

# Service-Specific Texts

## **Environment #1**

One day Honi HaM'agel was walking on the road, and he saw a man planting a carob tree. He asked him 'how many years do these require until they bear fruit?' 'After 70 years' was the reply. 'Do you expect to live seventy years and eat the fruit of your labor?' 'And did I find the world desolate when I entered it?,' replied the old man, 'just as my fathers planted for me before I was born, so do I plant for those who come after me.'" Babylonian Talmud Ta'anit 23a

## **Environment #2**

And God blessed them, and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply, replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth. Genesis 1:28

## **Environment #**

The lights of the world suffer because of the destroyers of beneficial trees. Talmud Bavli, Sota 47A

## **Environment #4**

"The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to the Jews: even if you see that it is filled with every good thing, you shall not say: I shall settle, but will not plant, - and you shall not be negligent in planting...When you enter the land, you will find trees planted by other people. So shall you plant trees for your descendants. And let no-one say: I am already old, how much longer shall I live? Why should I strive on behalf of others, if tomorrow I may die? Therefore a person may not evade this duty, even if he plants trees in old age, to add to what has already been planted" - Midrash Tanchuma, Kedoshim

## **Environment #5**

The purpose of this mitzvah [**bal tashchit**] is to teach us to love that which is good and worthwhile and to cling to it, so that good becomes a part of us and we will avoid all that is evil and destructive. This is the way of the righteous and those who improve society, who love peace and rejoice in the good in people and bring them close to Torah: that nothing, not even a grain of mustard, should be lost to the world, that they should regret any loss or destruction that they see, and if possible they will prevent any destruction that they can. Not so are the wicked, who are like demons, who rejoice in destruction of the world, and they are destroying themselves. (Sefer Ha-Hinukh, #529)

## **AIDS**

"Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi asked Elijah, "When will the Messiah come?" He (Elijah) answered 'Go ask him'. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi asked 'Where does he sit?' 'By the gates of Rome' 'How will I recognize him?' 'He sits with the poor who suffer sicknesses, wrapping and unwrapping their bandages. Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 98a

## **Illness**

It was taught that visiting the sick has no measure. What does "Have no measure" mean? Rav Yosef said, "There is no measure to the reward you will receive." Abayye countered, "Is there a measured reward to any of the commandments? Is it not taught, "One should be careful when performing any commandment be it great or small, because no one knows the true measure of a deed." So, Abayye understood "have no measure" to mean, that even an adult should visit a child. Rava said, "It means you should go even one hundred times a day "Rabbi Acha Bar Chanina said, "One who visits the sick removes a sixtieth of his pain." If that's so, get sixty people to go visit and let's heal him! He answered, "Each one takes a sixtieth from what is left." Babylonian Talmud Nederim 39b

## **Children (also could be Poverty/homelessness)**

"Advocate for the indigent and the orphan; and deal righteously with the poor and the downtrodden...save them from the hand of the wicked" Psalms 82:3-4

## **Poverty/homelessness**

"Understand: the qualities of God are not like the qualities of flesh and blood. If a man gives a generous gift to a king, he is unsure whether or not it will be accepted from him...and he is unsure whether or not he will see the face of the king. The Holy One Blessed be He is not so: anyone who gives a penny to a poor person merits to be received by the Divine Presence" Babylonian Talmud Bava Batra 10a

## **Refugees / poverty**

"If you want to raise a man from mud and filth, do not think it is enough to stand on top and reach down to him a helping hand. You must go all the way down yourself, down into the mud and filth. Then take hold of him with strong hands, and pull him and yourself into the light" Rabbi Shlomo ben Meir HaLevi of Karlin



### Hunger #1

Some say that careful inquiry should be made in regard to beggars who ask for clothing, but no inquires should be made in regard to food. Others say that in regard to clothing also no inquires should be made. Midrash Vayikra Rabba 34:14

### Hunger #2

A story is told of Binyamin HaTzaddik, who was the supervisor of the community's tzedakah funds. Once, when food was scarce, a woman came to him and said, "Rabbi, feed me!" He replied, "I swear there is nothing in the tzedakah fund." She said, "If you do not feed me, a woman and her seven children will die." So he fed her from his own money. Baba Batra 11a

### Hunger #3

If the rich man says to the poor man, "Why do you not go and work and get food? Look at those hips! Look at those legs! Look at that fat body! Look at those lumps of flesh!" The Holy One, Blessed be He, says to the rich person, "It is not enough that you have not given him anything of yours and helped him out, but you must set an evil eye upon (make fun of/mock) what I have given him, must you?" Midrash Vayikra Rabba 34:4

### Education #1

Abaye said: We have it on tradition that no one is poor save he who lacks knowledge. In the West [palestine] there is a proverb: He who has this, has everything; he who lacks this, what has he? Has one acquired this, what does he lack? Has he not acquired this, what does he possess? - Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 41a

### Additional Texts

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*Babylonian Talmud Ta'anit 23a*

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"According to what a poor person is lacking, you are commanded to give him."

*Mishneh Torah, Gifts to the Poor 7:3*

"If there be among you a needy person, one of your kinsmen, in any of your settlements, in the land that the Lord your G-d is giving you, do not harden your heart and shut your hand against your needy kinsman. Rather you must open your hand and lend him sufficient for whatever he needs." *Deuteronomy 15:7-8*

Rabbi Yitzhak said "He who gives a small coin to a poor man obtains six blessings, and he who addresses to him words of comfort obtains eleven blessings." *Baba Bathra 9b*

"When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses to live in, and your herds and flocks have multiplied and your silver and gold have increased and everything you own has prospered, beware lest your heart grow haughty and you forget the Lord your G-d, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery." *Deuteronomy 8:12-14*

"Our rabbis taught: We give a livelihood to non-Jewish poor together with Jewish ones, and we visit the sick among non-Jews together with Jewish one's and we bury the dead of non-Jews together with Jewish dead, out of consideration for the ways of peace." *Talmud Gittin 61a*

"Just as He clothes the naked, you too clothe the naked; You, too, visit the sick. You, too, comfort the mourners. You, too, bury the dead" *Babylonian Talmud Sotah 14a*

"When any of your brothers are poor, do not harden your heart or shut your hand against your needy brother...make every effort to give him, and do not let your heart rebuke you for giving, because the Lord your God will bless you in all your deeds. For the poor will never cease to exist in the land; so I am commanding you to open your hand generously to your poor and destitute brother in your land"

*Deuteronomy 15:7-11*

