



Learning and Discussion Sheet On Settling the Land

1. ויקרא פרק כה פסוק כג

וְהָאָרֶץ לֹא תִמְכַּר לְצַמְתָּת פִּי לִי הָאָרֶץ פִּי גֵרִים וְתוֹשְׁבִים אִתְּם עַמְדִּי:

Vayikra (Leviticus) 25:23: The land shall not be sold for ever; for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me.

2. ספרא בהר פרשה ג

...כשתבוא שלי הרי היא שלכם.

Sifra (*bahar*, ch. 3): When it [the land] will be Mine (G-d's), it will be yours (man's).

3. תהלים פרק כד פסוק א

לְדוֹד מִזְמוֹר לִיקְנוֹק הָאָרֶץ וּמְלוֹאָה תִּבֵּל וַיִּשְׁבִּי בָּהּ:

Tehillim (Psalms) 24:1: A psalm of David. The earth is the L-rd's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell in it.

4. תהלים ויye erp פסוק zy

הַשָּׁמַיִם שָׁמַיִם לַה' וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן לְבְנֵי־אָדָם:

Tehillim (Psalms) 115:16: The heavens belong to the L-rd, and the earth He has given to the children of Adam.

5. ויקרא רבה (וילנא) פרשה כה:ג

ר"י ב"ר סימון פתח (דברים יג) אחרי ה' אלהיכם תלכו, וכי אפשר לבשר ודם להלוך אחר הקב"ה... אלא מתחלת ברייתו של עולם לא נתעסק הקב"ה אלא במטע תחלה הה"ד (בראשית ב) ויטע ה' אלהים גן בעדן, אף אתם כשנכנסין לארץ לא תתעסקו אלא במטע תחלה הה"ד כי תבאו אל הארץ.

Vayikra (Leviticus) Rabbah (25:3): Rabbi Yehudah be Shimon began his discourse with the text, "After the Lord your G-d shall ye walk" (Devariim 12:5). But can a man of flesh and blood walk after the Holy One, blessed be he(?)... But in truth the Holy On, blessed be He, from the very beginning of the creation of the world, was before all else occupied with plantation, as is proved by the text, "And the Lord G-d planted a garden in the first instance in Eden" (Bereshit 2:8), and so do you also, when you enter into the land, occupy yourselves first with nought else but plantation; hence it is written, "And when ye shall come into the land, then ye shall plant."

6. ישעיהו פרק מה פסוק יח

כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְקֹנוֹק בּוֹרְאֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם הוּא הַאֱלֹקִים יִצַּר הָאָרֶץ וְעִשָּׂהּ הוּא כוֹנְנָהּ לֹא תְהוּ בְרָאָה לְשִׁבְתָּ יִצְרָה אֲנִי יְקֹנוֹק וְאִין עוֹד:

Yesha'yahu (Isaiah) 45:18: For thus says the Lord that created the heavens; G-d himself that formed the earth and made it; he has established it, he did not create it a waste land, he formed to be inhabited: I am the Lord, and there is none else.

7. תלמוד בבלי מסכת חגיגה דף ב עמוד ב
... "לא תהו בראה לשבת יצרה", אלא מפני תיקון העולם...

Babylonian Talmud, Chagigah 2b: "He did not create it a waste land, he formed it to be inhabited", specifically for tikkun olam (repairing the world).

8. שולחן ערוך חושן משפט סימן קעה סעיף כו
היה רוצה הלוקח לקנותה לבנות בה בתים, ובן המצר רוצה לזרעה, הלוקח זוכה משום ישוב הארץ ואין בה דין בן המצר. ויש מי שאומר שאם המצרן רוצה לנוטעה יכול לסלקו.

Shulhan Arukh, Hoshen Mishpat 175:26: An interested party desires to buy property in order to build houses, and the owner of adjoining property desires the (same) property in order to plant crops- the interested party has first rights to purchasing the property because of "yishuv ha'aretz" ("settling the land") and we are not concerned with the (presumed first rights of) the owner of adjoining property. And there are some (hallakhik decisors) who say that if the owner of adjoining property wants to plant trees, he may be take precedents.

9. סמ"ע סימן קעה ס"ק מג
משום ישוב הארץ כו'. דכל שיש קבוע וקיום בהקרקע טפי יש בו ישוב טפי, והבתים בר קיימא טפי מזרעים, ואילנות קבועים ונשרשים בקרקע טפי מבתים. ודין זה נוהג אפילו בחו"ל...

Sm'a (on the preceding source): "...because of 'yishuv ha'aretz'..." (that is to say,) that everything which has greater permanence and is more established in the land better fulfills "yishuv" ("settlement"), houses are more established than crops, and trees are more established and remain in the earth longer than houses. And this hallakhik ruling is also practiced in hutz l'aretz (outside of the land of Israel)...

Discussion questions:

1. Who owns the world, G-d or people? What is humanity's role in relationship to the land?
2. The idea of settling the land has ancient Jewish roots and many modern applications. Why do you think "settling the land" has been considered such a value in Jewish thought over time?
3. When we settle the land, what is the human relationship to G-d? If it's not Shabbos, you may find it helpful to have participants draw a diagram that shows their view of the relationship between G-d, people, and the land.

Compiled by Rabbi Daniel Brown

All entries listed are for English sources in print; all other translations were provided to, or produced by the compiler of this source sheet.

English translations for sources B3 taken from the "Koren Tanakh" *The Holy Scriptures*. Revised and edited by Harold Fisch. 1997, Koren Publishers Ltd. Jerusalem.

English translation for source B5 taken from *Midrash Rabbah: Leviticus*. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon. 1983, The Soncino Press. London, New York.