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# SHEMITA

HALACHA FROM THE SOURCES

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YESHIVAT HAR ETZION IN  
COOPERATION WITH MAGGID BOOKS

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Unless indicated otherwise, all references to the Mishna, the *Talmud Yerushalmi*, the commentators to the Mishna and the commentators to the *Yerushalmi* relate to tractate *Shevi'it*.

Unless indicated otherwise, all references to the Rambam relate to *Hilchot Shemita ve-Yovel*.

References to the Rash relate to the Rash's commentary to the Mishna in tractate *Shevi'it*.

A detailed index may be found at the end of this volume.



INTRODUCTION TO  
*SHEMITA*



## THE REASONS FOR *SHEMITA*

Then shall the land enjoy its Sabbaths (Vayikra 26:34)

In *Parashat Bechukotai*, in the context of the curses that will befall Israel should they stray from God’s path, the Torah states: “Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths” (Vayikra 26:34). This means that Israel’s failure to observe *shemita* will lead the nation into exile. What underlies this central role of *shemita*, and what is the rationale behind this *mitzva*?

There are two main passages in the Torah that deal with the *shemita* year: one in *Parashat Behar* (Vayikra 25:1–7) and one in *Parashat Mishpatim* (Shemot 23:10–11).<sup>1</sup> In addition, in *Parashat Re’eh* (Devarim 15:1–6) cancellation of cash debts during *shemita* is discussed. These passages have different emphases, in accordance with their respective contexts in the Torah: *Parashat Mishpatim* generally deals with social issues, placing the focus of *shemita* on its social dimension. In *Parashat Behar*, on the other hand, the Torah focuses on the idea that “the land is Mine.” Let us try to examine the various rationales for *shemita*.

### THE VIEW OF THE RAMBAM

The **Rambam** offers two reasons for the *mitzva* of *shemita* in his **Guide for the Perplexed**:

With regard to all the commandments we have enumerated in *Hilchot Shemita ve-Yovel*, some of them are meant to lead to pity and promoting the well-being of all men, as the Torah states: “That the poor of your people may eat” (Shemot 23:11) ... and are meant to make the earth more fertile and stronger through letting it lie fallow. (*Guide for the Perplexed*, III, 39)

The second reason offered by the **Rambam** is an **agricultural reason**: If the land “rests” for a year, it will produce greater yields in the years that follow. The **Abrevanel** rejects this understanding; the



Torah promises that the sixth year will produce a yield that will last **for three years**. If the land becomes progressively weaker from year to year, then surely by the sixth year it should be particularly weak. How then will the land produce a yield three times the size of an ordinary yield? This difficulty, however, appears to be reconcilable. The Torah states: “Then I will command My blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years” (*Vayikra* 25:21). In other words, if left to the forces of nature, the sixth year’s yield would in fact be small, as argued by the **Rambam**, but owing to **God’s blessing**, the crop will be triple its normal yield.

There is, however, another difficulty with the **Rambam’s** rationale that was pointed out by R. Yitzchak Arama, author of the *Sefer Akeda*. If the *shemita* year is necessary for agricultural reasons, why is the Torah so insistent about keeping the *shemita* year, to the point that failure to observe it is punishable by exile?

To answer this question, it is worth pointing out that the **Rambam’s** rationale might have broader significance. If allowing the land to rest is important agriculturally, why doesn’t the *mitzva* of *shemita* apply outside of Eretz Yisrael? Doesn’t all land require strengthening? The importance of observing *shemita* in Eretz Yisrael might be that it raises our consciousness to the fact that it is a **holy land, therefore it must be protected, strengthened and nurtured**. According to this, the importance of preserving the quality of the soil flows from **the unique sanctity of the land**.<sup>2</sup>

At the beginning of the aforementioned passage, the **Rambam** offers another reason: *Shemita* stems from concern for the poor. The Torah does not advocate a communist doctrine nor does it call for property to be divided equally among all people rather, it allows a person to profit in accordance with the effort that he invests in his work. In order to protect the poor, the Torah commands that various gifts be given to those in need - charity, poor-man’s tithe, gleanings (not gathering up all the grain), leaving behind the forgotten sheaves, leaving the corner of the field unharvested, and the like – and the observance of the *mitzva* of *shemita*. Every seventh year, all fruits and vegetables are declared ownerless so the poor may enjoy them.

2. The Rambam might disagree, as we find that he offers a similar explanation of the prohibited foods, namely, that they are harmful to the body. The Abravanel and others disagree with the Rambam on this point as well, and it is possible that the Rambam is consistent here with his own position. Elaboration on this point, however, is beyond the scope of this work.



3. One might be able to reconcile the differences between the two passages as reflecting two conflicting dimensions or aspects of *shemita* (following the approach of Rav Mordechai Breuer z"l), but we have chosen to follow the integrative approach of Chazal, as will be explained below.

If, however, this is the reason for *shemita*, then it is difficult to understand why the Torah commands that working the land must stop. On the contrary, it should have commanded that work must continue in order to increase the yield for the benefit of the poor! Indeed, a careful reading of the various Scriptural texts dealing with *shemita* teaches that *Parashat Mishpatim*, which emphasizes the idea of helping the poor, does not forbid agricultural labor; it merely commands that the land be released (“*tishmetena u-netashtah*”; *Shemot* 23:11)<sup>3</sup> and declared ownerless.

The *Mechilta*, however, interprets the verse as follows: “You shall release it’ (*tishmetena*) – from its work, ‘and you shall leave it’ (*u-netashtah*) – from eating it.” According to this interpretation, the prohibition of working the land appears in *Mishpatim* as well. While it might be argued that this prohibition stems from the other reasons for *shemita*, my revered teacher, **Rav Aharon Lichtenstein**, understands this issue as follows: Working the land must cease, because the Torah is not only concerned with the poor man’s **financial situation**, but also with removing the landowner’s feeling of **superiority**. For this reason, the owner of the field does not work his property, and thus he does not **give** anything to the poor person. The fruit grows on its own, and the land is declared ownerless. The poor person is therefore entitled to take of the ownerless produce and is not dependent upon the landowner’s kindness. (Thus, already the passage in *Mishpatim* alludes to the idea of equality that is explicit in the passage in *Behar*, verses 6–7).



## THE VIEW OF THE SEFER HA-CHINUCH

There is another useful benefit to be gained from the observance of *shemita*: to attain through it the quality of yielding and relinquishing (*mitzva no. 84*)

A third reason for the *mitzva* of *shemita* is offered by the *Sefer Ha-Chinuch*.

Once every seven years, a person must declare his field ownerless, not only in order to assist the poor, but also to learn how to waive his property to protect himself from greed and avarice. When a person acquires this quality with respect to his land, it will presumably influence his conduct in other realms as well: his conduct with other people and his relationship with his family.

The *Chinuch* also cites another rationale for this *mitzva*:

So that a man will remember that the land that grows produce for him... produces not by its own power and ability, for there is a Master over it and over its owner...

It is precisely with respect to a farmer, who tills his land and succeeds in producing something new that the concern arises that he will look upon his crop and say: “My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth” (*Devarim 8:17*). Thus the Torah commands that a person must declare his property ownerless during the seventh year in order to show that the land is not really his: the land belongs to the Master of the universe. This commandment also highlights that the land does not produce its yield by itself, but by the grace of God. This teaches us a lesson about everything else in our world as well. Nothing comes into being on its own and nature does not operate independently but only by Divine decree. Thus, one of the main principles of *shemita* is to emphasize that “the land is Mine” – it is not man, but God, who is the Lord of the land. This principle has various ramifications which will be discussed later in the book.



The *Sefer Ha-Chinuch* mentions one more reason for the *mitzva* of *shemita* – intensifying man’s trust in God:

Yet another useful benefit to be found in this is that man increases trust in God...

During the *shemita* year, a person refrains from planting and working his land, and puts his trust in God. Moreover, a person declares all of his produce ownerless, without worrying about the consequences. This explanation is reminiscent of Israel’s wanderings in the wilderness, when the people placed their trust in God that He would provide them with their daily portion of manna (see *Devarim* 8:2–5 regarding the desert and 8:6–20 about the proper attitude upon entering Israel).

The *Sefer Ha-Chinuch* brings one final reason for *shemita* at the end of his description of this *mitzva*:

At the root of the precept lies the establishment in our heart ... of the doctrine that the world was brought into being through creation, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth ... and in order to remove, uproot and extirpate from our thinking any idea of the eternity [of the world], as believed by those who deny the Torah...

The idea of *shemita* is similar to the idea of *Shabbat*. Just as in the case of *Shabbat*, a person works for six days and on the seventh day he rests, so too in a *shemita* year, a person works for six years, and in the seventh year he rests. One of the objectives of the *mitzva* of *Shabbat* is to serve as “a reminder of the creation” (as stated in the *Kiddush* on Friday night). By observing *Shabbat*, a person demonstrates that the world is not eternal, rather it was created by God. As a reminder of how the Creator rested on the seventh day, man also rests weekly. Similarly, ***shemita*, the seventh year**, serves as a declaration that the world was created by God.

As an aside, the entire weekly cycle that is observed today points to the creation of the world. In nature, we are familiar with the daily cycle, following from the rising and the setting of the sun, and the



monthly cycle, following from the waxing and the waning of the moon. The weekly cycle, however, has no foundation in nature. This cycle came into being in the wake of creation. The nations of the world followed the Jewish people and accepted the weekly cycle, and thus they too proclaim, at times unknowingly, the creation of the world.

## THE VIEW OF IBN EZRA AND RAV KALISCHER

**Rav Kalischer** offers another understanding of *shemita*, which is already alluded to by certain *Rishonim*:<sup>4</sup>

Another reason is that people should not always be occupied in working the land for material purposes... when a person is relieved of the yoke of work, he should occupy himself in Torah.

In ordinary years, a person is busy with his work and increasing his material wealth. The sabbatical year is meant to provide man with a break from preoccupation with material needs so that he might occupy himself in Torah study.

## THE VIEW OF RAV KOOK

**Rav Kook**, in his introduction to *Shabbat ha-Aretz*, his comprehensive work on *shemita*, follows the aforementioned approach but adds another element:

The individual removes himself from mundane life on a regular basis every *Shabbat*... The same effect that *Shabbat* has on the individual, the *shemita* year has on the nation as a whole. It is a special need of this nation, because from time to time the Divine light within it reveals itself in its full glory, light that is not extinguished by mundane social life... with all its ire and competition....

*Shabbat* is also a day of rest which is meant to serve as an opportunity for Torah study, but *shemita* is a period of special rest. On *Shabbat* a person must not engage in creative work, and by rabbinic

4. See Ibn Ezra, *Devarim* 31:10–12.



decree he must even refrain from engaging in the sale or purchase of merchandise. During the *shemita* there is no agricultural produce for sale.

Furthermore, on *Shabbat*, while a person must refrain from work, he retains possession of his property. During the *shemita* year a person is commanded to declare his property ownerless for the benefit of **all people**, and to cancel all monetary debts owed to him. The entire economic system comes to a halt; debts are cancelled and personal property is declared ownerless.

All this leads to a fundamental distinction between *Shabbat* and *shemita*: *Shabbat* involves the rest of each individual on his own, whereas *shemita* involves the rest of the people of Israel as a whole.

Divine light lies concealed within the people of Israel at all times, but material occupation sometimes dulls the radiance of that light. Through the detachment from material affairs and the abandonment of the competition and struggle that characterizes mundane and commercial life, the soul becomes free to soar to spiritual heights. Then the previously hidden Divine light within the people reveals itself in all its intensity. The soul of the nation as a whole and the souls of every individual become purified and refined.

Upon examination of the biblical passages, it becomes evident that Scriptural support can be brought for each of the reasons for *shemita* proposed above. The table at the end of this chapter shows the various reasons and the biblical source for each (the color of each reason corresponds to the color of the supporting passage).



## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VARIOUS REASONS

**What is the relationship between the various reasons?** There might be room to embrace all reasons, as it is quite possible that many different rationales underlie the *mitzva* of *shemita*.

One may suggest, however, that there is a single over-arching, all-inclusive reason for the observance of *shemita*: “For the land is Mine” (*Vayikra* 25:23), the land belongs to God and not to man. This idea is expressed in the Gemara *Sanhedrin* 39a: “Plant for six years and release [the land] during the seventh, so that you shall know that it is Mine.” All the other explanations can be shown to flow from this principle. During the *shemita* year, a person must demonstrate that he is not the master; therefore his produce is declared ownerless.<sup>5</sup> For the same reason he must cease working in order that he not develop the sense that he is the creator of the produce.<sup>6</sup> This situation leads to the other **results** of *shemita* mentioned above (**results**, rather than **objectives**); people refrain from proprietary disputes and competition (most of the strife in the world stems from mutually contradictory senses of possession). As a result of the lack of dispute and competition, the Divine spiritual spark that lies within each and every individual rouses to life, and each person is free to occupy him or herself with Torah study.

This approach also accounts for the prohibition to destroy *shemita* produce. As will be explained below, it is forbidden to destroy *shemita* produce, and therefore it is even forbidden to discard *shemita* produce in the usual manner. The simple reason that destroying *shemita* produce is forbidden is because it is endowed with special sanctity. There might, however, be another reason as well (as I heard from my revered father-in-law, Rav Blumenzweig); a person who borrows or rents an article is permitted to use it, but only the owner is permitted to destroy it. Any damage to property, other than that caused by the owner himself, incurs liability. Thus, it follows that nothing gives a person a greater sense of ownership than the right to destroy. During the *shemita* year, it is forbidden to destroy produce, because we are not the owners of the produce.

5. For further discussion and practical ramifications (and for understanding the law of *hefker* with respect to *shemita*), see pp. 142, 231, 264.

6. There are halachic ramifications that flow from this reason regarding reaping and gathering, see below, p. 149. Harvesting produce in an amount that will suffice for only a few days does not demonstrate ownership, and therefore this is permitted. Similarly, fruit growing at the beginning of the year (which lacks *shemita* sanctity) does not have to be declared ownerless (in other words, its owner retains possession of it), and thus it is permitted to harvest the entire crop.



This idea also explains the concept of **Otzar Bet Din**. As will be explained later in the book, a court is permitted to hire agents to harvest produce in the normal manner (and then distribute it among the entire community). Similarly, a court is permitted to hire agents to press grapes for wine. The *Rishonim* and the *Acharonim* (see Rash Sirillio, *Yerushalmi, Shemita 9:5*; *Chazon Ish 11:7*) ask: Why is this permitted even when performed in the ordinary manner? If we understand that the entire foundation of the prohibition is displaying ownership, the law makes perfect sense. The court is not acting as an owner; the fields do not belong to the court. The whole idea of **Otzar Bet Din** is that the ownerless produce should be distributed to the public by way of a body that has no proprietary rights in the produce. Therefore, even if the court harvests the produce or presses the grapes in the usual manner, there is no prohibition, because there is no sense of ownership.

The *shemita* year teaches us that we do not truly own anything. This is also the underlying principle of the prohibition of “*bal tashchit*,” the prohibition of destroying things of value. It is forbidden to wantonly destroy an article of value, absent just cause, because we do not really own it, just as it is forbidden to inflict injury to one’s body.



## SHEMITA IN OUR TIME

Today we do not live in an agricultural society and the *shemita* year has lost much of its unique national flavor. Commerce continues as usual; people retain possession of their property. Serious consideration must be given to the question of how we can best develop the important ideas that characterize the *shemita* year.

This question connects back to the various reasons for *shemita* suggested above. In order to truly feel the idea that the land belongs to God, and to extend assistance to the poor, we must consider alternative ways of performing acts of kindness and charity that will be unique to the *shemita* year.

In addition to performing the usual acts of kindness, it is possible to do things that will remind us of renouncing ownership of the land during the *shemita* year. For example, professionals can provide their services to the needy free of charge or for a nominal fee (lawyers, doctors, teachers, plumbers, and the like). Of course, a person can give expression to the social aspect of *shemita* by waiving a portion of the debts owed to him (and, perhaps, banks and other financial institutions can offer their customers better terms for repaying their loans and balancing their finances).

It is also possible to “declare as ownerless” a portion of our time. Both adults and children can dedicate time to special acts of giving and kindness during the *shemita* year.

The special Torah study of the *shemita* year can find expression in additional periods of study. For example, a person can dedicate time on Fridays for regular study, and perhaps additional frameworks should be established to encourage such study (Friday *kollels* and the like).

The rationale for *shemita* that stems from the sanctity of the land and from the idea that God is its true owner is expressed in our increased efforts to purchase the produce of Eretz Israel, and especially *shemita* produce, such as *Otzar Bet Din*. We should buy *shemita* produce even if it costs a little more, and thus also merit becoming active partners in the *mitzva* of *shemita*, and not allow it to fall solely on the shoulders of the 1.6% of Israel’s population that works in agriculture.



We can appreciate the special sanctity of *shemita* produce by eating such produce and giving special care to the uneaten portions and leftovers. This can be source of great joy, as every time we respect the special sanctity of the produce and do not discard it in the usual manner, we pay renewed attention to the unique sanctity that we are privileged to encounter during the *shemita* year.

During the *shemita* year we live on a higher level, in closer proximity to God. We discover new strengths and find ourselves capable of performing more acts of kindness and studying more Torah than in ordinary years.



## A YEAR THAT IS ENTIRELY A SABBATH

There are surprising parallels between *Shabbat* and *shemita*. The most obvious among them include: the seventh day and the seventh year; resting from work and resting from working the land; a Sabbath to God (*Shabbat*) and a Sabbath of the land to God (*shemita*):

<i>Shabbat</i> [the sabbath of creation – <i>Shemot</i> 20]	<i>Shemita</i> [the sabbath of the land – <i>Vayikra</i> 25]
Six days shall you labor	Six years you shall plant your field
And do all your work	And gather in its fruits
But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God	But in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath year of solemn rest in the land for the Lord
In it you shall not do any work	You shall neither plant your field, nor prune your vineyard
Neither you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant	And the Sabbath produce of the land shall be food for you; for you, and for your servant, and for your maid
Nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates	And for your hired servant, and for your stranger that sojourns with you, and for your cattle, and for the beast in your land
For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth.	For the land is mine ( <i>Vayikra</i> 25:23)

What is the significance of this correspondence?

Another interesting parallel might shed light on the matter. There seems to be a clear parallel between *shemita* and the state of the world in the Garden of Eden, prior to Adam's sin:



<i>Bereishit</i> 1	<i>Vayikra</i> 25
<p>(29) And God said, Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed, <b>which is upon the face of all the land</b>, and every tree, on which is the fruit yielding seed; <b>to you it shall be for food</b>.</p> <p>(30) <b>And to every beast of the land</b>, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, wherein there is life, <b>I have given every green herb for food</b>: and it was so.</p>	<p>(6) <b>And the Sabbath produce of the land shall be food for you</b>; for you, and for your servant, and for your maid, and for your hired servant, and for your stranger that sojourns with you.</p> <p>(7) And for your cattle, <b>and for the beast in your land, shall all its produce be food</b>.</p>

The rest from work restores reality to its original state before Adam's sin: a world in which everything belongs to God, and all benefit equally. This is a world in which different groups of human beings, and even animals to a large extent (even though man rules over animals, he may not eat of their meat), coexist peacefully.

*Shemita* is, in a certain sense, even more exalted than that initial condition. As we have seen, there is a unique term that is common to both *Shabbat* and *shemita*: “**A Sabbath to the Lord.**” What is the significance of this expression?

*Shabbat* is a reality that is beyond the ordinary reality of this world. God rested on the seventh day, but the world continued to function. Resting on the seventh day does not belong to the human reality of this world. The world and man should actually continue working on the seventh day, and not desist from their work. Resting belongs to exalted and lofty reality, the reality of the world-to-come. The people of Israel were privileged to receive on *Shabbat* the crown of kingship, a crown that belongs to the heavenly world: “Like the world-to-come is the sabbath of rest.”



Resting on *Shabbat* likens us, as it were, to the Master of the universe. *Shabbat* provides us with special strength and supreme sanctity which impacts on the rest of the week. There is no comparison between a person whose entire week flows from the sanctity of *Shabbat*, and a person whose week stems from a reality devoid of sanctity, even if he has some physical rest.

The same is true of *shemita*. The people of Israel were commanded to work the land – “to work it and to preserve it” (*Bereshit* 2:15). Resting from working the land is something that is found beyond ordinary reality. This teaches that the Land of Israel is unlike all other lands, and that the people of Israel are unlike all other peoples. Both of them have special God-like spiritual dimensions.

Resting from work during the *shemita* year connects us to the world of the Garden of Eden (for there are also many parallels between the Garden of Eden and *shemita*), the world of God. The people of Israel who reach their unique sanctity in the land of Israel elevate themselves to an even higher world - a world in which there is no competition or jealousy, a world of mutual assistance and fraternity, a world in which Torah study and connecting with God are natural and expected.<sup>7</sup>

With God’s help, may we merit to enter in sanctity and purity to a year that is entirely *Shabbat*. May we merit experiencing the unique intensity and elevation of the *shemita* year. And may we merit joining together to connect ourselves to God.

**Come let us go out to greet the *Shabbat* queen!**

7. See also Rav Kook’s introduction to *Shabbat ha-Aretz*.

The  
Rambam  
(Guide, III, 39)

Some of these laws are meant to lead to pity and promoting the well-being of all men, as the Torah states: "That the poor of your people may eat" (*Shemot* 23:11)... and are meant to make the earth more fertile and stronger by letting it lie fallow [periodically].

The *Chinuch*  
(mitzva 84)

There is another useful benefit to be gained: to attain the quality of yielding and relinquishing.

The *Chinuch*  
(ibid.)

So that a man will remember that the land that grows produce for him... produces fruit not by its own power, for there is a Master over it and over its owner...

The *Chinuch*  
(ibid.)

Yet another useful benefit to be found in this is that a man increases trust in God...

The *Chinuch*  
(ibid.)

At the root of the precept lies the purpose of establishing in our heart... the doctrine that the world was brought into being through creation, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth... and in order to remove and uproot from our thinking any idea of the eternity [of the world], as believed by those who deny the Torah...

Ibn Ezra and  
Rav Kalischer

Another reason is that people should not always be occupied in working the land for material purposes... when a person is relieved of the yoke of work, he will be able to occupy himself with Torah study...

Rav Kook  
(introduction  
to *Shabbat  
ha-Aretz*)

The individual removes himself from mundane life on a regular basis every *Shabbat*... The same effect that *Shabbat* has on the individual, the *shemita* year has on the nation as a whole. It is a special need of this nation, because from time to time the Divine light within it reveals itself in its full glory, light that is not extinguished by mundane social life... with all its ire and competition...

Assisting the poor

Agricultural reason

The quality of  
relinquishing

The land belongs to  
God

Trust in God

Belief in the creation  
of the world

Break for Torah study

Interruption of the  
mundane life of  
society in order to  
allow the revelation of  
the Divine light that is  
concealed within it

1. And the Lord spoke to Moshe in Mount Sinai, saying:
2. Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, When you come to the land which I give you, then shall the land keep **a sabbath to the Lord**.
3. Six years you shall plant your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in its fruit.
4. But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, **a sabbath for the Lord**: you shall neither plant your field, nor prune your vineyard.
5. That which grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your undressed vine; for it shall be a year of rest for the land.
6. And the sabbath produce of the land shall be food for you; for you, and for your servant, and for your maid, and for your hired servant, and for your stranger that sojourns with you.
7. And for your cattle, and for the beast in your land, shall all its increase be food.

**(Parashat Behar, Vayikra 25)**

18. And you shall perform My statutes, and keep My judgments, and do them; and you shall dwell in the land in safety.
19. And the land shall yield its fruit, and you shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety.
20. And if you shall say, "What shall we eat in the seventh year? Behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase":
21. Then I will command My blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years.
22. And you shall plant the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in, you shall eat of the old store.
23. The land shall not be sold for ever: **for the land is Mine**; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.
24. And in all the land of your possession you shall **grant a redemption for the land**.

**(Parashat Behar, Vayikra 25)**

10. And six years you shall plant your land, and shall gather in its fruits.
11. But in the seventh year you shall **let it rest and lie fallow; that the poor of your people may eat**: and what they leave, the beasts of the field shall eat; in like manner you shall deal with your vineyard, and with your olive grove.
12. **Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest**, that your ox and your donkey may rest; and the son of your handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.

**(Parashat Mishpatim, Shemot 23)**