



Blessing the Trees: Acknowledging What Is Good While Expecting So Much Better

Many people are going out these days to fulfill the mitzvah of “Birkat Hailanot” (Blessing of the Trees), which is recited during the month of Nissan. You stand near two flowering fruit trees and bless as follows:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁלֵא חֶסֶר
בְּעוֹלָמוֹ כְּלוּם, וּבָרָא בּוֹ בְּרִיּוֹת טוֹבוֹת וְאֵילָנוֹת טוֹבוֹת
לְהַנִּיחַ בְּהֵן בְּנֵי אָדָם

Blessed are You, Hashem our God, King of the universe, who has not withheld anything from His world, and has created within it good creatures and good trees for mankind to enjoy.

This is a blessing of gratitude to God and an acknowledgment of the good in all living things, especially fruit trees.

There is a special story about fruit trees regarding Rabbi Nissim Luzon and his family. Twenty-five years ago a mortar shell fired by terrorists struck the community of Kfar Darom in Gush Katif and hit the Luzon family's home there. The entire family, including their daughter Eliraz, who was five years old at the time, was miraculously saved, thank God. Eliraz grew up, married, and settled in the community of

Neta, established by Gush Katif residents. In their new home, they planted fruit trees they had brought with them, in tears, from Kfar Darom during the disengagement from Gaza.

Now, during the current war, on Eliraz's 30th birthday, a missile from Iran fell into her living room. Once again, thank God, the entire family was saved. The next day, the head of the family, Rabbi Nissim, went out to recite Birkat Hailanot next to the fruit trees that were brought from Kfar Darom. This act conveyed a powerful message about Jewish resilience to which Rabbi Nissim added the following message of his own:

“Twice we saw damage to our home from terrorist attacks. Twice we saw with our own eyes how a calm reality can change in an instant from good to bad, how everything can be suddenly destroyed. But we know that reality can just as easily change in the opposite direction and everything can quickly go from bad to good. The nation of Israel can rectify its mistakes and God can bring us into a new reality as we assume a new stature. This month of Nissan we wait expectantly for such an

enormous positive change and, with God's help, only good news in the future.”

We are looking forward to redemption together with you, Luzon family, as you continue to plant and to bless. ■

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