

## HBD, World! – Torah, Spirituality and the Environment

### 1. The Mahzor

היום הרת עולם היום יעמיד במשפט כל יצורי עולמים אם כבנים אם כעבדים...

This day is the birth of the world. This day stands all the world's creations up in judgment, stands them as son or as slaves...

### 2. Rabbi Lord Immanuel Jakobovits' *Companion to the High Holydays Prayerbook*, p. 140 (1921-1999)

We... return to the posture we had in the mother's womb before we were born.

### 3. Genesis 1:28

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱ-לֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ וְכַבְשֶׁהָ וּרְדוּ בְדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל חַיַּה הַרְמִשָּׁתַּי עַל הָאָרֶץ:

Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it; have dominion over... every living thing.

### 4. Genesis 2:15

וַיִּקַּח ה' אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם וַיְנַחֵהוּ בְּגֶן עֵדֶן לְעִבְדָהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ:

And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and to keep it.

### 5. Leviticus 19:19

אֶת חֲקֵתִי תִשְׁמְרוּ בְּהִמְתָּךְ לֹא תִרְבִּיעַ כְּלָאִים שָׂדֶךְ לֹא תִזְרַע כְּלָאִים וּבְגֶד כְּלָאִים שַׁעֲטָנֹז לֹא יַעֲלֶה עֲלֶיךָ:  
Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind; thou shalt not sow thy field with two kinds of seed...

### 6. Maimonides, *Book of Commandments, negative commandment #216 (1135-1204)*

Not to sow grain or vegetables in a vineyard, as it is written "thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with two kinds of seed"

### 7. Deuteronomy 22:9

לֹא תִזְרַע כְּרֶמֶךְ כְּלָאִים פֶּן תִּקְדַּשׁ הַמְּלֵאָה הַזֶּרַע אֲשֶׁר תִּזְרַע וּתְבוֹאֵת הַכֶּרֶם:

Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with two kinds of seed; lest the fullness of the seed which thou hast sown be forfeited together with the increase of the vineyard.

### 8. Deuteronomy 22:6-7

כִּי יִקְרָא קוֹן צִפּוֹר לְפָנֶיךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ בְּכָל עֵץ אוֹ עַל הָאָרֶץ אֲפֹרָחִים אוֹ בִּיצִים וְהָאֵם רֹבֶצֶת עַל הָאֲפֹרָחִים אוֹ עַל הַבִּיצִים לֹא תִקַּח הָאֵם עַל הַבָּנִים: שִׁלַּח תִּשְׁלַח אֶת הָאֵם וְאֶת הַבָּנִים תִּקַּח לָךְ לְמַעַן יִיטֵב לָךְ וְהֶאֱרַכְתָּ יָמִים:

If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young; thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, but the young thou mayest take unto thyself; that it may be well with thee, and that thou may prolong thy days.

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### 9. Exodus 23:5 and Deuteronomy 22:4

כִּי תִרְאֶה חֲמוֹר שֶׁנֶּאֱדָר רֵיֵךְ תַּחַת מִשְׁאוֹ וְחֻדְלֵת מֵעֵזֵב לֹא עֵזֵב תִּעֲזֹב עִמּוֹ:  
לֹא תִרְאֶה אֶת חֲמוֹר אָחִיֶךָ אוֹ שׁוֹר נִפְלִים בַּדֶּרֶךְ וְהִתְעַלְמָתָ מֵהֶם הֲקִים תִּקְיָם עִמּוֹ:

Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fallen down by the way, and hide thyself from them; thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.

### 10. Leviticus 22:28

וְשׁוֹר אוֹ שֶׁה אוֹתוֹ וְאֶת בְּנֵי לֹא תִשְׁחָטוּ בְּיוֹם אֶחָד:

And whether it be cow or ewe, ye shall not kill it and its young both in one day.

### 11. Shmuel David Luzzatto's *Foundations of the Torah*, XX note F (1800-1865)

In *Midrash Rabbah* we read: "And just as God shows mercy to man, so too, He has shown mercy to cattle. Whence this? For it is said, 'But from the eighth day and thenceforth it (the animal) may be accepted for an offering.' And what is more, God commands, 'Ye shall not kill it and its young both in one day.'" And in the same way that God had compassion upon the cattle, so too, was God filled with mercy for the birds... The statement in *Mishnah Berachot* that if one says 'May Your mercies reach the nest of a bird' is silenced seems to me, with due apologies to the Sages of the Talmud for their interpretation, that since it is stated, 'May Your Mercies reach' and not 'did Your mercies reach', we may conclude that it does not refer to the commandment concerning the sparing of the mother bird but rather to the people of Israel. The latter is like a bird wandering from its nest and anyone who asks God to have mercy upon them, the rabbi feels that he ought to be silenced for the language he employs is strange and not understood by everybody. Since communal prayer must be understood by everyone, therefore, when the people hear the poetic metaphor... they will not comprehend it and it will cause laughter and ridicule...

### 12. Shmuel David Luzzatto's *Foundations of the Torah*, XXII

The Torah forbade any cruel practices even in cases of sacrifices... Similarly the prohibition to seethe a kid in its mother's milk – in the opinion of Rashbam and Ibn Ezra – is on account of the cruelty to seethe and offspring in its own mother's milk. Although, after the kid was slaughtered, what does it matter to it or to its own mother in what liquid it is boiled? Nevertheless, such an act will adversely affect the mentality of the perpetrator and the onlooker. Suppose one makes spoons out of his father's bones and a dish from his skull and eats from them [see *Mishnah Yadayim 4:6* – SW]. Although he does not harm his dead father, it is a cruel deed nevertheless, and this act destroys in him and in his onlookers the quality of compassion and kindness.

### 13. Deuteronomy 20:19-20

When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by wielding an axe against them; for thou may eat of them, but thou shalt not cut them down; for is the tree of the field man, that it should be besieged of thee? Only the trees of which thou know that they are not trees for food, them thou may destroy and cut down, that thou may build bulwarks against the city that make war with thee, until it fall.

**14. Maimonides, Book of Commandments, negative commandment #57**

שהזהירנו מהשחית האילנות כו' הוא אמרו יתעלה לא תשחית את עצה.

Not to destroy fruit trees, nor may anything else be pointlessly destroyed, as it is written "thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof."

**15. Maimonides, Laws of Kings 6:10**

ולא האילנות בלבד, אלא כל המשבר כלים וקורע בגדים והורס בניין וסותם מעיין ומאבד מאכלות דרך השחתה עובר בלא תשחית ואינו לוקה אלא מכת מרדות מדבריהם.

This prohibition does not apply to trees alone. Rather, anyone who breaks utensils, tears garments, destroys buildings, stops up a spring, or ruins food with a destructive intent transgresses the command "Do not destroy." However, he is not lashed. Instead, he receives stripes for rebellious conduct as instituted by the Sages.

**16. Bava Kamma 91b**

א"ר חנינא לא שכיב שיבחת ברי אלא דקץ תאינתא בלא זמנה  
אמר רבינא ואם היה מעולה בדמים מותר

**Rabbi Hanina** said: Shivnat my son did not pass away except for having cut down a fig tree before its time. **Ravina**, however, said: If its value for other purposes exceeds that for fruit, it is permitted to cut it down.

**17. Shabbat 129a**

שמואל צלחו ליה תכתקא דשאגא כו' וא"ל אביי לרבה והא קעבר מר משום בל תשחית א"ל בל תשחית דגופאי עדיף לי!

A teak chair was broken up for **Samuel**; a table... was broken up for **Rav Yehudah**... But you are infringing upon "You shall not destroy"! -- "You shall not destroy" in respect of my own body is more important to me, he retorted.

**18. Shabbat 140b**

ואמר רב חסדא האי מאן דאפשר ליה למיכל נהמא דשערי ואכל דחיטי קעבר משום בל תשחית ואמר רב פפא האי מאן דאפשר למישתי שיכרא ושתי חמרא עובר משום בל תשחית ולא מילתא היא בל תשחית דגופא עדיף

**Rav Hisda** also said: When one can eat barley bread but eats wheaten bread he violates, thou shalt not destroy. **Rav Papa** said: When one can drink beer but drinks wine, he violates, thou shalt not destroy. But this is incorrect: Thou shalt not destroy, as applied to one's own person, stands higher.

**19. Shabbat 105b**

מתניתין הקורע בחמתו ועל מתו וכל המקלקלין פטורין

One who tears in anger or in mourning for his dead... is exempt.

**20. Leviticus 19:16-18**

לא תלך רכיל בעמך לא תעמד על-דם רעהו אגני ה'.  
לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך הוכח תוכיח את-עמיתך ולא-תשא עליו חטא.  
לא-תקם ולא-תטר את בני עמך ואהבת לרעהו כמוך אגני ה'.

Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor... Love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.