

# NAVIGATING TREES, LIFE & WAR

**There are different opinions offered on a verse that at a glance is very straightforward. In your reading of the verse, would you assume that its context is only in times of war? Would you expand it to all contexts? Would you make exceptions, or would you see it as an unequivocal and absolute statement?**

## **Navigating Rashi**

1. How is Rashi's challenge relevant?
2. Is it possible for the "innocent" to remain unscathed in times of war?
3. Would Rashi's position change if there were a demonstrated need to destroy the trees?

## **Navigating Avraham Ibn Ezra**

1. According to Ibn Ezra why are we not allowed to destroy fruit trees?
2. What difference does it make that the tree "brings life to humans" while in the process of destroying humans?
3. Could this limitation undermine a military objective?
4. If the answer is yes, why are trees so important according to Avraham Ibn Ezra.

## **Navigating Midrash Sifre Devarim**

1. What fine point does the Midrash learn?
2. Why is this important?

## **Navigating Maimonides**

1. How does Maimonides expand this statement beyond the issues of war?
2. What does Maimonides have in common with each of the previous commentaries? How is he different?
3. Would Maimonides ever allow the destruction of fruit trees? Prove your point by bringing a proof text.