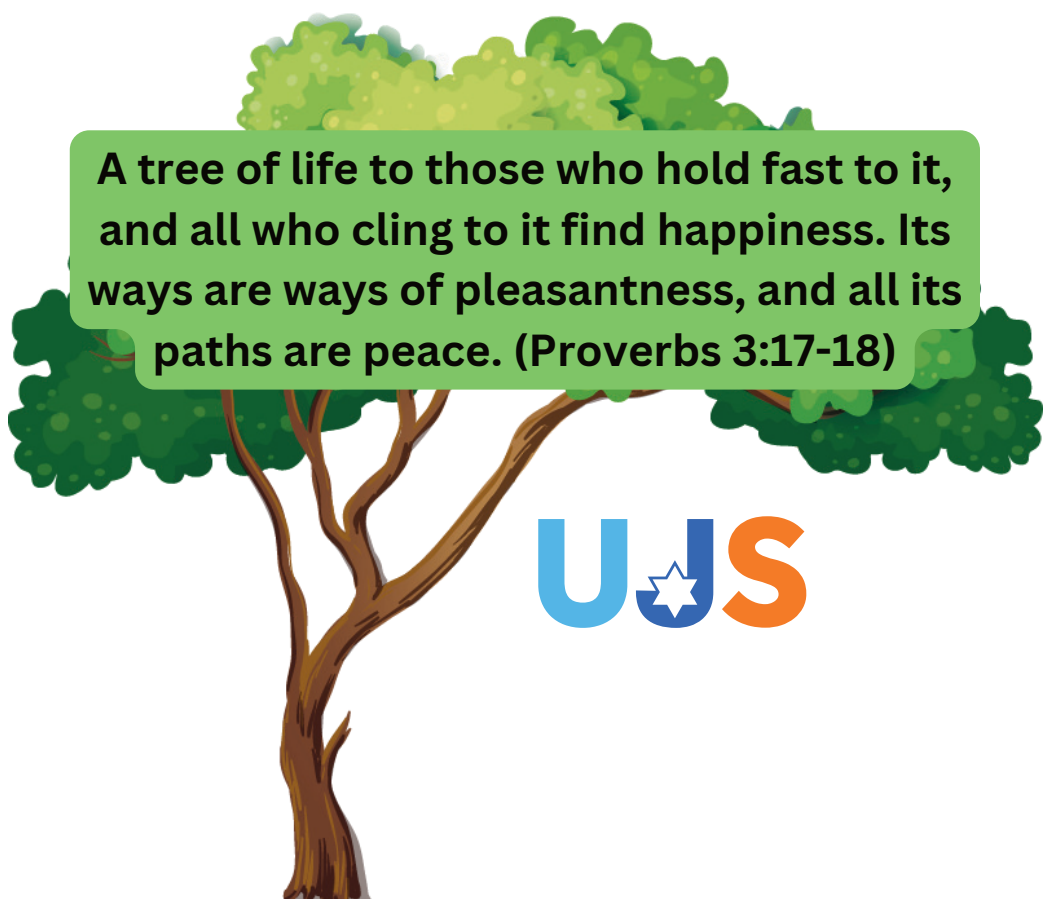
**Whoever has more wisdom than deeds is like a tree with many branches but few roots, and the wind shall tear him from the ground...  
Whoever has more deeds than wisdom is like a tree with more roots than branches, and no hurricane will uproot him from the spot.**

**(Pirke Avot 3:17)**





It was the custom when a boy was born to plant a cedar tree and when a girl was born to plant a pine tree, and when they married, the tree was cut down and a canopy made of the branches. (Gittin 57a)



A tree of life to those who hold fast to it, and all who cling to it find happiness. Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace. (Proverbs 3:17-18)

