



Dr. Deborah Williger's speech at the award ceremony of the UN
granting *Bees for Peace* the award as an official project of the
Decade of Biodiversity

Shalom - Peace - I am Deborah - a bee. For the Jewish New Year Rosh Hashanah we wish each other "Good Rosh" [Hebrew, head, for the start of the new year], and we eat honey with apples and sweet round breads – in the hope of a sweet new yearly cycle. In biblical Israel, honey was extracted from date palms. In the promised land, milk and honey was to flow for the people of Israel, and Creation ought to live in peace and justice. Milk and honey offer a paradisiacal, full-fledged diet: carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals, trace elements and more.

In Hebrew, the bee is called "Debora." In the Book of Genesis we hear about Debora, Rebecca's nurse. A nurse gives milk to an infant, securing newborn life. The name of the wetnurse, Debora, Bee, connects her simultaneously with honey. A sweet promise for future life. When Debora dies, Jacob burys her under a tree near Bethel (Beth El, Hebrew, "House of God"). Bethel is also the site of Jacob's dream of the angelic ladder, which connects heaven and Earth. All the people of Israel interrupt their migration and gather peacefully. A resting phase, a Sabbath, serves peace and regeneration. I support the Green Sabbath project, which calls on everyone to pause regularly for our fellow world [Mitwelt]. The tree at Debora's tomb is called the Tree of Weeping. Israel mourns Debora's death. The entire people are united in compassion.

The Book of Judges tells of a second, meaningful Debora, or bee, the prophetess Debora, who, sitting under a palm tree near Bethel, judged – that is, ruled – the people of Israel. Debora had succeeded in kindling hope among the people for a life of freedom and peace. She thus united the tribes of Israel, and the occupiers could be defeated. Under a palm tree, a tree that is visible to everyone, Debora led the Israelites. Transparency and no scheming in secret. The judge Debora taught the people the commandments of God, which are heavenly models for a just way of life and peaceful coexistence. A queen bee and her hive. Learn from animals, from bees! Agriculture in Israel flourished and the people lived in peace for forty years. Forty years of peace and prosperity, a time of purification and regeneration. Forty years of wandering in the desert to purify the souls of the Israelites after the exodus from Egyptian slavery or forty days of rain of the Great Flood, Mabbul. Forty – in French, quarante - a quarantine, a phase of purifying and

resting, which we should definitely use. World grill masters only lead us further into the evolutionary impasse. According to Jewish tradition, human beings are by no means the crown of Creation. Corona, Latin for "crown", gestures at our place. As "Bees for Peace," the nurse Debora and the prophetess Debora show us the way from Jewish tradition to an arkic society, as on the ark, in rainbow diversity, in biodiversity, united in justice and peace, away from a hierarchical, divided, despotic, jugularistic¹ society. For the UN Decade Prize I wish "Masal Tov". May you remain healthy!

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Translated from German by Carrie Dohe

¹ From Latin „jugulare“ (slaughtering), referring to the domination of humans over animals