

On the first of Nissan is the New Year for the kings^[1] and for the festivals.^[2] - **בְּאֶחָד בְּנִסָּן רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה לְמַלְכִּים** - אֶחָד בְּנִסָּן רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה לְמַלְכִּים
On the first of Elul is the New Year for the *maaser* of animals.^[3] **רִבִּי** - **בְּאֶחָד בְּעֻלּוּל רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה לְמַעֲשֵׂר הַחַיָּוָה**
However, R' Elazar and R' Shimon say: **אֶחָד בְּתִשְׁרֵי** - **בְּאֶחָד בְּתִשְׁרֵי** It is on the first of Tishrei.^[4]
On the first of Tishrei is the New Year for reckoning the years,^[5] **בְּאֶחָד בְּתִשְׁרֵי רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה לְשָׁנִים**
for the *shemittah* and *Yovel* years,^[6] **לְשָׁמִיטָה וְלַיּוֹבֵל** - **לְשָׁמִיטָה וְלַיּוֹבֵל** for the sapling^[7] and for the vegetables.^[8]
On the first of Shevat is the New Year for the tree^[9] **בְּאֶחָד בְּשֵׁבַת רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה לְאֵילָן** - **בְּאֶחָד בְּשֵׁבַת רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה לְאֵילָן** according

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to the opinion of Beis Shammai. **בֵּית הַלֵּל אומרים** - **בֵּית הַלֵּל אומרים** However, Beis Hillel say: **בְּחִמֻּשָּׁה עָשָׂר בּוֹ** - **בְּחִמֻּשָּׁה עָשָׂר בּוֹ** It is on the fifteenth of [Shevat].^[10]

Rosh Hashana 2a

2

What is the reason that the New Year for trees falls in Shevat?^[11] **מָאי טַעְמָא**

The Gemara answers:
R' Elazar said in the name of R' Oshaya: **חֹאֵיל וְיָצְאוּ רֹב יָמֵי שָׁנָה** - **חֹאֵיל וְיָצְאוּ רֹב יָמֵי שָׁנָה** Because most of the rain days of the year have passed by this time.^[12]

24. [In Eretz Yisrael, rain does not fall throughout the year, only during a rainy season that lasts from midautumn through winter. The rains that fall in the first half of the season are what generate the growth of the new crop. [That part of the season is therefore known as the *zman* for the early rains "impregnate" the earth and give rise to the new fruits (see *Taanis* 6b).] These rains cause the sap to rise in the trees, and it is this that produces the new fruits. Thus, once the first half of the season has passed, the new fruits of the tree are ready to emerge.]

Rosh Hashana 14a

3

כִּי רַק עֵץ אֲשֶׁר-תֹּדַע, כִּי-לֹא-עֵץ מֵאֲכָל
הוּא--אֵתוֹ תִּשְׁחִית, וְכָרְתָּ; וּבְגִיט מִצּוֹר,
עַל-הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר-הוּא עֹשֶׂה עִמָּךְ מִלְחָמָה--
עַד רִדְתָּה. [פ']

יט כִּי-תִצּוֹר אֶל-עֵיר יָמִים רַבִּים לְהִלָּחֵם
עָלֶיךָ לְתַפְשָׁהּ, לֹא-תִשְׁחִית אֶת-עֵצָהּ
לְגִידֶם עָלֶיךָ גִּרְזֹן--כִּי מִמֶּנּוּ תֹאכַל, וְאֵתוֹ
לֹא תִכְרֹת: כִּי הָאָדָם עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה, לְבֹא
מִפְּנֵיךְ בְּמִצּוֹר.

זהו
כ: כ

19When you besiege a city for many days to wage war against it to capture it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them, for you may eat from them, but you shall not cut them down. Is the tree of the field a man, to go into the siege before you?

20However, a tree you know is not a food tree, you may destroy and cut down, and you shall build bulwarks against the city that makes war with you, until its submission.

4

כִּי הָאָדָם עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה: הֲרִי כִי מִשְׁמַשׁ בְּלִשׁוֹן דְּלָמָּא. שְׂמָא הָאָדָם עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה לְהַכְנִס בְּתוֹךְ הַמִּצּוֹר מִפְּנֵיךְ לְהַתִּיּוֹסֵר
בִּיּוֹסוּרִי רַעַב וְצָמָא כְּאִנְשֵׁי הָעִיר לְמָה תִּשְׁחִיתֶנּוּ:

Rash:

Is the tree of the field a man, to go into the siege before you? The word **כִּי** here means "perhaps." Is the tree of the field perhaps a man who is to go into the siege by you, that it should be punished by the suffering of hunger and thirst like the people of the city? Why should you destroy it?

5

for thou mayest eat of them, but thou shalt not cut them down; for is the tree of the field man.
meaning, the life of man is dependent upon the tree of the field

Hence, do not destroy fruit trees which give life to man. You are only permitted to eat from them

Shm Oran

6

This precept is designed to inculcate love of the good and beneficial. This will lead to the avoidance of destructiveness and the promotion of our wellbeing. This is the way of the pious and the worthy who love peace and rejoice in the wellbeing of all men, bringing them near to the Law. They do not suffer the loss of even a grain of mustard, being distressed at the sight of any loss or destruction. If they can help, they prevent any destruction with all the means at their disposal. But it is otherwise with the wicked, the embodiments of destructive spirits who revel in the corruption of the world, corrupting themselves. Man is measured by his own yardstick. In other words, he is always affected by his own attitude, and he who desires good and rejoices in it, will always be granted to enjoy it.

Sefer Hachinuch

7

א"ר חנינא: לא שכיב שיבחת ברי, אלא דקץ תאינתא בלא זמנה.

R. Hanina said: The only reason my son Shivhat passed away was for having cut down a fig tree before its time. (Talmud Bavli Bava Kamma 91b)

8

כחונכרך אתם אלהים ויאמר להם אלהים פרו ורבו ומלאו את הארץ וכבשק ורדו בדגת הים ובעוף השמים ובכל חיה רממשת על הארץ

28And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and rule over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the sky and over all the beasts that tread upon the earth. 1:28 כיכלש

9

טז:השמים שמים ליהוה והארץ נתן לבני אדם

Tehillim 115: 16

16The heavens are heavens of the Lord, but the earth He gave to the children of men.

10

... Reb Aryeh plucked a flower as they walked along. Startled, Rav Kook reminded Reb Aryeh of Hazal's statement that every blade of grass has an angel above that prompts its growth.¹⁴ Rav Kook softly told Reb Aryeh:

In all my days I have taken care never to pluck a blade of grass or flower needlessly, when it had the ability to grow or blossom.... Every sprout and leaf of grass says something, conveys some meaning. Every stone whispers some inner, hidden message in the silence. Every creation utters its song.¹⁵

Echoes of Eden
Re Ar: Kahan
pg 137

This world was given to man, but man should display great sensitivity to all aspects of Creation. Nature is created for man, but man is part of nature – "for man is as a tree of the field."

11

וערפו: קוצץ ערפה בקופיץ. אמר הקב"ה תבא עגלה בת שנתה שלא עשתה פירות ותערף במקום שאינו עושה פירות, לכפר על הריגתו של זה שלא הניחוהו לעשות פירות

shall decapitate: He breaks its neck with a hatchet [i.e., from the back]. The Holy One, blessed be He, says: Let the calf which is in its first year and has, therefore, produced no fruits, come and be decapitated at a place [the valley that was not tilled] which has not produced fruits, in order to atone for the murder of this man, whom they [the murderers] did not allow to produce fruit [i.e., to perform mitzvot]. — [Sotah 46a]

Rashi: Devarim 21:4

12

How great are Your works, Adonoy; מה-גדלו מעשיך יהנה
how infinitely profound are Your thoughts; מאד עמקו מחשבתך:
An empty-headed man cannot know, איש-פער לא ידע
nor does a fool understand this: ובטיל לא-ידין את-זאת:
When the wicked bloom like grass, בפרח רשעים כמו עשב
and all the evildoers blossom— ונאצו כל-פעלי און
it is so that they may be destroyed forever. להשמידם ערי-ער:
But You will remain on high forever Adonoy, ואתה מרום לעלם יהנה:

The righteous will blossom like a date palm, צדיק כפמר יפרח
like a cedar in Lebanon, he will grow tall. כארז בלבנון ישגה:
Planted in the House of Adonoy, שתולים בבית יהנה
in the courtyards of our God they will blossom. בתצרות אלקינו יפריחו:
They will still be fruitful in old age; עוד ינובון בשגיבה ♦

they will be full of sap and freshness. דשנים ורעננים יהיו:
To declare that Adonoy is upright; להגיד כי-ישר יהנה
He is my Stronghold; צורי
in Whom there is no injustice. ולא-עולתה בו:

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