

# **The Daily Portion**

## **- Sivan Rahav Meir**

### **Planting trees where rockets fall**

*Translation by Yehoshua Siskin*

How could it be that I never heard about this tradition? On Kibbutz Kerem Shalom, which borders the Gaza Strip, a tradition which began two years ago with Operation Guardian of the Walls continues. In every crater created by a falling rocket, a tree is planted. Geulah Rabi wrote me from the kibbutz as follows:

"In my opinion there are several messages conveyed through this act. First of all, it represents our roots in this piece of land, whether we are religious or secular since people from both sectors are living harmoniously together here. We are also planting trees only a few meters from the Gaza Strip to show that, despite the danger, we are not going anywhere. On the contrary, just as the roots of a tree grow deep, so too are our roots; the deeper the roots, the taller and stronger we grow.

Second, the more our enemies desire to take away life, the greater our desire to add life becomes. They want to burn things down and paint our region black, and we want to plant,

make things grow, and paint our surroundings green.

And even if a missile already dug an ugly hole, we will utilize it for the growth of a beautiful tree. Every hole will be filled with rich earth and a seedling tree. This is one of life's most important lessons: It is possible to take advantage of distressing circumstances to promote goodness and growth.

Yesterday, at the end of all the inspiring speeches honoring this tradition, children came over to plant trees. With their hands and their bare feet they covered the roots of the trees with the sandy soil that borders the Gaza Strip.

It was inspiring and reassuring, but we aspire to more than this. In the Torah portion from last Shabbat, we read: "And I will grant peace in the land ... as I lead you upright." Rashi explains that "upright" means "erect in stature". The nation of Israel will return to the Land and will live in peace and conduct itself erect in stature with self-confidence and with deterrent strength.

You are invited to visit the Garden of Eden in which we are privileged to live. We have new trees for you to see.

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