

## The Beloved Land – Texts

### 1. Prompts

#### Prompt 1 - [Bereishit 2:15](#)

וַיִּקַּח ה' אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם וַיְנַחֲהוּ בְּגֶן־עֵדֶן לְעֲבֹדָהּ וּלְשִׁמְרָהּ:

God took the man, and put him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and to preserve it.

#### Prompt 2 - [Tehillim 115:15-16](#)

בְּרוּכִים אַתֶּם לַיהוָה עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:

May you be blessed of the Lord who made heaven and earth.

הַשָּׁמַיִם שָׁמַיִם לַיהוָה וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן לִבְנֵי־אָדָם:

The heavens are the heavens of the Lord: but he has given the earth to the children of men.

### 2. Sources

#### Source 1: [Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:1](#)

Tu B'Shvat, the holiday celebrated on the fifteenth of the month of *Shvat*, is known as the “New Year for Trees” in rabbinic literature. The *Mishnah*, the first codification of Jewish law, from the early third-century land of Israel, details the four different “New Years” in the Jewish calendar and explains the unique purpose each one serves.

אַרְבַּעָה רֵאשֵׁי שָׁנִים הֵם. בְּאַחַד בְּנִיסָן רֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה לְמַלְכִּים וְלְרִגְלִים. בְּאַחַד בְּאֵלוּל רֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה לְמַעֲשֵׂר בְּהֵמָה. רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר וְרַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן אוֹמְרִים, בְּאַחַד בְּתִשְׁרִי. בְּאַחַד בְּתִשְׁרִי רֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה לְשָׁנִים וְלְשִׁמְטִין וְלִזְבוּלוֹת, לְנִטְיָעָה וְלִירִקוֹת. בְּאַחַד בְּשֶׁבֶט, רֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה לְאֵילָן, כְּדַבְּרֵי בֵּית שְׁמַאי. בֵּית הַלֵּל אוֹמְרִים, בְּחֻמְשָׁה עֶשֶׂר בּוֹ:

There are four days in the year that serve as the New Year, each for a different purpose: On the first of *Nissan* is the New Year for kings; it is from this date that the years of a king’s rule are counted. And the first of *Nissan* is also the New Year for the order of the Festivals, as it determines which is considered the first Festival of the year and which is the last. On the first of *Elul* is the New Year for animal tithes; all the animals born prior to that date belong to the previous tithe year and are tithed as a single unit, whereas those born after that date belong to the next tithe year. Rabbi Elazar and Rabbi Shimon say: The New Year for animal tithes is on the first of Tishrei. On the first of Tishrei is the New Year for counting years, as will be explained in the Gemara; for calculating Sabbatical Years and Jubilee Years, i.e., from the first of Tishrei there is a biblical prohibition to work the land during these years; for planting, for determining the years of *orla*, the three-year period from when a tree has been planted during which time its fruit is forbidden; and for tithing vegetables, as vegetables picked prior to that date cannot be tithed together with vegetables picked after that date. On the first of *Shvat* is the New Year for the tree; the fruit of a tree that was formed prior to that date belongs to the previous tithe year and cannot be tithed together with fruit that was formed after that date; this ruling is in accordance with the statement of Beit Shammai. But Beit Hillel says: The New Year for trees is on the fifteenth of *Shvat*.

Source 2: [Bereishit 1:1](#)

בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth

**Rashi:**

**בראשית.** אמר רבי יצחק לא היה צריך להתחיל את התורה אלא מהחדש הזה לכם, שהיא מצוה ראשונה שנצטוו בה ישראל, ומה טעם פתח בבראשית? משום כח מעשיו הגיד לעמו לתת להם נחלת גוים (תהילים קי"א), שאם יאמרו אמות העולם לישראל לסטים אתם, שקבשתם ארצות שבעה גוים, הם אומרים להם כל הארץ של הקב"ה היא, הוא בראה ונתנה לאשר ישר בעיניו, ברצונו נתנה להם, וברצונו נטלה מהם ונתנה לנו:

In the beginning — Rabbi Isaac said: The Torah which is the Law book of Israel should have commenced with the verse (*Shemot* 12:2) "This month shall be unto you the first of the months" which is the first commandment given to Israel. What is the reason, then, that it commences with the account of the Creation? Because of the thought expressed in the text (*Tehillim* 111:6), "He declared to His people the strength of His works (i.e. He gave an account of the work of Creation) so that He might give them the heritage of the nations." For should the peoples of the world say to Israel, "You are robbers because you took by force the lands of the seven nations of Canaan", Israel may reply to them, "All the earth belongs to the Holy One, blessed be He; He created it and gave it to whom He pleased. When He willed He gave it to them, and when He willed He took it from them and gave it to us" (*Yalkut Shimoni* on Torah 187).

Source 3: [Devarim 11:10-12](#)

כי הארץ אשר אתה בא שמה לרשתה לא כארץ מצרים הוא אשר יצאתם משם אשר תזרע את זרעך והשקית ברגלך כגן הירק:  
For the land that you are about to enter and possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come. There the grain you sowed had to be watered by your own labors, like a vegetable garden;

והארץ אשר אתם עברים שמה לרשתה ארץ הרים ובקעת למטר השמים תשתה מים:  
but the land you are about to cross into and possess, a land of hills and valleys, soaks up its water from the rains of heaven.

ארץ אשר ה' אלקיך דרש אתה תמיד עיני ה' אלקיך בה מרשית השנה ועד אחרית שנה:  
It is a land which your God יהוה looks after, on which your God always keeps an eye, from year's beginning to year's end.

Source 4: [Devarim 20:19-20](#)

כי תצור אל עיר ימים רבים להלחם עליה לתפשה לא תשחית את עצה לנדיח עליו גרזן כי ממנו תאכל ואתו לא תכרת כי האדם עץ השדה לבא מפניך במצור:  
רק עץ אשר תדע כי לא עץ מאכל הוא אתו תשחית וכרת ובנית מצור על העיר אשר הוא עשה עמך מלחמה עד ודנתה:

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 to construct siegeworks against the city that is waging war on you until it has been reduced.

**Source 5: [Tehillim 92:13](#)**

צָדִיק כַּתְמָר יִפְרַח כְּאֶרֶז בְּלִבְנוֹן יִשְׁגֶּה:  
The righteous bloom like a date-palm;  
they thrive like a cedar in Lebanon;

**Source 6: [Mishlei 3:18](#)**

עֵץ חַיִּים הִיא לַמַּחֲזִיקִים בָּהּ וְתִמְכִּיָּהּ מֵאֲשֶׁר:  
She is a tree of life to those who grasp her,  
And whoever holds on to her is happy.

**Source 7:**

**[List of Masechtot in the Mishnah](#)**

**Source 8: [Pirkei Avot 3:7](#)**

רבי אלעזר איש ברתותא אומר, תן לו משלו, שאתה ושלקך שלו. וכן בְּדוּד הוא אומר (דברי הימים א כט) כי ממך הכל ומידך נתנו לך. רבי שמעון אומר, המהלך בדרך ושונה, ומפסיק ממשנתו ואומר, מה נאה אילן זה ומה נאה ניר זה, מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו מתחייב בנפשו:

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 Shimon 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 plowed field!” scripture accounts it to him as if he was mortally guilty.

**Source 9: [Kiddushin 36b-37a](#)**

מתני' קל מצוה שהיא תלויה בארץ – אינה נוהגת אלא בארץ, ושאינה תלויה בארץ – נוהגת בין בארץ בין בחוצה לארץ,  
Mishnah: Any mitzvah that is dependent on the land [aretz] applies only in *Eretz Yisrael*, and any mitzvah that is not dependent on the land applies both in *Eretz Yisrael* and outside of *Eretz Yisrael*.

ל"א

חוץ מן הערלה וכלאים. רבי אליעזר אומר: אף הקדוש.

This is apart from the *mitzvot* of *orla* and diverse kinds, which apply even outside of *Eretz Yisrael*. Rabbi Eliezer says: This is the halakha even with regard to the prohibition to eat from the new crop before the *omer* offering has been brought on the sixteenth of *Nissan*.

גמ' מאי תלויה ומאי שאינה תלויה? אילימא תלויה – דכתיב בה "ביאה", ושאינה תלויה – דלא כתיב בה "ביאה", והרי תפילין ופטר חמור, דכתיב בהן "ביאה", ונוהגין בין בארץ בין בחוץ לארץ!

Gemara: The Gemara asks: What is meant by *mitzvot* that are dependent on the land, and what is meant by *mitzvot* that are not dependent on the land? If we say that a mitzvah is called dependent in a case where it is written in verse with regard to it: Coming to *Eretz Yisrael*, and a mitzvah that is not dependent on the land is one concerning which the verb: Coming, or the verb: Bringing, is not written in verse with regard to it, that would lead to difficulty: But aren't there the *mitzvot* of donning phylacteries and the redemption of the firstborn donkey, in which the verse states: Bringing, in the passage: "And it shall be when the Lord shall bring you to the land of the Canaanite...And every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb...And it shall be for a sign upon your hand, and for frontlets between your eyes" (*Shemot* 13:11–16), and yet those *mitzvot* apply both in *Eretz Yisrael* and outside of *Eretz Yisrael*.

אמר רב יהודה: הכי קאמר: כל מצוה שהיא חובת הגוף – נוהגת בין בארץ בין בחוץ לארץ, חובת קרקע – אינה נוהגת אלא בארץ.  
Rav Yehuda said that this is what the *mishnah* is saying: Any *mitzvah* that is an obligation of the body, i.e., an obligation upon the person, applies both in *Eretz Yisrael* and outside of *Eretz Yisrael*. Conversely, an obligation of the land, that is, a mitzvah that applies specifically to the earth and its growths, applies only in *Eretz Yisrael*.

אמר ריש לקיש: מאי דכתיב "והיה אמונת עתיך חוסן ישועות חכמת ודעת וגו'". "אמונת" – זה סדר זרעים. "עתיך" – זה סדר מועד. "חוסן" – זה סדר נשים. "ישועות" – זה סדר נזיקין. "חכמת" – זה סדר קדשים. "ודעת" – זה סדר טהרות. ואפילו הכי, "יראת ה' היא אוצרו".

The Gemara continues discussing the conduct of the Sages, citing that Reish Lakish said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "And the faith of your times shall be a strength of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge, the fear of the Lord is his treasure" (*Yeshayahu* 33:6)? Faith; that is the order of *Zera'im*, Seeds, in the Mishnah, because a person has faith in God and plants his seeds (Jerusalem Talmud). Your times; that is the order of *Moed*, Festival, which deals with the various occasions and Festivals that occur throughout the year. Strength; that is the order of *Nashim*, Women. Salvations; that is the order of *Nezikin*, Damages, as one who is being pursued is rescued from the hands of his pursuer. Wisdom; that is the order of *Kodashim*, Consecrated Items. And knowledge; that is the order of *Teharot*, Purity, which is particularly difficult to master. And even if a person studies and masters all of these, "the fear of the Lord is his treasure," it is preeminent.

אמר רבא: בשעה שמכניסין אדם לדין, אומרים לו: נשאת ונתת באמונה? קבעת עתים לתורה? עסקת בפריה ורביה? צפית לישועה? פלפלת בחכמה? הבנת דבר מתוך דבר? ואפילו הכי, אי יראת ה' היא אוצרו – אין, אי לא – לא. משל לאדם שאמר לשלוחו: העלה לי כור חיטין לעלייה. הלה והעלה לו. אמר לו: עירבת לי בהן קב חומטון? אמר לו: לא. אמר לו: מוטב אם לא העליתה.

With regard to the same verse, Rava said: After departing from this world, when a person is brought to judgment for the life he lived in this world, they say to him in the order of that verse: Did you conduct business faithfully? Did you designate times for Torah study? Did you engage in procreation? Did you await salvation? Did you engage in the dialectics of wisdom or understand one matter from another? And, nevertheless, beyond all these, if the fear of the Lord is his treasure, yes, he is worthy, and if not, no, none of these accomplishments have any value. There is a parable that illustrates this. A person who said to his emissary: Bring a *kor* of wheat up to the attic for me to store there. The messenger went and brought it up for him. He said to the emissary: Did you mix a *kav* of *homton*, a preservative to keep away worms, into it for me? He said to him: No. He said to him: If so, it would have been preferable had you not brought it up. Of what use is worm-infested wheat? Likewise, Torah and *mitzvot* without the fear of God are of no value.