**Kelim, Chapter One, Mishnah Six**

**Introduction**

The remainder of this chapter establishes geographical grades of holiness—which lands are holier than others, and which places within Israel holier than other places.

**Mishnah Six**

There are ten grades of holiness: the land of Israel is holier than all other lands.

And what is the nature of its holiness? That from it are brought the omer, the firstfruits and the two loaves, which cannot be brought from any of the other lands.

***Explanation***

The first grade of holiness, meaning the first place with any degree of holiness at all, is the land of Israel, which is holier than any other land.

The mishnah then proceeds to explain what are the ramifications of Israel being holier than the other lands. Israeli is holier for three reasons:

1. The barley that is reaped on the day after Pesah (see Leviticus 23:10-15), called the omer, must be harvested in the land of Israel.
2. First fruits, which are brought to the Temple (see Mishnah Bikkurim) and eaten in Jerusalem by their owners, are brought only from fruits that grow in the land of Israel. We should note that this is true of all agricultural offerings—terumah, tithes, etc. Anything brought directly from produce grown on the land comes only from the land of Israel. The mishnah specifies first fruits because they are brought to the Temple in a formal ceremony, whereas the other offerings are given directly to the priest or Levite, without any special ritual.
3. The two loaves are brought on Shavuot. They must come from grain grown in Israel (see Leviticus 23:17).

It is revealing that the rabbis grade holiness by opportunities to perform mitzvot. A place in which more mitzvot can be performed is holier than others. This implies that holiness is wrapped up in the performance of God's will, as if to say that the more one can perform God's will, the more holiness is brought to the world.

A different view of gradations of holiness might claim that God "resides" in a certain place, and therefore, that place is holier.