

Tani Talks Life ---"For The Love of Hashem's Nature"--The shiur where we talk a topic per session with some practical lessons

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The shiur should be a zechus for the refuah and yeshua of anyone who wants or needs one

Ever notice how beautiful Hashem made the world? Did you ever take a minute to appreciate the nature Hashem created? Breathtaking scenery, beautiful mountain scapes, amazing views, gorgeous sunsets, and so much more in the world comes directly from Hashem.

But how often do we stop and appreciate it? How often do we contemplate it and try to fathom its vastness? Sometimes it's important to literally stop, pause, and smell the roses, see the sights, soak in the beautiful nature made by Hashem.

My wife and I used to go to different botanical gardens in the past. The one in Brooklyn, NY, and the one in the Bronx are two of the best ones we've been to. On our trip to England when we were first married we went to a garden as well. On that same trip, we went to Israel and stayed a few days in Netanya, soaking in the beautiful views, the water, the sun and so much more. Throughout the years we have tried to go to parks and gardens, especially with our kids. Even recently we have gone to a nearby neighborhood -sometimes- to see the harbor with the water, and the pretty scenery around.

It is important to take in what Hashem created in this world and appreciate it.

There are so many natural wonders Hashem made in this world. Think about the Grand Canyon in Arizona the Ramon Crater in Israel, the mountains of Hawaii, and so much more.

Interestingly, in my humble opinion, the land of Israel is the most beautiful in the world and contains many of the most beautiful creations by Hashem in the world, and contains all elements-I see it as a micro picture of the world in terms of climates and features found around the world, all contained in one tiny land. I have always yearned to live there, and we should be zocheh to make it there one day, may it be soon for me and my family and the rest of the Jewish people.

When we think about nature and about Israel, it seems that so much of it is contained in Israel itself. From the land to the products to everything in between, it seems it can be found in Israel.

In fact,

The gemra in Kiddushin 49b says

Ten *kav* of wisdom descended to the world; Eretz Yisrael took nine of them and all the rest of the world took one. Ten *kav* of beauty descended to the world; Jerusalem took nine and all the rest of the world in its entirety took one.

That's fascinating. Israel itself, Jerusalem itself has 9 keys or nine keys of wisdom and beauty, while the whole rest of the world combined have one key or one key of wisdom and beauty! How amazing is that!

I tend to think that the land of Israel really as a whole has 9 keys or keys of beauty while the whole rest of the world has one key or key. In its entirety in my opinion, Israel has all ecosystems.

I believe the land of Israel encompasses all natural worldly geographic beauty as well as spirituality. It contains so much in it.

Wikipedia explains

The geography of Israel is very diverse, with desert conditions in the south, and snow-capped mountains in the north. Israel is located at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea in Western Asia.^[1] It is bounded to the north by Lebanon, the northeast by Syria, the east by Jordan and to the southwest by Egypt.^[1] To the west of Israel is the Mediterranean Sea, which makes up the majority of Israel's 273 km (170 mi) coastline. Israel has a small coastline on the Red Sea in the south.

Israel is divided into four physiographic regions: the Mediterranean coastal plain, the Central Hills, the Jordan Rift Valley and the Negev Desert.

Israel is divided east–west by a mountain range running north to south along the coast. Jerusalem sits on the top of this ridge, east of which lies the Dead Sea graben which is a pull-apart basin on the Dead Sea Transform fault.^[25]

The numerous limestone and sandstone layers of the Israeli mountains serve as aquifers through which water flows from the west flank to the east. Several springs have formed along the Dead Sea, each an oasis, most notably the oases at Ein Gedi and Ein Bokek (Neve Zohar). Israel also has a number of areas of karst topography. Caves in the region have been used for thousands of years as shelter, storage rooms, barns and as places of public gatherings.^[25]

The far northern coastline of the country has some chalk landscapes best seen at Rosh HaNikra, a chalk cliff into which a series of grottoes have been eroded.^[26]

Think about how fascinating this is: In the tiny country of Israel, which is like the size of the state of New Jersey, there is such a diverse topography with four main different types of areas. In the tiny country, Hashem made that there are mountains, valleys, desert, rainforests, forests, snow mountains like the Hermon, hills, seas, (ie Kinneret, Dead Sea), rivers (Jordan River), the ocean, ports, a crater or canyon (Ramon Crater like the Grand Canyon), stones, limestones, and rock, the Dead Sea-saltwater on earth, and lowest water and lowest point on earth, natural hot springs, Ein Gedi, coral reefs, and so much more. Literally every geographical aspect of the world is contained in Israel; it is a microcosm of the world.

According to one opinion in the convention on biological diversity, The number of ecosystem types covering Israel's entire land area depends on the criteria for classifying them. According to one classification, 46 ecosystem types were defined, clustered into 11 groups, the largest of which is the woodland and shrubland ecosystems.

46! In this tiny country, our homeland! Fascinating!

We need to appreciate the world Hashem made, especially that of ISrael. MY wife and I tend to watch virtual tours of Israel from Eve Harrow in One Israel Fund and David Sussman of Davidsussmanisraeltours through his TV show, and are blown away by the awesomeness and beauty of the country. The green, which sprouted once the JEwish people came back, is stunning. And the connection to the areas to the words of the Tanach is simply mind blowing.

Interestingly, Tu Ba'av was just a day or so ago.

The Talmud points out

The Talmud points out in Taanit 30b (referenced in the Mishnah,) compiled around 1,800 years ago, recalls the great match-making event that would take place twice a year:

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: There were no days as joyous for the Jewish people as the fifteenth of Av and as Yom Kippur, when the daughters of Jerusalem would go out... and dance in the vineyards. And what would they say? Young man, please lift up your eyes and consider what you choose for yourself as a wife. Do not set your eyes toward beauty, but set your eyes toward a good family, as the verse¹ states: "Grace is deceitful and beauty is vain; only a woman who fears the L-rd, she shall be praised."²

The mishna taught: As on the fifteenth of Av they would go out to the vineyards and dance. The Sages taught this tradition in greater detail: The daughter of the king borrows white garments from the daughter of the High Priest; the daughter of the High Priest borrows from the daughter of the deputy High Priest; the daughter of the deputy High Priest borrows from the daughter of the priest anointed for war, i.e., the priest who would read verses of Torah and address the army as they prepared for battle; the daughter of the priest anointed for war borrows from the daughter of a common priest; and all the Jewish people borrow from each other so as not to embarrass one another

Nature is in all elements of our life, we need to appreciate it and utilize it for good and wonderful things. This was how the Gemara solved the shiddush crisis during the times of the talmud and before.

Aish.com points out with Author Adam Ross

Rabbi Avigdor Miller, one of the last generation's great rabbis, was known to take time appreciating the awesomeness of nature, marveling at the intricate detail and unfathomable wisdom in the world that God made. "Look at this apple, so perfect, so sweet, so round," he would say before channeling his gratitude into a blessing. Nature is not only there to feed us, but also to inspire us.

We can look at trees and their fruit as our teachers and guides. The date palm which grows in salty conditions yet brings forth honey teaches us to extract the good from the bad. The olive tree, which produces oil, encourages us to bring more light into the world, and the grape which is crushed before producing expensive wine, teaches us the value of humility.

We all have periods of winter in our lives, times of darkness, coldness and isolation, and sometimes it's hard to imagine ourselves back in a positive place. In Israel, after four long, cold months most trees have lost their leaves, battered by the harsh winds and frost. Just when they look ready to be cut up and used for firewood, new life appears again. The almond tree blossoms, these barren trees which have laid dormant for so long make a comeback.

The key is not to let the difficult non-productive times in our lives define us. Like trees, we too live our lives in cycles, like the moon that waxes and wanes, shrinking and disappearing before growing and becoming full.

We need to learn from Hashem's nature. Appreciate Hashem's nature. Be grateful for Hashem's nature. Don't take it for granted. Don't take it as a given. Those locked up such as throughout last year who be so grateful to be outside to see it and missed being outside. If you have a backyard or front yard--use it! Appreciate it! Thank Hashem for it! If you're in a building go on walks and go to nearby parks! Hashem made nature purely for us to see it, experience it, and to partake of it.

Sefaria.org points out

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov taught...As often as you can, take a trip out to the fields to pray. All the grasses will join you. They will enter your prayers and give you strength to sing praises to God...(The Empty Chair, p. 86)

"How good it is to pray to God and meditate in the meadows amidst the grass and the trees.

When one goes out to the meadows to pray, every blade of grass, every plant and flower enter his prayers and help him, putting strength and force into his words."

It is best to seclude yourself and meditate in the meadows outside the city. Go to a grassy field, for the grass will awaken your heart.

Sichos HaRan 144

He would often ride to the outskirts of the city and take walks in the field. This was for his health and for other awesome reasons that only he knew.

This is why I have loved davening outside amidst the crazy past year and a half we have had. It is such a wonderful feeling davening outside to Hashem, amongst Hashem's nature, feeling the weather, seeing the trees, and davening to Hashem.

It reminds me of the idea of what myjewishlearning explains about kabbalat shabbat:

In the 16th century, the small town of Safed, located in the mountains of Galilee in northern Israel, was a center of Jewish mysticism. Solomon ben Moses Halevi Alkabets was one of the many mystics who lived and studied there. On Friday nights, Alkabets and his colleagues would dress in white like bridegrooms and joyously dance and march through the fields outside town to greet the Sabbath, which is depicted in both Talmud and in mystical texts as a bride and queen. Around 1540, Alkabets, a poet, composed a beautiful ode to the Sabbath Bride, Lecha Dodi, urging Jews to greet the Sabbath and extolling her virtues.

And gemara shabbat 119a explains

Rabbi Hanina would wrap himself in his garment and stand at nightfall on Shabbat eve, and say: Come and we will go out to greet Shabbat the queen. Rabbi Yannai put on his garment on Shabbat eve and said: Enter, O bride. Enter, O bride.

Jewishaction with author Rabbi Adler further points out

For the mekubalei Tzefas, this Talmudic passage served as the source for the liturgical kabbalas Shabbos which, for them, entailed a trek to the outskirts of the city to formally greet the Sabbath Queen. The field was thought to be the optimum venue for this reception because of its natural ability to promote an inner contemplative mental state as well as for its mystical associations. In fact, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria—the AR”I HaKadosh—is reported as having formally invoked the image of the field by declaring at the outset, “Bo’u v’neitzei likras Shabbos malkesa lachakal tapuchin kadishin”—“Let us go out toward the Sabbath Queen to the field of holy fruit.” Other mekubalei Tzefas viewed any outdoor area as acceptable for the welcoming ceremony, such as the synagogue courtyard .’

“Lecha Dodi Likras Kallah..”, from the poem made by Rabbi Alkabetz, must certainly have been intended as literal references to what was then the common practice of gathering an entourage to “go out” and greet the Sabbath. Even the image of the field is implicitly invoked by the words “Lecha Dodi” which, in their original source in Shir Hashirim (7:12), are followed by “neitzei ha’sodeh” (“Let us go out to the field”).

It should be noted that even after the kabbalas Shabbos service was incorporated within a beis haknesses setting, it was not uncommon for the tzibbur to recite Bo’iy v’shalom, if not the entire service, outdoors in the shul patio. I

The Aruch Hashulchan observes that, in his time, this practice had been all but forgotten. What remains today as the only vestige of this ancient minhag is the widespread practice of turning to the rear of the shul at the recitation of Bo’iy v’shalom to symbolically direct our gaze westward—the direction of the setting sun, or toward the door.

Rabbi Yitzchak Zev HaLevi Soloveichik zt”l—just before the onset of Shabbos.

After showering, he would don a kapata and sit on his balcony solemnly awaiting the approach of Shabbos. At sunset, he would enter the house, check the clock to ascertain the precise moment of sheki’ah, turn to face west and enthusiastically exclaim, “Bo’iy v’shalom ateres ba’lah ... bo’iy chalah, bo’iy chalah, bo’iy chalah, shabbas malkesa, Lecha Dodi..” He would then be seated and recite Psalms 92 (Mizmor shir) and 93 (Hashem malach).

An important lesson to learn regardless of how davening happens is that—the theme of welcoming royalty. Shabbos should not just come upon us, we must actually anticipate it and welcome it. Too often, especially on the short Fridays during the winter months, it is easy to “stumble” into Shabbos without affording it a proper welcome. It behooves us to reclaim the precious moments prior to Shabbos and to use them to the utmost. Rav Soloveitchik—the Rav zt”l—often spoke of a phenomenon that he felt was lacking in American Orthodoxy—that of the “erev Shabbos Yid.” The erev Shabbos Yid experiences the sanctity of Shabbos so deeply that he infuses his pre-Shabbos preparation with a unique aura of anticipation. The Rav related how such Jews abounded in every Eastern European shtetl and hamlet. The ranks of erev Shabbos Yidden included many a humble tailor, water carrier and smith whose simple piety paralleled that of the most erudite scholars. By midday, tools of the trade were set aside, shops were closed and one could palpably sense the approach of Shabbos. One would enter the shul well before sundown and find Jews of every stripe enraptured in the recitation of Shir Hashirim. Such were the likes of erev Shabbos Yidden. Sadly, the Rav bemoaned the disappearance of this breed of Jew, noting that although contemporary Orthodox Jewry might be meticulous in its Shabbos observance, it has lost this special spark, of the erev shabbos jew.

Going out to daven, to welcome the shabbos, is a wonderful way to interpret how to bring in shabbos. Davening outside, is a wonderful way to talk to Hashem while appreciating his creations in nature.

Kohelet Rabbah 7:13:1 points out

(1) . When the Blessed Holy One created the first human, He took him and led him round all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him: “Look at My works, how beautiful and praiseworthy they are! And all that I have created, it was for you that I created it. Pay attention that you do not corrupt and destroy My world: if you corrupt it, there is no one to repair it after you.

We need to appreciate the beauty of the world and the beauty of nature and take care not to destroy it.

Aish.com points out from Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan

Everything God created has a purpose to fulfill. Although God is omnipotent and has no need of messengers, He decreed that the world should run according to natural laws. In this way, He makes use of all things to fulfill His will and to guide man towards his destiny. Therefore, everything that may affect man, be it a drop of rain, or a thunderclap, is under God's direct control.

When we walk outside, when we see the creations we should see and appreciate the hand of Hashem.

Aish.com from Rabbi Leff

When it comes to using nature as a path to God, one's explorations must be carefully guided, so that one indeed finds God through his observation of nature. As King David proclaimed, God is to be found in nature:

"When I see Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, I am inspired to realize my insignificance in relationship to God, Who is overwhelming." (Psalms 8:4)

But there remains a danger in the observation of nature as the Torah warns us:

"Lest you raise your eyes heavenward and observe the sun, the moon and the stars, and you are enticed to bow to them and serve them." (Deut. 4:19)

All creation was designed to inspire and lead us to love God. The Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 31a) says that on the fifth day of the week, we recite Chapter 81 of Psalms, "*Sing out to the God of our strength*," for on this day birds and fish were created to praise God's Name. Rashi explains that it is not the birds and fish themselves which sing God's praises; rather when people observe the birds and fish, they give praise to the One Who created them. Similarly, *Perek Shira*, which relates the songs of various animals, plants and inanimate objects, is explained by Rabbi Yosef Mitrani, in his work *Beis Elokim*, as referring not to the utterances of these creatures and objects, but to the responses the natural phenomena evoke in the human beings who observe and study them.

The accessibility of nature to our physical senses is an important supplement to our knowledge of God. As physical beings, we are affected more by what we see, hear, touch, smell, and taste than by what we know intellectually.

But don't let God forbid turn to anything but Hashem. Don't think nature or science or anything has independent power--it all comes only from Hashem himself.

From the aish rabbi

When seeing unusually shaped or beautiful mountains, that one can readily recognize as a wonder of God, one should recite the following blessing (Code of Jewish Law - O.C. 228:1,3):

Blessed are You God, King of the universe, who forms the works of Creation."

-there are some guidelines involved, ie not from plane not if saw within past month etc

We need to physically acknowledge and appreciate the creations of Hashem in our life, especially those around us in Hashem's natural world.

Near end of his life, Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch announced that he was going to tour Switzerland on foot. His students were shocked, and tried to dissuade him from risking his health.

Rabbi Hirsch explained: "When I come before Almighty, I will have to answer for many things. But what will I tell Him when He asks me, "Shimshon, did you see My Alps?"

We are supposed to appreciate the wonders of this world. Make sure you do so!

Rabbi Dov Lev points out on aish.com

The Torah exhorts us to love God. But how does one love an immortal, infinite, non-physical being? Maimonides teaches that one way is to focus on the wonders of Creation.³ When we observe how a little seed can transform into something so beautiful and alive, we are overcome with awe and appreciation for the Almighty.

Mankind's first mission was to tend a garden: Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden to look after and cultivate the beautiful garden that God prepared.⁴

God first appeared to Moses in a thorn bush,⁵ because God wanted to emphasize that even vegetative life is infused with the Divine Presence.⁶

The Sages tell us that one should not simply enjoy the beauty of nature for its own sake, but use it as an opportunity to praise God for creating such beauty in this world.⁷ Some of God's most amazing miracles are happening right now in your own backyard!

It is considered praiseworthy to plant trees for people to benefit from the shade, beauty and fruit.⁶¹ The Talmud, which we will see the source itself a little later in *Yoma*, uses the metaphor of a tree to illustrate the idea of being selflessly devoted to building a better future:

An old man was planting a tree, when a young person passed by and asked, "What are you planting?"

"A carob tree," the old man replied.

"That's foolish," said the youth. "Don't you know that it takes 70 years for a carob tree to bear fruit?"

"That's okay," said the old man. "Just as others planted for me, I am planting for future generations."

The Torah compares a human being to a tree.⁸⁵ There is much that we can learn from trees⁸⁶ – from their vibrancy, growth patterns, and perseverance under difficult conditions.

A tree needs to be planted in the earth. The soil is not only the source through which nourishment is absorbed, but also provides space for the roots to anchor firmly in the ground.

This is true for people as well. To paraphrase the Talmud:⁸⁷ in *pirkei avot*, which we will also see the source itself later on *g-d* willing,

If you have many branches and few roots, then a wind can turn your tree upside down.

Whereas if you have few branches and many roots, even if all the winds of the world were to blow, you will not budge from your place.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of gardening in Israel pertains to the laws of the Sabbatical year, *Shmita*. The Torah says that during the final year of a regular seven-year agricultural cycle, the Land of Israel must remain fallow and ownerless. During the *Shmita* year, it is forbidden to plow, plant, harvest, prune, etc. Moreover, whatever grows on its own may be eaten by anyone, and the field's owner may not stop others from partaking.⁸²

The observance of *Shmita* imbues trust in God, with an appreciation that the land produces fruit only because God wills it.⁸³

Make sure to firmly plant your roots in the ground in a literal and figurative way--appreciating and using Hashem's nature and using your own nature to put roots in the ground through doing mitzvos and Torah learning throughout your days.

The *aish* rabbi also points out that

The delicate balance comes from *Deut. 20:19-20*. When an army surrounds a city and prepares to use a tree as a battering ram, the Torah says that a fruit-bearing tree may not be used for this purpose (*g-d* willing source we'll see later). If one uses the fruit-bearing tree, then the fruit will be needlessly destroyed, since the same objective could be accomplished with a tree that does not bear fruit.

On the other hand, a person may cut down a fruit tree for some constructive purpose (*Maimonides - Laws of Kings 6:8*). This encapsulates the Torah perspective on the environment: While we may use the world for our needs, we may never irresponsibly damage or destroy the environment. (Needless destruction is called *Bal Taschit*.)

Dont needlessly destroy things. Take care of the world around you---even your daled amos of the world in your front and back yard. This is why we often times have people help tend to and look after our property-and why we in my house, use a gardener to help tend to and look after our outdoor property in front and back.

Liten to these facts from a Fact sheet about Israel rom Aish.com from 2013

Israel & the Environment



Cleantech

Israel is ranked as the second highest Cleantech country in the world, according to World Wildlife Fund.



Solar Energy

Over 83% of Israeli homes use solar energy for hot water, the highest percentage in the world.



Green Energy

Israel is the first country to host a national electric car network.



Water Management

Israel's reverse osmosis facility in Ashkelon is the world's largest water desalination plant.



Water Conservation

Israel treats 92% of its wastewater and reuses 75% in agriculture, the highest rate in the world.



Agricultural Technology

- An Israeli company pioneered the use of drip irrigation in agriculture, helping to implement it throughout the developing world.
- Thanks to balanced diets and the latest scientific innovations, Israeli cows produce more milk per cow than any other in the world.
- An Israeli company based in a religious Kibbutz is the world's largest producer of natural pesticides.



Marine and Coastal Environment

Israeli scientists developed a bacteria that "eats" petroleum, helping to clean up oil spills on land and sea.



Environmental Planning

Israel is one of two countries in the world in which deserts are shrinking rather than expanding.



Air Quality

Israel's CO2 emissions are 11.02 per capita, half that of the United States.



Reforestation

Israel is the only country that entered the 21st century with a net gain in its number of trees - even more remarkably, in an area that's mainly desert. In the past 50 years, Israel has planted over 260 million trees.



Recycling

Israelis recycle 20% more of their plastic bottles than Americans, even though they only started recycling ten years ago.

Now isn't that just truly remarkable? The world should look and learn from the good Israel does and focus just on that.

Some stories help depict the idea of nature and how we can appreciate or interact with it. Listen to these stories from aish.com and [nesanel Safran](http://nesanel.com):

The author explains: As a kid, sometimes one of the nicest things about being away at Camp Wallabee is the quiet. Instead of the usual symphony of car alarms, busses, and sirens, the noisiest thing around are the crickets chirping at night and an occasional mosquito buzzing in your ear. So you can understand why I was so surprised to hear what sounded like a construction site one morning as I was eating breakfast.

Me and my best friend, Jerry, ran over to investigate, and we couldn't believe what we saw.

Sure enough, there was a big bulldozer parked across the road, and Mr. Allen, the camp director, standing with a man wearing a hard hat and carrying a chainsaw right in front of 'Big Apple.' Now Big Apple, besides being the nickname of my home town, is what all we kids called the tall, sprawling apple tree by the camp entrance. It had been there longer than any of us, even the counselors, could remember, and it was part of the Camp Wallabee tradition. And now if I was seeing right, it looked like it was about to turn into firewood!

Jerry and I looked at each other, and started to run. We headed off the director and the tree executioner at the pass. "Hey, Mr. Allen, what's going on?!" I yelled out in panic.

He must have seen how upset we were because he didn't get mad or anything, but smiled and said, "Don't worry guys, we're just improving Camp Wallabee. We're going to make a great camp even better by building you kids some great new playground equipment and even put up a great new snack bar."

Maybe I didn't understand him or he didn't understand me. What did all this have to do with killing 'Big Apple?' "But why is that man about to chop down this beautiful tree for no reason?" He frowned for a moment and then smiled. "It's not for no reason," he explained. "We have to put the new equipment and snack bar somewhere, don't we? Now could you boys please move away from the work area. It could be dangerous, you know."

Well there was some reason, but was it really worth chopping down this magnificent tree for some dumb snack bar?

Jerry and I begged and pleaded to Mr. Allen not to cut down the tree, but he wouldn't budge, and although he's a nice guy and tries to keep us 'happy campers,' I could see that even he was starting to lose his patience.

The big, mean-looking worker, who had lost his patience long ago, started up his chainsaw and it looked like Big Apple was about to turn into Big Applesauce, like it or not, when I got an idea. "Mr. Allen, what if we kids took a vote, and decided we'd rather keep the tree alive than all that new stuff... Would you be willing to change your mind?"

Mr. Allen scratched his chin and thought, and I prayed the answer would be 'yes'. Finally he agreed, and gave the workers some other jobs to do. He said he needed the answer within an hour, or the tree was coming down, and that was that.

I was sure all the kids would agree, but when I ran back to the dining hall where everyone was still eating and told them the story, I saw it wasn't going to be as easy as I thought.

"A snack bar sounds pretty good to me!" said Big Ed, munching on a donut.

"And what's wrong with having some new equipment?" added another kid.

A big debate (maybe you could call it an argument) started up between the 'tree people' and the 'playground people', and as the minutes ticked away things were looking pretty bad.

Suddenly Jerry winked at me, jumped up and said, "Why do we need a new playground, when God already gave us one?"

Everyone quieted down to hear what he had to say.

"Think about it," he said, "What's a better playground than a tree? You can climb on it, it gives you a lot of shade to sit under, and with just a couple of ropes we can hang some swings! We even get free background music from the singing of all the birds that make the tree their home."

The kids nodded their heads, and it looked like we were gonna win, when Big Ed, still chewing, piped up. "Yeah, but what about the snack bar?"

We were stumped. Nobody said anything for a minute, and then I got an idea. "What's a better snack bar than an apple tree? God gives us tons of fresh, delicious apples all summer long, for free, and," I said, turning to big Ed, "they're even a little bit healthier than donuts."

Ed let out a big laugh and threw his hands up in the air. I knew we had won him over to our side. After a quick vote, we ran back to Mr. Allen just in time to save the tree!

By the next day, things were quite again as usual at Camp Wallabee. And as Jerry and I sat munching on a couple of the 'snack bar's' apples, it felt good knowing we had helped protect part of God's environment, and helped people to understand why it was worth protecting. Sometimes all it takes is one tree to make us appreciate the true beauty of what Hashem made in the world.

A second story from aish and Nesanel safran

Steven and Craig were walking out of the Camp Chattanooga dining hall. Lunch had been the usual filling if unexciting fare and the boys were looking forward to the hour rest period to recharge them for the afternoon activities ahead. They hadn't gotten too far when they heard someone whistle in their direction. Looking up they saw Stan, the camp troublemaker, coming their way.

"Hey guys. What's up?" he asked, as he spit some gum he had been chewing onto the path, just a few feet from the nearby trash can. "Me and a couple of my buddies are gonna take some canoes out onto the lake now. We even got permission. Wanna come?"

The two friends look at each other. "I say we keep away," whispered Craig. "If Stan and his crowd is involved, it could only mean trouble."

But Steve disagreed. "What's the problem? Just because we're going canoeing with them doesn't mean we have to act like them."

Craig shrugged. "You go if you want. But I'm going back to the bunk," he said, as he went on his way.

"Count me in," said Steve, as he turned to join Stan heading down to the lake.

The boys grabbed the canoes and paddled out into the shiny blue-green waters. Steve was having fun. "This is great!" he thought. Suddenly he heard a loud splash followed by wild laughter. Quickly he turned his head and saw that Stan had dived out of his canoe into the middle of the lake. "Whoa," thought Steve. "We're not allowed to do that. The counselor had told us how dangerous it was."

But soon one splash followed another until all the boys except Steve had jumped out of their canoes. The boy felt left out. At first he stayed put, but then when he saw that everyone seemed to be having so much fun, he also jumped out of the canoe. Just then the supervising counselor pulled up in a rowboat and started yelling at everyone jumping in the water. Turns out that besides tipping the canoes, the boys didn't even get permission to go out in the canoes in the first place!

As the counselor gathered the boys into his rowboat, he noticed Steven. "This is a surprise. I would never have expected you to act this way," he said with a frown.

Steven bowed his head in shame. All of the boys, including Steven, lost their swimming and boating privileges for a whole, hot week.

Later that day when his friend Craig came back from swimming, Steven told him the whole story. "You were right," he said. "Somehow just being with those guys made me lose my head. From now on I'm going to stay with the right crowd and keep my head above water."

It's good to appreciate nature, to appreciate the water. But we have to do so in proper and permissible ways. Make sure to care for the nature of Hashem around us and to do so in the right ways.

A final story from From aish.com and nesanel safran

It was the end of the school year and as a special treat Mrs. Glass, the nature and ecology teacher, decided to take her class on a hike through the Blue Ridge nature reserve. She told the students that they had permission to bring back one small object each that would help them to remember the experience and asked them to save it for a show-and-tell presentation when they got back to school.

It was an unbelievable trip. It had been a warm and rainy spring which had caused the many types of plants and wild flowers to bloom into a dazzling array that made parts of the valley look like a giant flower bouquet. The rushing streams that followed the trail and the small waterfall at the end of the hike gave plenty of pure cool water to refresh the kids' spirits for the bus ride back to school.

On the way home, several of the girls were chatting about the trip. The topic of the show-and-tell came up. "What did you bring back, Laura?" asked one of her friends. The girl adjusted her glasses, opened up her tidy carry bag and pulled out a neatly folded piece of paper. She spread it out on the seat next to her.

"They had some of these brochures at the entrance to the park," she explained. "This one lists all of the park's facts and figures including all the trails' elevations. It even has a small map. What better way to remember the trip?" she added with a tight smile as she refolded the brochure.

"Well, maybe for you there is no better way but for me this said it all," offered Sharon, the girl in the next seat. She opened up the faded denim pouch she always carried and pulled out a small pine cone. She brought it to her nose. "Mmm!" she said. "Just one smell brings me right back to that incredible forest."

Just then another girl, Ruth, cut in with a wave of her hand. "It's nice," she admitted, "but I think you both missed the boat." She reached into her blue-and-green "Save the Earth" tote bag and pulled out a crushed Pepsi can.

"What's that?" asked her friends.

"Didn't you notice there were tons of these things just off the side of the trail?" Ruth asked.

"Even in a nature reserve people just have to litter! This can is going to remind me to fight even harder against pollution. After all, this is an ecology class, isn't it?"

Suddenly, the girls realized that Debbie, the teacher's assistant, had been watching their little show-and-tell preview. The older girl tried to turn her head away when they noticed her. But it was too late.

"C'mon, Debbie, you decide," said Ruth. "Which of us picked the best thing for show-and-tell?"

Debbie blushed and tried to change the subject but the girls wouldn't let her off the hook. Finally she looked at them warmly and said, "They were all perfect." But this answer seemed to satisfy nobody.

"Really, Debbie," said Laura. "How could they all be perfect? That's statistically impossible." The older girl held back a smile. "What I mean is that Mrs. Glass asked each of you to bring something back that had special meaning for you. And that's what you did. Each of you, from your own way of looking at things, fulfilled the assignment perfectly! Knowing each of you, I think you each chose just the object that will help you to remember and appreciate the nature reserve."

The friends drank in Debbie's words with a smile.

Just then the bus pulled into the school parking lot. The girls filed off the bus, each with her "perfect" object and a little bit wiser from the trip home.

We should appreciate Hashem's nature and truly care for it as best we can. Throw out your trash. Tend to the front and back yard, even if that means hiring a gardener, like we do. Make sure to get out and see and feel the beauty of the world Hashem gave us. Talk to Hashem outside, even try to daven outside if you can. For me it has been a total game changer to daven outside--a beautiful feeling. Make sure to go to parks and gardens, to the water and the trees. See what Hashem gave us and truly treasure it--never taking it for granted. IF we can appreciate the world, tend to the world, care for the world, maybe we can finally bring true peace in the world and usher in an amazing time period for all of the world.

Let's see some other sources.

Deuteronomy 20:19-20

When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city? Only trees that you know do not yield food may be destroyed; you may cut them down for constructing siegeworks against the city that is waging war on you, until it has been reduced.

Psalms 19:2

The heavens declare the glory of God, the sky proclaims His handiwork.
Hashamayim misaprim kivod kel umaasei yadav magid harakia

Bereshit Rabbah 10:6

Bar Sira said (Ben Sira 38:7-8), "God brings forth spices from the earth. With them the healer heals the ailments, and with them the perfumer perfumes the perfumes."

Psalm 104

Bless the LORD, O my soul; O LORD, my God, You are very great; You are clothed in glory and majesty, wrapped in a robe of light; You spread the heavens like a tent cloth. He sets the rafters of His lofts in the waters, makes the clouds His chariot, moves on the wings of the wind. He makes the winds His messengers, fiery flames His servants. He established the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never totter. You made the deep cover it as a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. They fled at Your blast, rushed away at the sound of Your thunder,...

PTC. Hashem can be seen in the elements of the world. We just have to look for him, appreciate him, and understand that it is all from Hashem in the nature around us.

Deuteronomy 20:19

FOR IS THE TREE OF THE FIELD A MAN [THAT IT SHOULD BE BESIEGED BY THEE
Ki Haadam eitz hasadeh

Duties of the Heart, Second Treatise on Examination 5:55-56

One of the most important subjects on which you should reflect is the wonderful gift of G-d to living creatures and plants - the rain, which besides falling in its due season, descends in showers when needed. As Scripture said, (Yirmiya 14:22) "Are there any among the vanities of the nations that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? are You not He, O L-ord our G-d? therefore we will hope unto You: for You have made all these things" (Yirmiya 5:24)
"Neither say they in their heart: Let us now fear the L-ord, our G-d, that gives rain, both the former and the latter, in due season..."

Sefer Hachinuch 529

To not destroy fruit trees: That we have been prevented from chopping down trees when we besiege a city to distress the people of the city and to sadden their hearts. And about this is it stated (Deuteronomy 20:19), "you may not destroy its tree, etc. and you shall not chop it down." And likewise not to do any damage - such as burning or ripping a garment or breaking a vessel for no reason - entered under this negative commandment

The root of this commandment is well-known - it is in order to teach our souls to love good and benefit and to cling to it. And through this, good clings to us and we will distance [ourselves] from all bad and destructive things. And this is the way of the pious and people of [proper] action - they love peace and are happy for the good of the creatures and bring them close to Torah, and they do not destroy even a grain of mustard in the world. And they are distressed by all loss and destruction that they see...

The idea of Bal Tashchis, dont waste, dont destroy, dont cut down-esp unnecessarily for no reason

PTC. Make sure to be a builder, not a destroyer, especially of the environment and Earth around you. Dont waste, don't crumble, but make sure to build up and brighten the wonderful world and nature Hashem gave us.

משלי ג'י"ח

עֲצָתַיִם הִיא לַמַּחֲזִיקִים בָּהּ וְתִמְכֶיהָ מֵאֲשֶׁר: (פ) (יח)

Proverbs 3:18

(18) She is a tree of life to those who grasp her, And whoever holds on to her is happy.

ירמיהו י"ז:ח'

וְהָיָה כְעֵץ | שֶׁתּוֹלַעַלְמִים וְעַל־יִבְלֵי יִשְׁלַח שָׁרְשָׁיו (ח)

Jeremiah 17:8

(8) He shall be like a tree planted by waters, Sending forth its roots by a stream:

Psalms 115

The heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth He gave over to man.

Hashamayim shamayim lahashem vihaaretz nasan livnei adam

PTC. The tree of life, the element of our basic existence is that of the Torah. Cling to it as a plant clings to the Earth in order to thrive in life

Rabbeinu Bachya Bereshit 2:3:4

It is also possible to explain the words אשר ברא אלוקים, as referring to G-d "sealing" the whole מעשה בראשית, seeing that the repetition of the word אלוקים here needs justification. The Torah repeated these words in order to ensure that the reader would attribute the entire work of the six days of creation to a single Creator. He who had started it also completed it. The word לעשות on the other hand, teaches that He who had originated matter now instructed the various parts of nature to continue His work in accordance with the rules He had laid down.

Guide for the Perplexed, Part 2, 29

For we believe that this Universe remains perpetually with the same properties with which the Creator has endowed it, and that none of these will ever be changed except by way of miracle in some individual instances, although the Creator has the power to change the whole Universe, to annihilate it, or to remove any of its properties. The Universe, had, however, a beginning and commencement, for when nothing was as yet in existence except God...

Genesis 8:22

So long as the earth endures, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Summer and winter, Day and night Shall not cease."

Mishneh Torah, Foundations of the Torah 2:2

But how may one discover the way to love and fear Him? When man will reflect concerning His works, and His great and wonderful creatures, and will behold through them His wonderful, matchless and infinite wisdom, he will spontaneously be filled with love, praise and exaltation and become possessed of a great longing to know the Great Name, even as David said: "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God," (Ps. 42,2); and when he will think of all these matters, he will be taken aback in a moment and stricken with awe, and realize that he is an infinitesimal creature, humble and dark

PTC. Hashem made beautiful works in the world from the beginning of time that stay with us to the current day. Think about the elements of the world and how it all came from Hashem from the beginning of time with all principles and all aspects to the world

Psalm 24

Of David. A psalm. The earth is the LORD's and all that it holds, the world and its inhabitants.

Berachot 43b

On a related topic, the Gemara cites that Rav Yehuda said: One who goes out during Nisan and sees trees that are blossoming recites: Blessed...who has withheld nothing from His world, and has created in it beautiful creatures and trees for human beings to enjoy. Rav Zutra bar Toviya said that Rav said: From where is it derived that one recites a blessing over scent? As it is stated: "Let every soul praise the Lord" (Psalms 150:6). He explains the verse: What is it from which the soul derives benefit and the body does not derive benefit from it? You must say: That is scent...

Jeremiah 17

He shall be like a tree planted by waters, Sending forth its roots by a stream: It does not sense the coming of heat, Its leaves are ever fresh; It has no care in a year of drought, It does not cease to yield fruit.

Taanit 23a

One day, he was walking along the road when he saw a certain man planting a carob tree. Honi said to him: This tree, after how many years will it bear fruit? The man said to him: It will not produce fruit until seventy years have passed. Honi said to him: Is it obvious to you that you will live seventy years, that you expect to benefit from this tree? He said to him: That man himself found a world full of carob trees. Just as my ancestors planted for me, I too am planting for my descendants....

PTC. We care for the world, nurture it, and appreciate it and make blessings over it, not only for ourselves but for the good and the sake of future generations

Berachot 35a

imilarly, Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: One who derives benefit from this world without a blessing, it is as if he enjoyed objects consecrated to the heavens, as it is stated: "The earth and all it contains is the Lord's, the world and all those who live in it" (Psalms 24:1). Rabbi Levi expressed this concept differently. Rabbi Levi raised a contradiction: It is written: "The earth and all it contains is the Lord's," and it is written elsewhere: "The heavens are the Lord's and the earth He has given over to mankind" (Psalms 115:16)...

Koheles 1:4

One generation goes, another comes, But the earth remains the same forever

Psalm 104

How many are the things You have made, O LORD; You have made them all with wisdom; the earth is full of Your creations.

Mah rabu maasecha hashem kulam bchochmah asisa malah haarets kinyanecha

Proverbs 3

Her ways are pleasant ways, And all her paths, peaceful. She is a tree of life to those who grasp her, And whoever holds on to her is happy.

Diracheha darchei noam....

PTC. Hashem made the world in a beautiful natural and tranquil manner and way. Dont corrupt it and dont disgrace it by trashing the world or graffiting the world around is in different manners or methods

Genesis 1

And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation: seed-bearing plants, fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that this was good.

Psalms 92

The righteous bloom like a date-palm; they thrive like a cedar in Lebanon;

Genesis 2

And from the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and bad.

Pirkei Avot 3:17

Rabbi Elazar ben azariah...He used to say: one whose wisdom exceeds his deeds, to what may he be compared? To a tree whose branches are numerous but whose roots are few, so that when the wind comes, it uproots it and overturns it, as it is said, "He shall be like a bush in the desert, which does not sense the coming of good. It is set in the scorched places of the wilderness, in a barren land without inhabitant" (Jeremiah 17:6). But one whose deeds exceed his wisdom, to what may he be compared? To a tree whose branches are few but roots are many, so that even if all the winds in the world come and blow upon it, they cannot move it out of its place, as it is said, "He shall be like a tree planted by waters, sending forth its roots by a stream. It does not sense the coming of heat, its leaves are ever fresh. It has no care in a year of drought; it does not cease to yield fruit" (ibid, 17:8).

Taanit 7a

Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said: Why are Torah matters likened to a tree, as it is stated: "It is a tree of life to them who lay hold upon it" (Proverbs 3:18)? This verse comes to tell you that just as a small piece of wood can ignite a large piece, so too, minor Torah scholars can sharpen great Torah scholars and enable them to advance in their studies. And this is what Rabbi Hanina said: I have learned much from my teachers and even more from my friends, but from my students I have learned more than from all of them.

PTC. Be that person that can be a seed for change. Be that person that has such good strong roots in the earth that will not be toppled over by the surrounding evil. Be strong tree of Torah strength, caring for the people and the world around you.

Bamidbar Rabbah 3:1

A righteous person will flourish like a date palm. No part of the date palm is wasted: Its dates are eaten; its young branches are used for ritual blessing [of the lulav on sukkot]; its fronds cover the Sukkah; its fibers are used to make ropes; its leaves are used for sieves; its planed trunks are used for roof beams. So too there are none worthless in Israel: Some are versed in the Bible; others know Mishnah; some are masters of aggadah [storytelling]; others do good deeds; still others promote social equity.

Psalms 1

Happy is the man who has not followed the counsel of the wicked, or taken the path of sinners, or joined the company of the insolent; rather, the teaching of the LORD is his delight, and he studies that teaching day and night. He is like a tree planted beside streams of water, which yields its fruit in season, whose foliage never fades, and whatever it produces thrives.

Sukkah 45b

Rabbi Levi says: The rationale for the opinion of Rabbi Yoḥanan ben Beroka is not based on a verse. Rather, it is a custom that developed to express praise for the Jewish people, likening them to a date palm. Just as the date palm has only one heart, as branches do not grow from its trunk but rather the trunk rises and branches emerge only at the top, so too, the Jewish people have only one heart directed toward their Father in Heaven.

Pirkei Avot 3:7

Rabbi Elazar of Bartotha said: give to Him of that which is His, for you and that which is yours is His; and thus it says with regards to David: “for everything comes from You, and from Your own hand have we given you” (I Chronicles 29:14). Rabbi Jacob said: if one is studying while walking on the road and interrupts his study and says, “how fine is this tree!” [or] “how fine is this newly ploughed field!” scripture accounts it to him as if he was mortally guilty.

PTC. Use all of your elements to nourish the surroundings and the world around you. Dont waste any seed of talent-use all of your being and qualities to enrich the world around you with any capabilities and any nourishment you can offer to the world around you especially to the people in your life or not in your life yet

Yechezkel 31

Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon With beautiful branches and shady thickets, Of lofty stature, With its top among leafy trees.

Jonah 4

Now Jonah had left the city and found a place east of the city. He made a booth there and sat under it in the shade, until he should see what happened to the city.: The LORD God provided a ricinus plant, which grew up over Jonah, to provide shade for his head and save him from discomfort. Jonah was very happy about the plant. But the next day at dawn God provided a worm, which attacked the plant so that it withered. And when the sun rose, God provided a sultry east wind; the sun beat down on Jonah’s head, and he became faint. He begged for death, saying, “I would rather die than live.” Then God said to Jonah, “Are you so deeply grieved about the plant?” “Yes,” he replied, “so deeply that I want to die.” Then the LORD said: “You cared about the plant, which you did not work for and which you did not grow, which appeared overnight and perished overnight. And should not I care about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not yet know their right hand from their left, and many beasts as well!”

Talmud, Taanit 5b

A man was travelling through the desert, hungry, thirsty and tired, when he came upon a tree bearing luscious fruit and affording plenty of shade, underneath which ran a spring of water. He ate of the fruit, drank of the water and rested beneath the shade.

When he was about to leave, he turned to the tree and said: "Tree, O tree, with what should I bless you?"

"Should I bless you that your fruit be sweet? Your fruit is already sweet.

"Should I bless you that your shade be plentiful? Your shade is plentiful. That a spring of water should run beneath you? A spring of water runs beneath you.

"There is one thing with which I can bless you: May it be G-d's will that all the trees planted from your seeds should be like you . . ."

Shoftim 4

Deborah, wife of Lappidoth, was a prophetess; she led Israel at that time. She used to sit under the Palm of Deborah, between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites would come to her for decisions.

She judged there to be out in the open to avoid yichud/scelusion with a man, but talmud also says in megillah 14a

Alternatively, the verse means: Just as a palm tree has only one heart, as a palm tree does not send out separate branches, but rather has only one main trunk, so too, the Jewish people in that generation had only one heart, directed to their Father in Heaven.

PTC. Think about how we as the Jewish people are like one tree with many branches but with the same seed the same root the same father and king that of Hashem himself. Make sure to be connected to the pulse of the whole Jewish people and help them out.

Micah 4:4

But every man shall sit Under his grapevine or fig tree With no one to disturb him. For it was the LORD of Hosts who spoke.

From Avarham Yakov Finkel, The Essential Maimonides, Translations of the Rambam, Commentary on the Mishna, Page 142---in relation to a king who goes mad ordering a palace be built in a barren hot arid desert:

care of his business!"

Things are not the way they look on the surface. The pleasure of that imbecile also serves a purpose; it is preparing something good for someone whom the Creator wants to give it to in the future. Because he relaxes and enjoys his money, the imbecile will order his employees to build him a beautiful palace or plant an impressive vineyard, like kings or princes do. It is quite possible that this palace is really being built for a pious man who, one day many years later, will come and find shelter from the scorching sun in the shade of one of its walls. The palace will actually have saved him from death. This thought is expressed in the verse, *"Should he pile up silver like dust, lay up clothing like dirt—he may lay it up, but the righteous will wear it, and the innocent will share his silver"* (Iyov 27:17). Or one day a cup of wine from that vineyard will be used to make a medicine called *tri'aka*, which will save the life of a perfectly righteous man who was bitten by a snake. This is Hashem's way and this is His wisdom with which he directs nature, *"for You planned ideas of long ago, fulfilled in steadfast faithfulness"* (Yeshayah 25:1).

This concept was taught by the Sages, "When Ben Zoma would stand on the Temple Mount and see Israel coming to celebrate, he would say, 'Blessed is He Who created all these to care for me' (*Berachos 58b*), for he was the greatest Sage in his generation.

PTC. Think about how even one tree, one plant, one building can be structured or made literally to help even one Jew like in the Jonah story and in the parable of the Rambam. Every creation Hashem made was for us, to benefit us, to help us, and to guide us. Appreciate and love the nature around us and truly take care of it as best we can.

PTC's.

PTC. Hashem can be seen in the elements of the world. We just have to look for him, appreciate him, and understand that it is all from Hashem in the nature around us.

PTC. Make sure to be a builder, not a destroyer, especially of the environment and Earth around you. Don't waste, don't crumble, but make sure to build up and brighten the wonderful world and nature Hashem gave us.

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PTC. Hashem made beautiful works in the world from the beginning of time that stay with us to the current day. Think about the elements of the world and how it all came from Hashem from the beginning of time with all principles and all aspects to the world

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Sum up:

We need to truly acknowledge and thank Hashem for the wonderful nature and the wonderful world he gave us. We should truly care for it as best we can. Make sure to get out and experience and really feel the beauty of the world Hashem gave us. Talk to Hashem outside, daven outside, sing and dance and play music outside. Make sure to go to visit parks and gardens, to go see the water and the trees, the beaches and the rocks. See what Hashem gave us and truly treasure it, truly love it--never taking it for granted. If we can appreciate the world, nurture the world, love the world that Hashem gave, maybe we can finally bring true peace in the world and usher in an amazing time period for all of the world.