



# THE APPLE TREE'S DISCOVERY

Written by Peninnah Schram and Rachael Eckstein Davis  
Illustrated by Wendy W. Lee

*Little Apple Tree wishes she had stars hanging from her branches, instead of just ordinary apples. But as time goes by, she recognizes that everyone has something special shining inside.*

## JEWISH CONCEPTS

### Sameach B'Chelko

A lone little apple tree, surrounded in a forest by mature oaks, compares itself to them and is unhappy. Children and adults alike may find themselves in similar circumstances, experiencing some of the same feelings as this little tree: alone, small, impatient, or even desperately wanting what others have. There is a singularly Jewish way of acknowledging these feelings. The Hebrew phrase *sameach b'chelko* means being content with what one has. In *Pirke Avot*, a book of Jewish wisdom from ancient times, the sage Ben Zoma teaches: "Who is rich? Those who are content with their lot."

### Hikarat Hatov – Gratitude

In Hebrew, *hikarat hatov* means, literally, "recognizing the good." Children learn to "recognize the good" when we point out their fine qualities and model thankfulness for life's blessings: a friend who shares, a grandpa who visits, and warm soup on a cold night. This kind of recognition and appreciation opens the heart to trust, hope and confidence.

## USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Gratitude can be practiced. Celebrate with your children the variety that each person brings to the world. To keep gratitude in mind, discuss as a family:

- What does each of us have to be thankful for?
- Who and what are we thankful for as a family?
- What are some specific ways we can show appreciation to teachers, community helpers, and others who care for us?

On a car, bus or train trip, notice the beauty and diversity in nature. Talk about similarities and differences in trees. Make a list of the things in your home that come from trees. Get up close and personal with trees: if you live near citrus groves, check out the way orange and lime trees differ; take a family outing and go apple-picking; or sit on a park bench in the shade of a tree and read together. Above all, take the time to cut into an apple and show your children first-hand that stars do exist in apples – and in your family.